

USFS "Alaska Forest Reflections"  
Brenda Schwartz-Yeager  
2 September 2011

**NARRATOR: "FOREST REFLECTIONS, A SERIES OF STORIES BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED, WORKED AND PLAYED IN ALASKA'S NATIONAL FORESTS, SHARING THEIR MEMORIES OF FAVORITE FOREST PLACES FOR THIS 2011 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS."**

"My name is Brenda Schwartz-Yeager and I'm a maritime artist and a wilderness guide and captain in Southeast Alaska.

"My favorite place on the national forest in Southeast Alaska is Tracy Arm Fords Terror Wilderness Area on the Inside Passage in the heart of the Tongass (National Forest).

"Now, I guide every day in a wilderness area, and spent my life on the coastline of Alaska, so you'd kind of think that maybe you'd be like, hard to just wow me and get my attention because I spend so much time in spectacular wilderness areas.

"...Last year I was the very fortunate recipient of a artist in residency program out of the Juneau Ranger District, I got invited to spend a pretty good length of time with the wilderness rangers in the Tracy Arm-Ford Terror Wilderness Area, paddling by kayak, soaking this place up, in hopes that it would inspire some painting, which it did...but my experience there was way more than I ever could have expected.

"The place is stunning and everywhere you look is this incredible diversity...the wilderness area has two like, thirty mile long fjords that cut through these sheer granite walls that are all these different colors of rocks with waterfalls tumbling down everywhere and then ... at the terminus of the fjords are several glaciers that are tumbling these massive icebergs of all different colors, blues and indigos...into the water, which has got this, like, emerald green color up at the heads of the bay.

"And I think the most amazing thing to me is...it was like a motion picture all the time, it was ever changing.

"And my very favorite spot on this trip that I took where I was sketching continually, capturing images for paintings, was at the end of about ten days I camping on a place called Woof Spit, which is a little point of land that sticks out into Endicott's Arm, and I was at the very terminus of this little spit of land, and I had one of those very fortunate experiences, in a temperate rainforest, to have a clear night, and I elected to not set up my tent, and I spent the night right out at the point with the water at my feet and my kayak just a few feet away, and across the bay from me was the ...glacier, which was kind of a hanging glacier, and all through the night you could hear the ice pieces that had been relieved from the face of the glacier, and come tumbling down the rock hillside.

"And the water was like a mirror- another thing that doesn't always happen on the Alaska coastline. And there were thousands of birds...plovers and dunlins and all around me, landing at my feet. And the noise from the birds was astounding, just moving around. And it was like the country was just full of life.

And it was at the end of the season. It was late in the season and we had that low angle of light and hilltops were that kind of burnished red color, which contrasted great against the blue-green of the glaciers that have been exposed at the ice cap that late in the year. You had to kind of crane your neck... my neck was actually sore from like looking up at the towering mountains while sketching for so many days.

And I got to spend the night there in the low angle evening light, sketching, burnt through a while sketch book, and watching the sun go down and the moon come up over this hanging glacier and hearing the icebergs crash through the tide line there and the birds taking off and landing and their delicate feathers everywhere floating on the surface of the water.

“Unforgettable time, I'll never forget where I felt like that complete solitude that one can hopefully find in the wilderness and this unstoppable show going on in front of me. I really hope that other people can experience places like that.”

**NARRATOR: “FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR NATIONAL FORESTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS, PLEASE VISIT THE LINKS PROVIDED AT [WWW.MYALASKAFOREST.COM](http://WWW.MYALASKAFOREST.COM).**

**ALASKA FOREST REFLECTIONS IS PRODUCED FOR THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE, ALASKA REGION, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE.**

**IN JUNEAU, I'M BOB BELONGIE FOR THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE.**