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Meet Al Beaulieu--One of the Hardest Working Volunteers on the Francis Marion NF

By [Tammy Mason](#) on Apr 4, 2008



Al Beaulieu is a volunteer on the Francis Marion National Forest.

This valuable volunteer gives 2000 hours per year to the Forest Service.

What can you accomplish in 2000 hours? Ask 79-year-old Al Beaulieu who volunteers 2000 hours a year on the Francis Marion National Forest (FMNF) in South Carolina and on the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont. From October through April, Beaulieu volunteers on the Francis Marion and then migrates to Green Mountain. Each day he diligently begins work around 7 a.m. and works eight-hour shifts.

The beginning of Beaulieu's volunteer experience with the Forest Service was serendipity. While fishing at one of the campgrounds on the White Mountain National Forest, located in northern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine, a host informed him of available volunteer opportunities. A then recent second-time retiree, Beaulieu began his volunteer experience with the Forest Service as a campground host in 1991.

Tongue-in-cheek, Beaulieu asked the compliance officer who interviewed him, "What do I do, and what do I get?"

"I received a uniform, a radio, a car, \$15/per day and was able to stay free on the site," Beaulieu reminisced. "I was only intending to serve as a host for Memorial Day weekend and for the Fourth of July; however, I stayed three years."

Not realizing the after effects of Hurricane Hugo, Beaulieu then moved to Charleston, SC, in 1991 to be close to his son. With a benevolent spirit, he helped the FMNF with maintenance of property damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Hugo. From 1992-1993, he served as host of Buck Hall Recreation Area.

Beaulieu wears a myriad of hats on the FMNF. It's never a dull day for him. Rotating his volunteered time, he works as an information assistant at the Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center, helps with trail maintenance and helps with smoke patrol. Additionally, he routinely looks for and replaces missing trailhead and road signs.

"I don't ask what has to be done," Beaulieu said. "I see what needs to be done and do it."

"He is a wonderful asset to the unit, and frankly, I do not know what we would do without him," said Amy Fore, program manager of developed recreation and land on the FMNF.

Beaulieu's presence on the Forest is one of the most valued services he provides. His being there helps reduce vandalism and increase customer service. A liaison between officers and forest users, people are used to seeing Beaulieu in a green Forest Service truck patrolling the area.

Beaulieu grew up 35 miles south of Boston in Tauton, MA. A four-year Navy veteran, who served in the Korean Conflict, he worked as an electrical engineer for 20 years and later worked as a salesman for 15 years. While not volunteering for the Forest Service, Beaulieu enjoys spending time with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He has made friends all over the country and is a member of the American Legion Post #69 in Arlington, VT.

Asked what drives him to continue to volunteer with the Forest Service, he stated, "It's my forest, my country and my world, and of course, personal satisfaction."

Beaulieu has created his legacy of service to the Forest Service and the FMNF eagerly awaits his return from Vermont.

"We look forward to his return each fall and hate to see him leave each spring," said Fore. "Words cannot express all he does for us."

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