

Partnerships and Collaboration: Kootenai NF's Forest Restoration Partnership

Tracy McIntyre, manager of Eureka Rural Development Partners (ERDP), and Harmony Burow, fuels specialist on Kootenai National Forest's Rexford Ranger District, received the Sustaining Forests and Grasslands Award for the Forest Restoration Partnership project.



In 2009, the Kootenai National Forest entered into an agreement with ERDP, a local non-profit economic development organization, to employ 5-14 local personnel during the economic downturn. Over the last three years, the crew that was hired has reduced stand densities, hand piled residual slash, cleared hiking and cross country ski trails, and cleared roads needed for recreational users as well as fire suppression forces. The crews thinned and piled a total of 580 acres and brushed 31 miles of roads and trails.

McIntyre spearheaded the agreement process working through the maze of completing an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act agreement, obtaining matching funds, hiring and supervising the crew, and coordinating with the Forest Service. Burow ensured the agreements were properly completed, identified the projects, reviewed the environmental documents, and coordinated with the district specialist for treatment prescriptions.

Meeting America's Needs: Flathead NF's Timber Management Group

The timber industry represents a significant component of the economy in northwest Montana and is an essential partner in achieving Forest Service land management objectives such as fuels reduction, wildlife habitat management, and ecosystem restoration.



However, this industry has been significantly impacted and stressed by the ongoing economic recession and subsequent decrease in lumber markets. The availability of federal timber is critical to the long term viability of the local timber industry.

The Forest's Timber Management Group has responded to this need by continuing to offer timber and stewardship sales with stumpage rates appropriately appraised for the current market. Additionally, the

group's commitment to using stewardship contracting has resulted in the reinvestment of much of the generated timber value into land management projects across the Flathead National Forest.

Employees of the Flathead National Forest Timber Management Group include: Rob Carlin, Resources/Planning Staff; Keith Konen, Timber Program Manager; Melissa Jenkins, Forest Silviculturist; Dave Clay, Contracting Officer; Susan Roark, Resource Assistant; Linda McDevitt, Resource Assistant; Naomi Rhodes, Timber Sale Administrator; Cory Anderson, Forester; Jim Vander Schaff, Forestry Technician; Keigh Smiley, Forestry Technician; Paul Johnson, Forestry Technician; Heidi Trechsel, Silviculturist; Amanda Smiley, Forester; Geoff Vevera, Timber Sale Administrator; Paul Donnellon, Forester; Daren Nichols, Forestry Technician; John Bassman, Silviculturist/Timber Operations; Tony Willits, Timber Sale Administrator; Greg Karow, Forester; Andy Reed, Forester; and Chris Roy, Forestry Technician.

Promoting Recreation: Beaverhead-Deerlodge Cabin Restoration Crew

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest's Cabin Restoration Crew has completed restoration on 18 of the rental cabins on the forest earning them the Regional Forester's Honor Award for Promoting Recreation. Mark Libby, civil engineer for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, accepted the Regional Forester's Honor Award for the accomplishments of this exceptional group.



Crew members provide journey-level masonry, carpentry and log construction skills, and helping to solve problems associated with maintaining century-old facilities. Their work has resulted in promoting year-round outdoor recreation opportunities in the cabin rental program and has significantly improved historical stewardship of these important resources.

Their exemplary achievement has been accomplished in a safe, efficient and economical manner. The group works under challenging conditions such as working in remote locations where typical construction services, like electricity, do not exist.

Rental cabins are a focal point of the forest's recreation program. Through their work, they have improved the quality and availability of these tremendous public recreation opportunities.

An example of their skill can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vBV4n4yAS0>

Engaging Urban America: Madison Ranger District Pollinator Garden

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest's Madison Ranger District office features new interpretive signs along a walking path that relays the importance of pollinators, native species identification, water wise landscaping, and invasive species identification.

This display has become an important educational tool for the district, and it all came about through an effort led by Range Conservationist Kaye Suzuki.



The idea to improve landscaping around the building with an interpretive display of Montana native pollinating plants came about during the recent expansion to the district office. Plant materials native to southwest Montana were obtained from local Montana growers.

In addition to highlighting native plants, Kaye's landscaping initiative helped reduce water consumption and the need for lawn mowing assisting with the district's efforts toward energy conservation. The trees and shrubs also provide every savings by shading the south and west walls of the office during the summer months.

Excellence in Science & Technology: Libby Superfund Wildfire Community Protection

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued a Public Health Emergency determination for the Libby Superfund area and dedicated more than \$300 million on cleanup to protect the Kootenai Valley.

Due to the documented presence of asbestos in duff and tree bark on forested lands, there is a risk to firefighters and public safety during wildfires. Because of concerns for health of the community and wildland firefighters, efforts on ongoing to increase the initial attack success rate in the Libby Superfund are to minimize potential threats of exposure.



Kootenai National Forest's Nikia Hernandez and Kent Johnson have dedicated time, energy and provided leadership to develop innovative approaches for safe and effective wildfire responses in the Libby Superfund area. In cooperation with state and federal agencies, they have helped develop plans, provided training and equipment for volunteers, and developed suppression response protocol and

mitigation measures for response efforts. With unprecedented threats facing firefighters and the community, Nikia and Kent have shown excellent leadership and support for all partners and agencies involved in the area.

Creating a Safety Culture: Todd Wilson

One of the most dangerous jobs in the Forest Service is felling trees. For the past seven years, Todd Wilson has served as the regional chainsaw technical expert in addition to his position of Assistant Fire Management Officer (Operations) at the Cabinet Ranger District on the Kootenai National Forest.

In this collateral duty role, Todd has organized the annual regional chainsaw conference to help share ideas, track trends, and bring to light safety concerns at a regional level. Nationally, Todd is involved with a group tasked with writing chainsaw policy and proposing updates for the chainsaw and hazard tree training. This group is comprised of members from several federal agencies.



Todd has been a leader to in safety for saw operations throughout the region and the Forest Service by helping to change the culture of felling operations toward a safe mind set. Each year, Todd travels to three forests in the region in order to review the process used to train sawyers, track training, and ensure training records are being documented. This process confirms that standards of training are being upheld across the region.

Heroism and Emergency Response: Incident at Bear Creek Field Camp

On May 16, during the Bear Creek Field Camp, a fifth-grade boy suffered an allergic reaction after eating a macadamia nut cookie at lunch. He had difficulty breathing and his teacher asked for help and if anyone had an epinephrine autoinjector. Jeff Barnes and Mark Genito provided one and discussed on how to handle the situation.

Jeff, a former EMT, suggested calling for an ambulance to get the child to the Ennis Hospital. Mark, who recently completed EMT



training, strongly agreed. Mark transported the child and teacher toward the Ennis Hospital and met the ambulance on the way. Jeff made sure that Mark had Madison County on his radio and could speak directly with the ambulance to facilitate the transfer. They had the child heading to the hospital and admitted to the Ennis ER in less than 30 minutes from the start of the incident.

The child recovered in a few days, and Jeff and Mark are responsible for such a positive outcome to this incident. They were professional, calm, fast in making decisions, and above all made the right decisions. Their actions likely saved the child's life.

Law Enforcement and Investigations: Backcountry Mounted Enforcement Patrol Program

The Northern Region's Law Enforcement and Investigations' Backcountry Mounted Enforcement Patrol Program earned an award for its approach in patrolling backcountry and Wilderness areas that do not have roaded access.

Jon Herrick, Special Agent in Charge for the Northern Region, set the stage to return more traditional skills and employed Law Enforcement Officer Kevin Arnold as a regional resource for being more readily available for routine patrol and presence and assisting in active investigations in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in addition to many other locations within the region.



“The Forest and Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex appreciate the presence that a mounted patrol has contributed to better compliance and understanding of the existing special orders,” said Deb Mucklow, Spotted Bear District Ranger. “There is increased knowledge and awareness of the back-country and wilderness users and also with in our partners, volunteers and employees.”

They know and value that law enforcement values their input and has been able to respond timely and effectively to difficult situations that they have had to deal with independently prior to the emphasis of having a backcountry mounted enforcement patrol program.