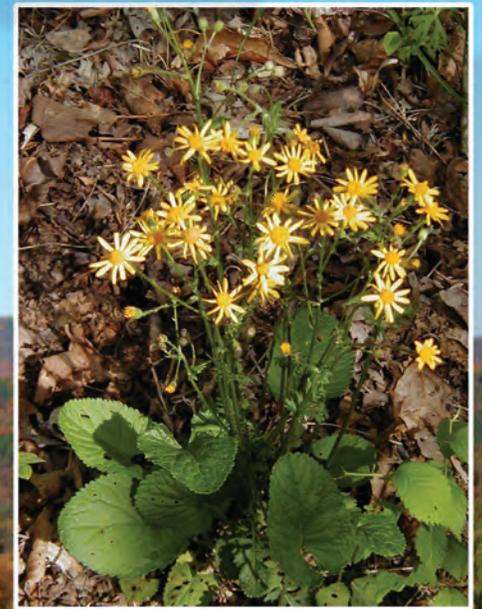
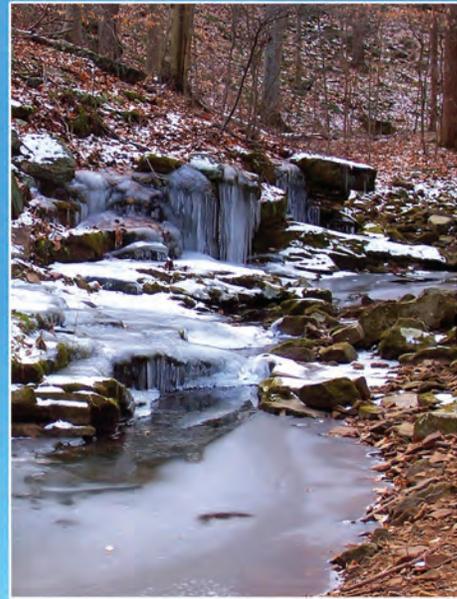
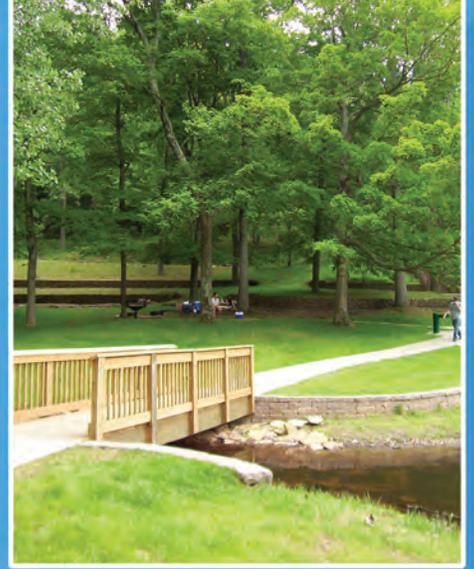




2011

Year In Review



A Year of ACHIEVEMENTS

A Letter from the Forest Supervisor



■ **Budget.** A word that has always packed a sort of punch, but in the most recent of economic times, it's one that makes us all wonder what lies ahead. It also takes me back to the hit show, "McGyver."

Think back, for example, to how McGyver would be able to make a weapon from a matchstick, some duct tape and a rubber band, and well, you have a sort of simile for what we do each day. Yes, while a bit of a stretch in some ways, it does tie-in with how we, as an agency, continue to meet our day-to-day mission, safely and soundly, despite declining budgets or resources, proving to live up to our motto of "Caring for the land and serving people." And for this, I wish to thank all of the dedicated team members, volun-

teers and partners for a year of great achievements and successes despite tougher budgetary times. Whether through partnerships, cost saving measures or simply thinking outside the box, all contributors continue to create capacity to meet the goals that enable good stewardship of the public land entrusted to us on behalf of the American people.

This Year in Review is filled with examples of successes where employees and partners of all kinds, dedicated their time and economic support to improve the conditions and opportunities for everything from plants to people. For example, volunteers donated 23,000 hours of work on the Forest. The myriad of contributions, from employees and partners alike, are sincerely appreciated, and the conditions and opportunities within the Shawnee National Forest are improved due to this display of dedication and interest.

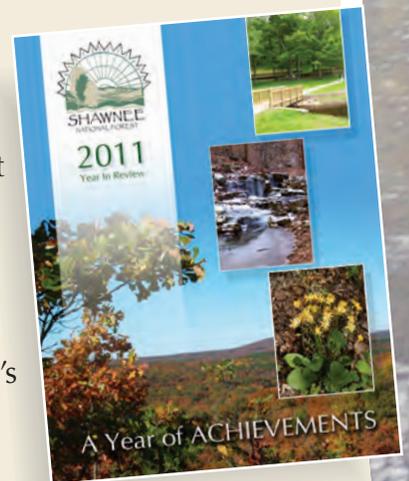
Allen Nicholas
Forest Supervisor

The Shawnee National Forest Is Going Green!

In an effort to go green and minimize costs associated with publishing and mailing, please note that we will not be mailing out next year's 2012 Year in Review newsletter. Future copies of this annual publication will take on an electronic format. To obtain upcoming editions, please visit the Shawnee National Forest's website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee>.

Also stay connected with up-to-the-minute Shawnee news via the Forest's Twitter feed: <http://twitter.com/shawneenf>. Hard copies will be available at the Shawnee NF Supervisor's Office in Harrisburg along with District offices located in Vienna and Jonesboro.

Those interested in receiving an electronic copy may do so by sending your name and email to the following: mailroom_r9_shawnee@fs.fed.us.



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

■ The rehabilitation of the Lincoln Memorial Recreation Area, located in Jonesboro, Illinois adjacent to the U.S. Forest Service office, was completed in 2011.

Improvements made to the site reflect the rustic stone and timber architectural design of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), who originally rebuilt the recreation area from the remains of the Union County Fairgrounds.



With both the cultural and natural heritage highlighted, the Forest Service project includes the improvement of a walking path, the installation of a play area, and the rehabilitation of a fishing area; all designed to offer the local community access to outdoor activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle. Other site improvements that will promote visitors to "get outdoors" and connect with nature include the reconstruction of two picnic shelters and the restroom.

■ In February, a well-capping project was completed with ten drilled wells (with 8" opening) being sealed according to State of Illinois requirements in order to prevent ground water contamination and meet Illinois well drilling requirements.



■ In an effort to better the aquatic environment and also increase recreational angler opportunities, 750 fish habitat structures were placed in local lakes. This project is a cooperative effort with the Shawnee Resource Conservation



and Development, the Golconda Job Corps, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

■ As part of a 2-year ARRA contract, 37 of the total 50 miles of trail construction was completed within a four watershed area known as the "Trails Designation Project" for 2011.



■ Sharing resources to make improvements for travelers, the Forest worked cooperatively with Alexander County Highway Department on brushing, ditching, culvert replacement and surfacing along a portion of Bean Ridge Road (Forest Road #262).

■ Forest-wide installation of directional road signs and Forest Road identification signs was completed in December.



Protecting Ecosystems Across Boundaries

■ In September the Shawnee NF, with the assistance of the Illinois Audubon Society, acquired a five acre tract containing the entrance to the second largest Indiana bat hibernacula cave known in Illinois.



■ The Forest collaborated with IDNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), Western Illinois University, and Mark Twain National Forest in conducting fall harp trap surveys for bats in five caves and one mine. In light of the threat of White Nose Syndrome, it is as important as ever to join forces to monitor bat populations for signs of this disease.



■ 230 acres of terrestrial habitat was improved in openland areas to include mechanical mowing, disking, and seeding to improve populations of game and non-game wildlife species.

■ With the assistance of The Archaeological Conservancy, a 20 acre tract was acquired that included the archeological remains of an old farmstead within the historic Miller Grove community.

■ The annual upward reporting is complete with the Forest showing a substantial increase of achievements in all seven wildernesses. The Forest has achieved the national goals for minimum stewardship levels as part of the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge.

■ A parking area was constructed at the McConnel Tract to accommodate recreational fishing.

■ The Botany and Wildlife programs completed over 100 acres of core target in the removal of Garlic Mustard and other non-native invasive species across the Forest.

■ Through the support of the Forest Service Regional Office, 50 miles of trail condition surveys were completed by the Student Conservation Association (SCA).

■ Looking for Trail of Tears in Union County- During this two-day event, the Forest, along with the TOTA (Illinois Chapter) and other interested individuals, researched maps and archival documents to determine the roads and trails the Cherokee traveled on through Union County during their trek along the Trail of Tears.

■ In a Participating Agreement with Unimin Specialty Minerals, the Forest was able to close 18 abandoned mines for health and safety purposes as well as to stabilize mine entrances for bat use. Five of the mines were closed using culverts and gates since bats were known to inhabit them. The others were sealed using soil since no bats utilized them.



were Forest Service) for an overall total of 858 acres.

■ The ILC supported 108 prescribed fires for a total of 6,581 acres. Contributing agencies included Shawnee NF, FWS and the IDNR. All total, the Shawnee completed 23 prescribed burns for a total of 2123 acres.

■ In February 2011, mobilization began by sending out equipment and personnel to wildfires in Missouri, Texas and Virginia. Fire related resources, including Equipment, Overhead and Crews, responded to several disasters and emergencies too, including the Gulf Oil Spill, hurricane relief efforts, wildland fire and accident investigations. Overall, Shawnee NF personnel were mobilized for a total of 801 days.



■ The biannual meeting of Eastern States Rock Art Research Association was held at Giant City State Park and hosted by the Forest. Never before had these meetings included a stewardship project, however, Forest archaeologists organized the first-ever stewardship project that focused on cleaning Buffalo Rock (a rock art archaeological site) which had recently been vandalized.

■ The Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center (ILC) dispatched resources to 80 local wildland fires (43 of those fires

■ Three of the Forest's 'Type 6 Engines' were all engaged in multiple days of fire assignments at incidents in Georgia, North Carolina and Texas.

■ The Shawnee's 'Type 2 Initial Attack crew' was also mobilized for the first time since 2008. A true interagency crew, made up of personnel from the Shawnee NF, Huron-Manistee NF, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, were put into action in August to assist with Hurricane Irene clean-up efforts on the East coast.

Revolutionizing Effectiveness and Efficiency



■ The Forest successfully completed the Forest Service Facilities Realignment and Enhancement Act authorized sale and conveyance of the former Elizabethtown Ranger District administrative site, including all necessary coordination with the Regional Office, General

Services Administration (GSA), the District and local government. This achieved a management strategy to reduce overhead costs and office consolidation across the Forest.

■ Tree removal at Pounds Hollow has been substantially completed in support of providing electricity to the campground. As the camping world has changed from tents and smaller pop-up type camping units to larger, more sophisticated styles, the upgrade in electricity will help to accommodate Forest visitors. The facility upgrade was made possible through fees generated by campers who utilize Pounds Hollow as well, allowing monies collected onsite to be used for site improvements.

■ Lake Glendale Recreation Area improvements included paving of the Oak Point Campground road in May,



helping to improve visitor travel. Additionally, Phase II of the Water and Wastewater improvements were completed in April for better overall facility operation.

■ Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads work was accomplished in April 2011. The road repair work was completed on roads damaged during wind, rain and winter storm events in 2008 and 2009; totaling nearly \$2 million. This funding was provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

■ On June 2nd, a Recreational Trail Program Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held at High Knob Campground, Karbers Ridge, IL. Trail enthusiasts gathered to celebrate nine miles of trail construction that was made possible through joint efforts with the Shawnee Trails Conservancy (STC) and the Forest. Through a special IDNR Recreational Trails Program Grant the STC was able to secure the Illinois Equine Industry Research and Promotion Grant which provided the funding for the nine miles of improvements along the River to River Trail.

■ Millstone Bluff Volunteer Clean-up Day - Fifteen volunteers from around southern Illinois volunteered to help clean-up the interpreted archaeology trail at Millstone Bluff, helping to preserve and protect this natural and cultural resource.

■ An AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps team worked with the Forest to reconstruct the Den Trail in Panther Den Wilderness, serving as an avenue for helping to connect young adults with the natural world around them.

■ Volunteer, partner and hosted program contributions increased about 60%

from last year, In 2011 the total number of hours equaled 23,000 hours, the equivalent to 12.8 full-time employees, with a cost savings of \$492,000.

■ New prefabricated concrete toilet buildings were installed at Johnson Creek Campground, Pine Hills



Campground, Lusk Creek Trailhead, and Tower Rock Campground. Five vault toilets that were in disrepair were also removed from recreation areas.

■ In partnership with the University of Illinois Extension, the Forest was able to co-sponsor five AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, continuing the program's work in building sustainable programs across the region. In sum, their contributions equal over 6,000 hours, including the oversight of 416 volunteers, developing 30 new programs and contacting over 200 educators and 1,500 students. Total value of in-kind, non-cash resources equal over \$300,000.



■ In helping to build and foster knowledgeable trail crew volunteers, the Master Trail Steward curriculum was accredited by SIU for the spring 2012. Additionally, the Trail Steward "Boot Camp" was held, leading to certification of eight additional Trail Stewards, bringing the total Trail or Master Trail Stewards to 24. A Junior Trail Stewards curriculum was also developed and taught at Carbondale High School as well.

■ In 2011, the Friends of the Shawnee National Forest, a not-for-profit partner, became incorporated with a volunteer executive director and nine-member board of directors being established. Their goal is to raise awareness of public lands and participate in several outreach and environmental education events and programs, and during 2011, twenty new members joined the Friends organization. New endeavors include building sustainable recreation and tourism, increasing membership, applying for grants and fund-raising opportunities.

Be an Employer of Choice

■ Reorganization was completed on the Forest, including a transition plan for implementation and several new positions were outreached and advertised before being filled from individuals across the nation.

■ In cooperation with other Southern Tier National Forests, the Southern Tier Newsletter was completed and distributed (including placement on Forest websites). The newsletter is used to foster diversity and communicate the various ways the Forest Service is striving to be the Employer of Choice when it comes to employment opportunities.

More Kids in the Woods

■ A total of 83 conservation education programs and events were presented by Forest personnel and volunteers, reaching approximately 15,100 people.

■ AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers contributed a total of 3,175 hours on various projects that helped to strengthen and build sustainability via the Forest's conservation education and environmental awareness goals. Some of these contributions included building a recreation outreach database; developing interpretive programs and materials; designing electronic outreach materials for programs and events sponsored by the Forest; and participation in collaborating with partners, schools and organizations.

■ Major area flooding affected two popular conservation education events in southern Illinois: Stewardship Week and Fish Tales.



Although Fish Tales was cancelled, Stewardship Week was able to be held two out of the scheduled four days and reached a total of 1,056 students. Unfortunately, Fish Tales was not possible because many of the youth that typically attend were displaced from their homes due to the effects of the flooding; however, pending better weather, both programs will run as planned in 2012.

■ After a short hiatus, the long-time favorite LaRue-Pine Hills Appreciation Day, held on April 9th, attracted 78 students and adults during a day-long series of engaging presentations and guided walks, all centered on this exceptional and unique Research Natural Area. Led by field experts, participants enjoyed a myriad of topics, including botany, wildlife, birds, reptiles and amphibians along with information concerning the ecology and natural history of this 3,500 acre area.

■ In continuing efforts to connect children with the heritage of southern IL a number of students were given an out-



door lesson on a prehistoric Native American Village during a field trip to Millstone Bluff by a Forest archaeologist. The following schools and universities involved included; Mt. Vernon Quest School, Carrier Mills Elementary, Century Junior High, Carbondale High School, University of Illinois landscape architecture class, and archaeology classes from Murray State University.



Awards

■ Master Trails Stewards and Shawnee Volunteer Corps received the Eastern Region -A New Century of Service Award for revolutionized effectiveness and efficiency by utilizing a flexible process and delivery of results through the volunteer program where skilled volunteers return and work on Forest trail systems. Award recipients include: Kelly Pearson and Mary McCorvie (Shawnee NF); Jennifer Sublett (Santa Fe NF); Ron Duncan (Partnership for a Connected Illinois); Jody Johnson (University of Illinois Extension); and Terri Thomas (Southern Illinois University-Carbondale).

■ Southern Tier Employer of Choice Team received the Eastern Region - Working Together Award for working together to develop a suite of media products that utilize innovative marketing and recruiting strategies to nurture cultural change that embraces diversity in all its attributes. Award recipients include: Marlene Rivero, Mary McCorvie, Monica Neal, and Becky Banker (Shawnee NF); Gary Chancey, Devela Clark (Wayne NF); Jane Mobley (Mark Twain NF); Judi Perez, Ruth Siddens (Hoosier NF); and William Dunk (Monongahela NF). This team of employees strives to make the Forest Service agency the 'Employer of Choice' when it comes to choosing career paths.



Connecting Citizens to the Land

■ For the U.S. Forest Service, one of the most instrumental pieces of legislation was the Weeks Act of 1911.

In honor of this historic event, several informative tools were developed, distributed and/or scheduled in celebration of the Weeks Act Centennial, including informative handouts, posters, displays and lectures about its significance in southern Illinois and the Shawnee National Forest. A large floor display and other materials were exhibited not only at the Forest Headquarters in Harrisburg, but also Southern IL University (SIU), Hunting and Fishing Days, Sustainable Living Expo and local libraries.

■ With sustainability ever increasing in importance for the agency, the Forest was a partner in the 2nd Annual Sustainable Living Expo at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. During the event attendees gained knowledge and skills relating to a bevy of topics, including re-handling old wood-working tools, quilting, wilderness survival and of course lots of children's activities, including a visit from Smokey Bear.

■ Via booths provided by the Shawnee National Forest (NF), approximately 5,600 individuals were reached through the following additional 2011 events: DuQuoin State Fair, Illinois Horse Fair; and Hunting and Fishing Days.



■ The Shawnee NF, Illinois Archaeological Survey and the Illinois Association for Advancement of Archaeology sponsored Illinois Archaeology Awareness month in September by sponsoring a lecture on prehistoric Native American Rock Art at the Shawnee NF Headquarters.

■ A special program, Phoenix Rising, Cherokee Voices, featuring Cherokee storyteller Robert Lewis and Gina Burnett, Outreach

Coordinator for the Cherokee Heritage Center, was co-sponsored by the Shawnee and our partners, the Cherokee Nation and WSIU. The presenters shared Cherokee history through stories and life lessons with nearly 500 individuals in southern Illinois.



■ A series of quilts that the Forest has developed as an interpretive tool over the years were featured at Egyptian school during a local tourism conference. They were also highlighted in Anna, IL during a Union County historical celebration.

■ The Trail of Tears (TOT) and Lincoln Douglas Debate interpretive Quilts were part of a program in Jonesboro, IL that focused on that town's unique heritage as a stop along the TOT and the site of the third Lincoln Douglas debate in September 1858.



■ In June the Forest, along with the Trail of Tears Association (TOTA), held a National Trails Day event on the Trails of Tears National Historic Trail in Pope County. After clearing limbs and brush, participants gathered together as Forest Archaeologists and TOTA members told stories of Illinois history relating to the Trail.

Walking the Talk for Sustainability

■ After excess office furniture was identified and moved through the excess government property process, items suitable for recycling were sent to a recycling center instead of the garbage dumpster, preventing more waste from going to landfills.

■ With climate change ever on the forefront in today's world, the Forest Service continues to work towards reducing the agency's overall carbon footprint. In support of this vital effort, the Shawnee NF took to the streets (literally!), seeking ways to lessen the Forest's impact by continuing to analyze and adjust the operation of its fleet management. Through strategic thinking and planning, the Forest has seen a reduction in its carbon footprint through a more efficient system. From 2008 to 2011, CO₂ emissions were reduced by 110 tons solely through responsible fleet management (ie, reducing the number of vehicles within the fleet and by replacing larger vehicles with smaller, more efficient vehicles). Reduction of another 10 tons of CO₂ emissions is expected by 2015.



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Safety

- Reviews and updates were made to the Forest's Radio Communications and Employee Check-In/Check-Out Plan, ensuring the continued safety of employees and volunteers.
- The Safety and Occupational Health Manager position was filled with Mark Roe, who transferred to the Forest from OSHA and is also retired from the U.S. Air Force. This is a shared position with the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in northern Illinois.
- Two Forest employees completed the OSHA 10-hour course. Additionally, six employees completed the Safety Journey Cadre #2 training with the entire Forest Leadership Team attending the training, clearly demonstrating the Forest's commitment to safety. Via this training, Safety Journey sessions were conducted with all USFS personnel on the Forest, helping to create and facilitate dialogue beyond the mere perception of safety but more as a culture for our agency and how it is viewed and implemented by each team member.
- Overall 2011 safety statistics were positive with a total of 243,437 employee work hours taking place and only one recordable accident/injury.



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