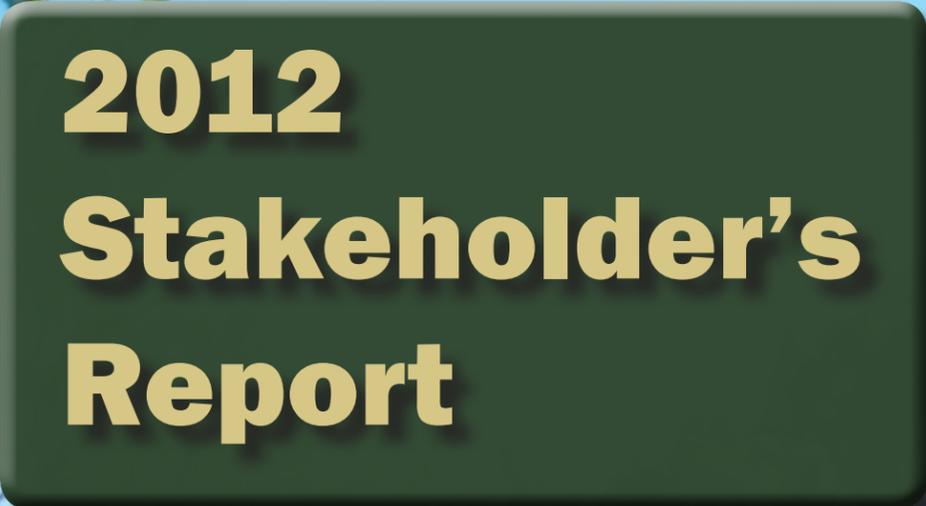




LINCOLN
*National
Forest*



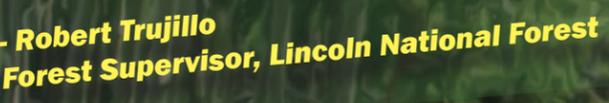
**2012
Stakeholder's
Report**



“Partnerships in Sustainability”



“Sustainability of the resources and sustainability of the partnerships that contribute vitally to the management of the Lincoln National Forest is paramount to long term-success. It is the resource that sustains us, our way of life, and the future of our local communities while partnerships provide the energy, vision, and drive to restore and maintain resilient forests. ”



***- Robert Trujillo
Forest Supervisor, Lincoln National Forest***



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SMOKEY BEAR

Sierra Blanca Wildfire Academy

“Traditionally, close to 300 students take advantage of this unique opportunity for centralized training each year!”

**- Harlan Vincent
Fire Chief, Village of Ruidoso**

The Sierra Blanca Wildfire Academy is the result of a strong multi-agency collaboration designed to provide critical wildland firefighting training to a regional audience of fire professionals. Cooperators include the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Forestry, the Ruidoso Fire Department, Lincoln County Emergency Management and Volunteer Fire Departments, and the City of Ruidoso Downs Fire Department. Other important partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

This academy offers courses that range from basic firefighting to more advanced training. Students from New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona, and even as far away as Minnesota, have attended courses at the academy. Harlan Vincent, Fire Chief for the Village of Ruidoso, and one of the founding members of the wildfire academy attributes the success of the academy to the multi-agency participation in providing qualified instructors to teach classes and lead discussions. In Chief Vincent’s words, “This is truly the definition of multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional teamwork. This academy was merely run off of a shoe string budget when it was started and without the help of our partners this academy would simply not exist. Due to the cooperation of all agencies involved, thousands of firefighters have been through this academy and received some of the finest classes and training offered.”

The Sierra Blanca Wildfire Academy plays an important role in providing well-trained fire personnel to respond to the needs of our forests and communities. We look forward to continued cooperation between all involved agencies to ensure that quality education is being provided for our brave men and women on the front lines!



Firefighters on the Little Bear Fire.

*RIGHT: Catchment drinker for the trick tank.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Smokey Bear Hotshots and others help
unload the tarp for the upper end of the tank.*



Lone Pine Water Catchment Project

The Lone Pine Water Catchment Project was a collaborative effort between the Lincoln National Forest and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. It was a dual-use project with its main purpose to improve conditions for both wildlife and livestock within the burned area of the 2011 White Fire. Funding for this project came from wildfire rehabilitation dollars, as well as the Habitat Stamp Program (HSP), which is funded in part through hunting and fishing license sales. This project was made possible with contributions from local businesses such as the Eagle Creek Land and Cattle Company and the Lincoln County Mercantile.

This collaborative effort established a 70’ x 70’ water catchment pad, along with three 5,000 gallon tanks for holding collected rainwater. A dedicated wildlife drinker was installed along with a separate livestock drinker in order to provide drinking water in a dual-use capacity. A fence enclosure was erected around the project to protect the water catchment pad from potential livestock impacts.

The project was a forest-wide effort. Employees from many different departments from both the Smokey Bear and Sacramento Ranger Districts provided assistance.

The Lone Pine project will provide a large amount of water to a historically dry area. Benefits to wildlife from this project will be monitored over the coming years. Continued maintenance will ensure that this project becomes an established water source for animals on the district. Through the continued efforts of our collaborators, the Smokey Bear Ranger District was able to improve post-fire habitat conditions on the forest for current and future generations.



RANGER DISTRICT

NM Wilderness Alliance



LEFT: Volunteers inventorying a campsite. ABOVE: Volunteers learn to use their GPS units. RIGHT: Sign requiring replacement. BELOW RIGHT: Relaxing after a long day's work.



In 2012, the Lincoln National Forest helped the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NMWA) secure grant funding through the National Forest Foundation to conduct much needed inventory work in the White Mountain and Capitan Wilderness Areas. This work helped us to improve our score in the Chief's 10 Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. The goal of the Challenge is to better manage our Wilderness Areas and ensure the values for which they were established are protected.

Over the summer months, 35 volunteers participated in GPS training and/or field data collection, logging in 580 hours. Volunteers came from Carlsbad, Los Lunas, Ruidoso, Cloudcroft, Alamogordo, Albuquerque, and as far away as New Jersey. So far, Lynne Uhring, NMWA GIS Specialist and wilderness volunteer coordinator, has made seven inventory trips from Albuquerque to multiple locations on the Smokey Bear Ranger District. Lynne travelled 3,266 miles in her Subaru and has logged 275 volunteer hours (does not include travel time) for the Smokey Bear Inventory. Below is a list of 2012 accomplishments.

White Mountain Wilderness:

- 62 campsites have been inventoried,
- 34 invasive plant locations have been recorded,
- 77 Points of Interest were recorded (mostly wilderness boundary signs and trail signs).

Capitan Wilderness:

- 5 campsites recorded and inventoried,
- 32 invasive plant locations were recorded,
- 43 Points of Interest were recorded.

We don't have total recall of all the events that shape our lives. Instead, our lives are marked by events that make enduring impacts, such as the birth of a child, getting married, or the death of a parent. These events are like buoys that chart the courses of our lives – they mark the passage we've traveled and lay a direction for where we are going.

The same can be said about a career in the Forest Service. I've worked for this agency since 1993, and there is no way I can remember all the things that shaped my career - but I do remember certain events and situations that helped shape not only my career, but my life. I remember a small fire in 1994 called the Tom fire; I remember building a very long section of high mountain trail in 1998; I remember the Cerro Grande and Viveash fires in 2000; and I will remember 2012 for the Little Bear fire.

In all these instances, it is not necessarily the events themselves that I remember, rather, it is the people who stood beside me that most readily come to mind. The same will be true for 2012. I will always remember the strength and commitment demonstrated by the people of Lincoln County during the Little Bear fire. I will remember the efforts of our multi-agency firefighters and first responders. I will remember the conviction of local elected officials. I will remember the solidarity and support from our Mescalero Apache neighbors. I will remember the partnership with NM State Forestry. I will remember the capacity for action by local governments. I will remember the competency of my staff. And I will remember the resilience of a community that found strength in the face of tragedy.

I would like to thank all of the people who stood shoulder to shoulder during and after this natural disaster. The Little Bear fire changed both the natural and human landscape of Lincoln County. There are places in the forest and places in our hearts that will never be the same as they were before the fire, but Mother Nature and the human spirit are tenacious fighters. Within the burned area, aspen trees have re-sprouted and are thriving. Wildlife surveys have noted the return of elk, deer, bears, and other furry and feathered friends. Damaged ski lifts at Ski Apache and the Monjeau Lookout tower are being reconstructed. Friends and neighbors continue to help those who lost homes rebuild their houses and their lives. We will need to continue these labors in 2013 and beyond. I look forward to being a part of these efforts.

Sincerely,

David Warnack



“While hiking in the wilderness to collect inventory data, I saw the wilderness with new eyes. I saw plants and trails and signs and scenery in ways I had never perceived them before.”

**- Lynne Uhring
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance**

SACRAMENTO

La Pasada Encantada - Reconstruction of a Visually Accessible Trail

The trail was originally designed and dedicated in the 1970's, in cooperation with the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The school would make field trips to the Sacramento Mountains and educate the students on environmental education, as well as give them practice on their braille reading.

The trail was improved by hardening the surface and constructing "bumper bars" on each side of the trail. All of the signs were rewritten and updated with the most current information about the flora and fauna that visitors may experience while out on the trail. The interpretive signs incorporated a combination of traditional written text and braille. The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired proofed the draft versions of the signs, with emphasis on the braille messages.



New sign and bench along La Pasada Encantada Trail.

Nine of the 25 signs have a cast bronze inset on them, with extra design features that provide a 3-D effect. Impressions of leaves, fossils, bones and even wildlife tracks can be experienced visually and by touch. In several areas alongside the trail, benches were installed, allowing for an extraordinary setting in which to sit and relax while listening to the sounds of the forest.

White Sands Missile Range Training Exercises

During the fall of 2012, the Sacramento Ranger District hosted White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) for training exercises. These exercises were to conduct training activities in the area of Sacramento Peak, Scott Able Canyon, and several Forest System Roads with about 220 soldiers participating in the efforts.

The Sacramento Ranger District has terrain and vegetation similar to what is found in Afghanistan, which made for an opportunity to do a real world test for the equipment. The main piece of equipment tested was the Rifleman Radio. The Rifleman Radio is body worn, minimizing the soldier's combat load while providing added features. This radio acts like a cell phone tower and the radios can tie in with other radios creating a network around them to carry a signal like a smart phone.

The reason for doing the exercises on the Sacramento Ranger District was to determine the effectiveness of the radios in settings where dense vegetation exists. Soldiers tested their radio equipment in the wooded and mountainous terrain before they were shipped to be used in Afghanistan. Most of the operations in east and northeastern Afghanistan take place in elevations ranging from 10,000 to 14,000 feet, also similar to that in the Sacramento Mountains.

The rugged and mountainous terrain on the Lincoln National Forest provided the perfect opportunity to test new and emerging equipment and was instrumental in the success of these operations. These multi-day training exercises were also a great example of multiple uses on our national public lands.

"The opportunity for WSMR to train on the Lincoln National Forest saved the American taxpayers around \$9 million!"

**- Marcie Kelton
Sacramento Ranger District, Recreation Staff Officer**

Setting up operations for testing on the district.

RANGER DISTRICT

Mexican Canyon Trestle Restoration and Reconstruction

In 1899, the railroad which began in the newly formed town of Alamogordo, NM, rose from the desert floor, climbed nearly 5,000' in elevation and reached the Village of Cloudcroft atop the Sacramento Mountains. It was an engineering marvel during its time, and over the years became one of the more important historical features in the area. Constructed out of wood, it lasted over 100 years, but began to show signs of deterioration in the early 1990's.



The Lincoln National Forest took the lead, and between 2009 and 2011, partnered with many volunteers to clear the way for preservation and restoration of the trestle. The endeavor included a plan for a spectacular new recreational vista, where visitors could stop to learn and admire this piece of history.

The Trestle Vista Area was completed in late fall of 2011. The grand opening of the Mexican Canyon Trestle Vista took place on June 2, 2012.



Workers prepare the trestle "bents" or sections for removal followed by repair and / or replacement of rotted timbers where needed.

"It is not merely the completion of this awesome project that we celebrate, but the many organizations and hundreds of volunteers that made this dream a reality."
- James Duran
District Ranger, Sacramento Ranger District



ABOVE TOP: The Mexican Canyon Trestle circa 1900 with a passenger train atop its timbers.
ABOVE MIDDLE: The main interpretive and viewing area at the new Vista.
ABOVE BOTTOM: The Mexican Canyon Trestle after restoration was completed.

The passion of those individuals who truly connect with the outdoors and the Sacramento Ranger District was visible all year long in 2012. This made another year of public service a very exciting time. I'd like to sincerely thank all of our partners who work alongside the Lincoln National Forest and make this place a special piece of forest, especially to those who continually go out in the woods everyday looking to maintain valuable traditions that make the multiple use vision so unique. I'm thankful for the community interaction which occurred this past year. The Mexican Canyon Trestle celebration was memorable. It was awesome to witness the results of a unified vision and of the valuable partnerships that made this American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project possible. The restoration work was complex, but serves as an excellent example of communities, local governments and the Forest Service working towards a goal to better serve the public. The best part of it all is seeing visitors continue to trickle in just to stop and enjoy the rich history of the railroad in the Sacramento Mountains.

2012 also brought forward opportunities for the district to support some very important multiple use projects. I'm proud of the work the district completed in order to partner on several military training operations. The Sacramento Ranger District served as a prime training ground for several units requiring steep terrain within dense timber, at high elevations, which closely models those environments found in areas where our soldiers fight for our freedom. I'd like to personally thank all of the military personnel at White Sands Missile Range and Ft. Bliss for their commitment to service, as well as for their professionalism during all on-the-ground operations on the Sacramento Ranger District. I hope that our work in supporting specialized training assists the military organization in accomplishing the Mission and I look forward to a continued partnership.

Lastly, I'd like to thank all of our forest community friends who continue to visit the district and especially the "regulars" who have made our Monthly Lecture Series a success. My staff enjoys the interaction with the people who adore the Sacramentos. The conversations during these events have been remarkably engaging and inspiring. I'm proud of my staff and would like to thank the entire district workforce for their hard work and continued commitment to connecting with communities and serving the public.

I wish all our partners a happy and safe 2013. May we all appreciate our beautiful outdoors and each other as we enjoy the New Year.

Happy Trails,

James D. Duran



Following three years of hard work by many entities, the restoration of the National Register-listed Mexican Canyon Trestle (1899) and its new interpretive overlook have been completed. The Trestle that has stood for over 100 years is now ready to delight visitors for the next hundred years.

The Lincoln National Forest would like to thank these Stakeholders and Partners for their support and contributions to this outstanding project:

The Mescalero Apache Tribe; Mescalero Forest Products; New Mexico State University, Department of Civil and Geological Engineering; New Mexico Rails-to-Trails Association; Congressman Steve Pearce's Office; the Village of Cloudcroft; Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce; The Travel Institute; Weasel Productions; Dodson Lumber Co.; Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company; New Mexico Department of Transportation; the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary Junior Civil Air Patrol, Alamogordo Composite SQDN; Alamogordo, NM, Boy Scout Troop 147, Yucca Council; the El Paso Ridgewalkers; Lincoln National Forest employees; Holloman Air Force Base (AFB) employees; Holloman AFB Sergeant's Assoc.; Tzec Maun Foundation; U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest; and the many individuals who volunteered to work on the project.

GUADALUPE

The World Down-Under: Caves

The Guadalupe Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest has some of the most important cave resources in the country and is well known internationally. About a year ago, the Lincoln decided to reinvigorate their Cave Program by hiring Cave Specialist, Jason Walz, who has managed and explored caves for more than a decade. About the same time, a new District Ranger, Jim Gumm, took the reins of the Guadalupe Ranger District. Together, Jason and Jim teamed up to improve the Lincoln's Cave Program and shared their ideas with other Forests. The Cave Ecosystem Program focused on integrating all sciences that the Forest Service managed.

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) prevention emerged as a nationwide issue in 2012. White Nose Syndrome is a fungal disease that has decimated bat populations east of the Mississippi. The disease is spreading, but has not been found in New Mexico yet, so all agencies in the State are managing for prevention. It has been proven that bats spread the disease to each other, but there is evidence that fungal spores can be spread by people and their belongings. With this in mind, the Lincoln National Forest is following the WNS Interagency Response Plan for New Mexico. To reduce the threat of exposure to bat populations on the Lincoln, all significant bat caves were closed and everyone who enters any cave must clean and disinfect their equipment. The Lincoln initiated a public awareness campaign focused on explaining this bat disease and the importance of the precautionary disinfection procedures. At the same time a large and active group of volunteers find and identify bat caves to be studied, counted and conserved before any disease arrives.

The Lincoln National Forest has been working with experienced cavers who are members of many groups called grottos. Grottos are cave clubs that are part of the National Speleological Society (NSS) and supply a lot of volunteer hours to the Lincoln National Forest. Many times grottos have the most accurate cave information. The Forest Service has a written agreement with the NSS which facilitates exchange of information. Another group that the Lincoln works closely with is the National Cave and Karst Institute (NCKRI) located in Carlsbad, NM near the Guadalupe Ranger District Office. Over the last year, the Lincoln has partnered with NCKRI to promote educational programs, training programs and a national conference. These partnerships help the Lincoln deliver a higher quality cave management program to the public.

“Science doesn’t stop at the cave entrance, actually, science gets more interesting and cutting edge with discoveries made every year. Creatures that live in these extreme environments can teach us about curing diseases and life on other planets!”

**- Jason Walz
Cave Specialist, Guadalupe Ranger District**



ABOVE: Descending into the depths of a cave.
BELOW: The haunting and beautiful “Pseudo Tolkien” room.



2012 has been a year of rebuilding here on the Guadalupe Ranger District; the fire season of 2011 challenged each and every one of us.

Through a lot of hard work by volunteers, Lincoln National Forest employees and the entire staff of the “Guads”, a corner has been turned and our cherished lands and the improvements here are on the road to recovery.

In addition to tangible rebuilding projects, 2012 has been a year of strengthening relationships here in Carlsbad and the surrounding areas. We have expanded our outreach efforts to local schools by bringing the cave ecosystem alive in the classroom. Staff members are actively engaged with researchers from New Mexico State University, Texas A&M, and our local community college learning more each day about the unique ecosystem that we live and work in. Civic organizations, like the Lions Club are donating their time and their money in our ongoing effort to restore Sitting Bull Falls.

In short, the year has been a success. We are stronger organizationally, the beautiful land is healing, our facilities have been improved, and most importantly, we have an even greater set of individuals and organizations partnering with us, each contributing in their unique way to the health of the Guads.

Many Happy Returns,

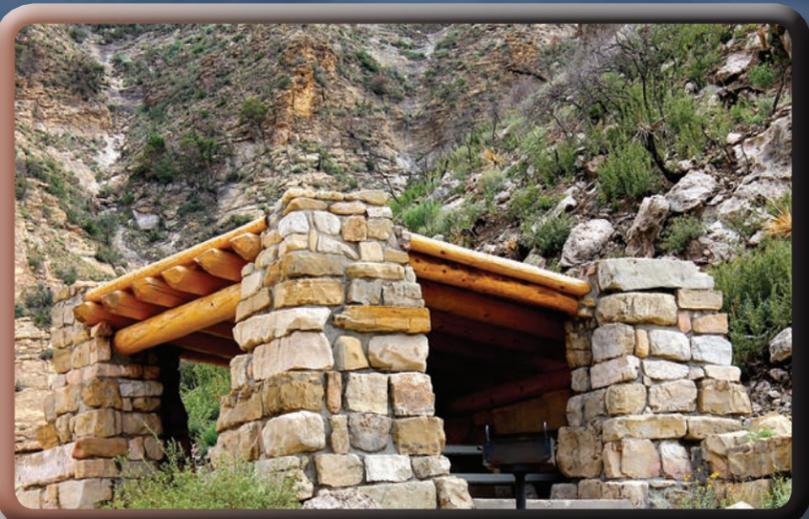
Jim Gumm



RANGER DISTRICT



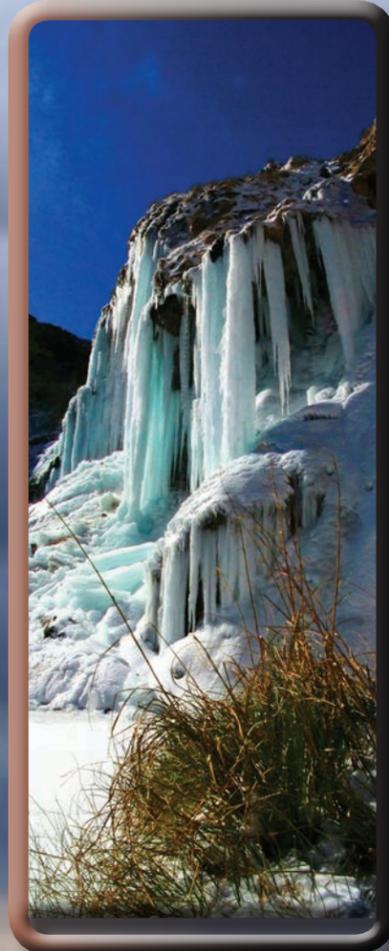
ABOVE: A pavilion burned during the Last Chance Fire in 2011.
BELOW: The restored CCC pavilion built during the 1930's and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Rebuilding Sitting Bull Falls

**"Without our volunteers,
this project would never
have been completed, thank
you to all!"**

**- Paul Buck
Recreation Staff Officer**



ABOVE: The spectacular falls at Sitting Bull Falls frozen over in winter.
BELOW: A Texas Madrone survives the fire and comes back to life.

The main focus of the Guadalupe Ranger District's Recreation program this year was the reconstruction and restoration of the Sitting Bull Falls Picnic Area, originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the early 1930's and now a significant cultural and historical landmark.

Following the Last Chance fire in 2011, this the picnic area was at its center and many things that could burn did burn, such as the wood in the pavilions, area vegetation, and even the limestone that contributed to structural soundness of the buildings suffered damage from the intense heat of the fire. After the fire, popular hiking trails looping throughout the site incurred damage that resulted from erosion.

Under the leadership of the Guadalupe Ranger District, the community came together to rebuild the site and area trails. We accomplished the following:

- Two modern cabanas and one Civilian Conservation Corps cabana were rebuilt,
- Twenty six trees, in sizes between 6 to 10 feet, were planted including trees that were donated by Carlsbad Lions Club,
- Burned fences were replaced and rebuilt,
- Trails were improved to allow for safe public traffic.

Volunteers donated approximately 1,150 hours. As a result of hard work and a common goal, the Guadalupe Ranger District was able to reopen the site in April of 2012.

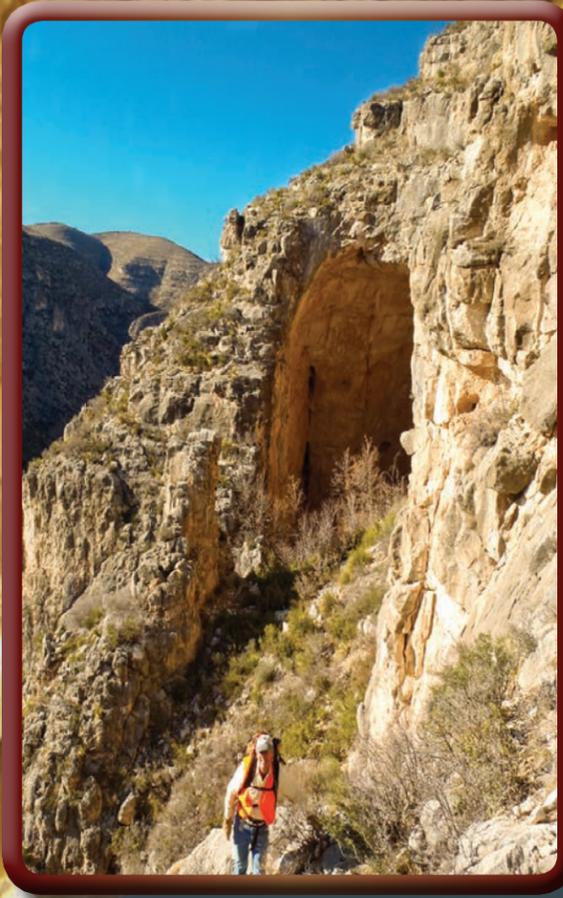


LEFT: Public enjoying the waters and riparian area below the falls.
ABOVE RIGHT: Volunteers work to reconstruct a fence near the Sitting Bull Falls area.



CAVE PROGRAM

Volunteer carefully hikes his way to a project cave entrance. This country can be steep, treacherous and difficult to reach.



Volunteers in Action

The High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP) has once again donated the most volunteer hours of all the cave groups working on the Lincoln National Forest during the past year. As soon as projects are identified, this group is out there completing the tasks!

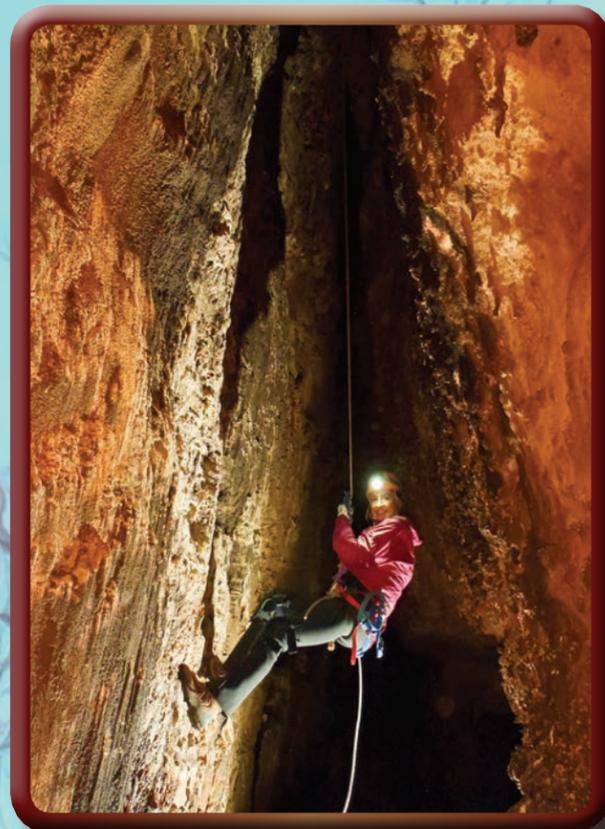
The largest projects they tackled involved restoring the paths through two caves so that the caves could return to recreational access. This took countless hours of replacing miles of flagging tape that keeps people on the path; and removing mud and boot-prints that had accumulated over the years. Dedicated volunteers completed the hard work that will make it possible for people to explore caves and experience new adventures. The work of the High Guads Restoration Project is the cornerstone of recreational caving on the Lincoln!

“The National Cave and Karst Research Institute sees caves and karst as amazing, diverse and beyond the ability of any one group or government agency to fully study and manage. We greatly appreciate the U.S. Forest Service’s partnership in support of our programs.”

**- George Veni
Executive Director of NCKRI**

Cave Exploration

Volunteers from the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project and the Southwest Region of the National Speleological Society (NSS) covered a lot of ground this past year. Some groups or ‘grottos’ were out searching for new caves while other groups initiated or continued cave survey projects. Mapping caves is a meticulous task with measurements taken in all directions, biological and geological inventories completed and drawings made in three different perspectives. This great work by NSS volunteers is very beneficial to the Lincoln National Forest and the grottos have some great adventures, while engaging in this unique work!



ABOVE: Descending into a dark fissure is an exciting adventure.
LEFT: Volunteers who were surveying and inventorying a cave, stop to admire the stream of sunlight as it enters a darker world.

Successful Partnerships

In 2012, the Lincoln National Forest continued developing its partnership with the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI). Along with the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, the Lincoln National Forest has been part of the Organizing Committee that is planning the 2013 National Cave and Karst Management Symposium. Through this partnership approach, a well-developed conference has been planned, with NCKRI hosting the event in Carlsbad, NM. Workshops, seminars, and field trips will be offered throughout the week-long event that will be held during the first week of November 2013. For registration information, visit: <http://www.nckri.org/events/conference.html>

HABITAT STAMP PROGRAM - Wildlife Improvements

About the Program

The Habitat Stamp Program is an integral part of the wildlife program on the Lincoln National Forest. A joint venture between the New Mexico Game & Fish and the U.S. Forest Service, the initial funding for the Habitat Stamp Program is provided through the State of New Mexico. The Lincoln National Forest leverages this money, matching them with funding, personnel and equipment, as well as funding and volunteers from other organizations, to accomplish projects on the ground. The work accomplished in the wildlife program has been heavily integrated with fisheries, timber, fire, range and recreation. Not only have the water trick tanks benefited wildlife, but modifications have allowed sharing with range resources. Timber removal and landscape-scale prescribed burning have been effective in enhancing wildlife habitat and forest restoration.

Personnel on all three ranger districts improved wildlife habitat on more than 1900 acres, with activities that included prescribed fire, thinning, and wetland restoration. Partnering with the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the districts were able to maximize success for projects that were not only functionally benefitting wildlife, but also aesthetically pleasing for forest visitors. Buffers along roads and drainages, and clumps of trees left to mimic the natural distribution of trees and balanced with meadow-like areas, resulted in a higher diversity of vegetation to contribute to ecosystem resiliency and enhanced wildlife species habitat.



The final step of a trick tank, the drinker.

Middleton Prescribed Fire Post-Monitoring - Measuring Success

In 2012, one prescribed burn area was monitored on the Guadalupe Ranger District to evaluate the effectiveness of the burn. Results of the monitoring showed significant increase in canopy openings, while retaining clumps of large mature trees across the landscape. Vegetation diversity increased, promoting a grassy herbaceous mix, and the fire was effective in reducing shrubs and juniper sprouts across the site.

Trick Tanks

Four trick tanks were installed on the Lincoln National Forest in 2012. Nygren Trick Tank was put into place on the Guadalupe Ranger District, Wofford, and Lookout Trick Tanks on the Sacramento Ranger District and Salazar Trick Tank was added on the Smokey Bear Ranger District. Jeffries, Lone Pine and Culp Trick Tanks were replaced. The tanks provide a water source for wildlife, in an area that normally has limited water resources. These benefit wildlife by providing a necessary component for survival.



An inverted umbrella catchment container for gathering water. This part of the trick tank gathers the water and pipes it to a drinker at a different location.

“We have provided thousands of acres of prime habitat for deer, elk, wild turkeys and other wildlife, at a rate of about 2,000 acres a year.”

***- Rhonda Stewart
Wildlife Biologist***



ABOVE: For some trick tanks, tarps such as the one above are laid down to catch rain water.

RIGHT: Mule deer, one of the many wildlife species benefitting from these treatments and water sources.



FIRE

Recapping a Fire Season

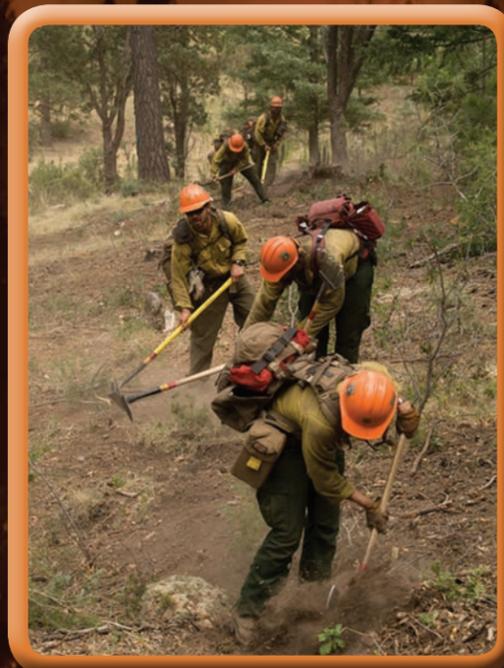
The 2012 fire season was characterized by two large fires. The Lincoln National Forest experienced moderate weather compared to 2011, which resulted in fewer large fires. Unfortunately, with the alignment of wind and weather, the Little Bear Fire consumed almost 30,000 acres in a single day. Although this fire will forever define the 2012 Fire Season, it hopefully will be used to educate and prepare for the next. Large fires are possible every year and the Lincoln National Forest will continue to prepare and manage the health of the complex interface.

The Smokey Bear Ranger District experienced the Little Bear Fire towards the end of the summer. The fire started in the White Mountain Wilderness Area making suppression difficult at such a high altitude. Several days later, a strong wind pushed the fire over three miles outside the wilderness burning 251 residences. The damage this fire created is significant and highlights the precarious relationship we have with our surroundings. Meanwhile, the Smokey Bear Ranger District continues to work on improving our capability to manage fires by prescribed burning 456 acres in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and 367 acres outside of the WUI. In addition, the district thinned 484 acres in the WUI.



Sacramento Ranger District did not experience a large fire this year and they continued their efforts to maintain and treat areas around the many interface communities like Mayhill, Cloudcroft, Timberon, and Weed. The crews prescribed burned 1,316 acres and thinned 944 acres in the WUI.

The Guadalupe Ranger District was the location of the second largest fire on the Lincoln National Forest during the 2012 fire season. The Horse Canyon Fire burned more than 5,000 acres over several days. Eventually, most of the fire ran into old fire scars from last year's activity. Although this was a large fire, it met many resource objectives and may be very beneficial by stimulating growth of new grasses and forbs. That rate of growth is largely dependent on the amount of precipitation that the area receives before the Spring of 2013.



LEFT: Firefighters from the Smokey Bear Hotshots work to create a fire line during the Little Bear fire. ABOVE: The plume of smoke from the Little Bear fire on June 8, 2012.

2012 SUMMARY OF FIRES						
Year	Human Caused		Lightning Caused		Combined	
	Number	Acreage	Number	Acreage	Number	Acreage
2012	14	27	17	40,503	31	40,530

Acreages are based on USFS acres only



LEFT: Road used as a "fire break". In this area the fire did not "crown" or travel through the tops of trees. Natural breaks such as roads and trails can be used or enhanced to limit the spread of a ground fire. ABOVE: The Crest Trail used to stop the advancement of the Little Bear Fire.

FUELS TREATMENT



The Lincoln conducts vegetative treatments to reduce the risk of wildfires and to improve habitat for a variety of wildlife species. These treatments can be as simple as a Pinyon-Juniper push or very complex with multiple treatment methods (cutting, masticating, burning) on one piece of land over a period of several years.

For a wildfire, “fuels” refers to the types of vegetation that can burn. The goal of many of our fuel reduction treatments is to reduce fuels, especially around wildland urban interface settings.

Associated with many of these treatments are the products that are produced for public consumption including: commercial timber for local area mills, fuel wood areas, material for pellet making and more.

Once a treatment is completed, nature continues its journey, and vegetation does begin to grow back. Previously treated areas must be revisited and maintenance projects are necessary to retain the effectiveness of the fuel reduction treatments.

“We thinned 944 acres within Wildland Urban Interfaces and conducted prescribed burning on 1,316 acres.”

**- Chad Stewart
Fire & Timber Staff Officer**

UPPER LEFT: A “before” treatment area.
ABOVE: After treatment(s) have been completed.
LEFT: One of many products from treatments, this image shows a stacking area for commercial timber products.

Veterans Green Corps

“The partnership is an increasingly important part of the forest’s workforce during the fall and winter months.”

**- David Warnack
District Ranger, Smokey Bear Ranger District**

In 2012, the Lincoln National Forest teamed up with the Veterans Green Corps Demonstration Program to complete critical hazardous fuels reduction projects. The Veterans Green Corps is the result of a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and the Southwest Conservation Corps. The program’s focus and objective is to enable former members of the armed services to transition into civilian life by providing job training, personal development, and conservation service opportunities in natural resources, with emphasis on fuels management projects.

The six-person Veterans Crew worked on the Forest for eight weeks. Their efforts were split equally between the Guadalupe, Sacramento, and Smokey Bear Ranger Districts. Project work included prescribed burning next to the Wildland Urban Interface and forest thinning. The crew also took advantage of wildfire training courses provided by the Forest Service.

The crew’s time on the Lincoln National Forest was important to participants. Crew leader Keith Grant said, “Putting the vets back to work is a great idea. With their backgrounds and exposure to the U.S. Forest Service they will be able to readily adapt to a civilian workforce. I have worked multiple sessions with other agencies. The Lincoln National Forest really understands what the objectives of the Green Corps are. I feel that the Lincoln supports a variety of training opportunities. It has been good for our crew to get exposure to the Forest Service and land management.”

This is the second year of our partnership with the Veterans Green Corps. The partnership is an increasingly important part of the forest’s workforce during the fall and winter months. We look forward to continuing this relationship and to supporting our Veterans from around the country.



ABOVE TOP: The Veterans Green Corps Crew.
BELOW: The crew in the field working on a prescribed burn project.



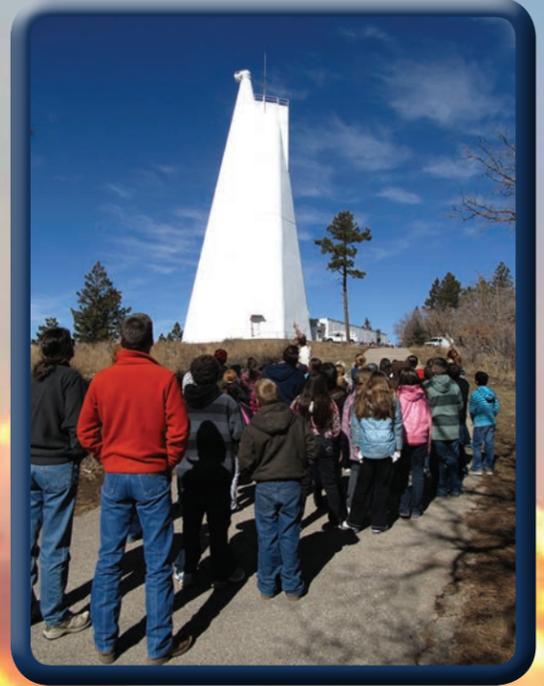
The “Take It Outside” Program

As land managers, the Forest Service wants to ensure that tomorrow’s leaders have the understanding and the motivation to use and care for our natural resources in a responsible, sustainable manner. It is not hard to find research decrying the fact that youth today spend significantly less time outdoors and more time with electronics than previous generations. This trend is blamed for obesity, ADHD, low self-esteem, poor grades, and much more.

Take It Outside, NM! is trying to change all that. This group of committed agency personnel, educators, and interested individuals is working together to get more New Mexicans into the outdoors where they can learn about our natural resources while enjoying the outdoors. This group pursues grant funding to get more kids outdoors, offers activities at schools, community functions, and military events, and works together to bring the outdoors to kids and kids to the outdoors.



ABOVE: Making it “count” - 4th graders at Sunspot learn about counting the rings in a tree as a way of dating it.
RIGHT: 4th Graders from Alamogordo visiting the Sunspot Observatory, many for the very first time.



**“Earth and sky, woods and fields,
lakes and rivers, the mountain
and the sea, are excellent
schoolmasters, and teach some of
us more than we can never learn
from books.”**

- John Lubbock

In March of 2012, all 452 fourth graders from the Alamogordo School system visited Sunspot. The majority of these students, and the adults that accompanied them, had never been to Sunspot. Some saw snow for the very first time. Students learned about our sun, telescopes, and what the astronomers at Sunspot do.

They learned about the wildlife that live in our mountains and saw the evidence of those animals in the different types of scat, the refuse of pine cones in a squirrel midden, and the scrapes and scratches left by bear and elk on the trees. They heard the “whump” as a tree was sawn down, smelled the fresh cut wood, and found the beetles that were feasting on the tree.

The fourth graders collected fossils as they imagined the plants and animals that used to live in our area. They learned about the origins of the White Sands and saw the dune field in its entirety. In a short respite from our hectic life, the kids sat still in silence for five minutes, listening to the wind in the trees, the birds claiming their territory, and insects crawling through the leaves. Experiences such as these, which may influence the children in their use of natural resources, their career choices, and their lives, are only possible through the partnership of many people and organizations. The National Solar Observatory, BLM-Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, White Sands National Monument, and the Lincoln National Forest contributed personnel to make these field trips an exceptional experience for the children.

The Albert I. Pierce Foundation generously donated funding for the busses that transported the kids up the hill to Sunspot. As Take It Outside, NM! continues efforts to connect people to the outdoors, we hope we see you in the woods in 2013 and beyond. Happy Trails!

Learning to bore a tree as a means to determine the age of a tree, without having to cut it down.



Mesa Barn Restoration

The Smokey Bear District of the Lincoln National Forest, in partnership with the Lincoln County Historical Society, has been working steadily to restore the Mesa Barn. Restoration has been accomplished through a variety of means including Youth Conservation Corps employees, a Forest Service Enterprise Unit, and under contract.

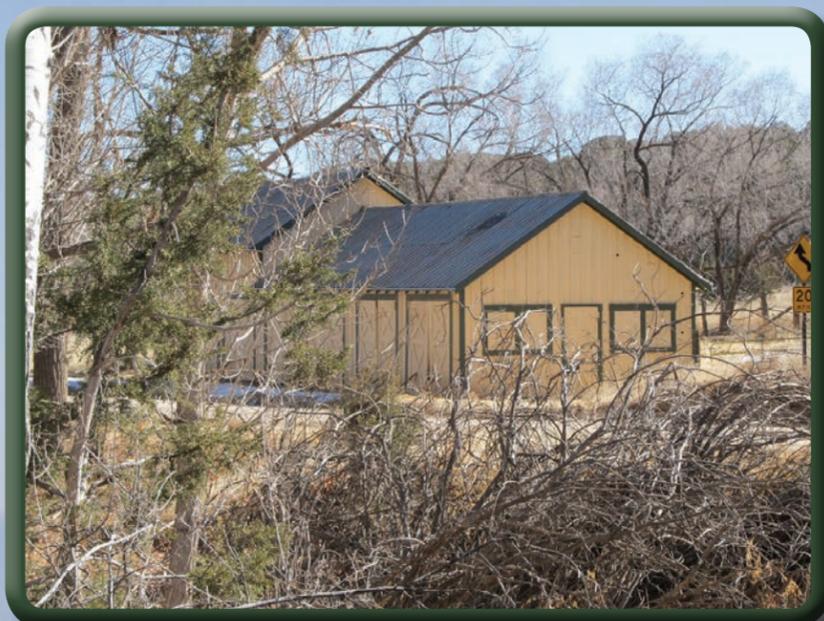
The National Register-eligible barn is the last surviving Civilian Conservation Corps structure on the District, dating back to the 1930s. It is also the location of the Mesa Ranger Station established shortly after the Lincoln National Forest was created. Originally, the Ranger Station had a homestead-like layout with a house, office, shed, barn, fruit trees, and vegetable garden (see photos below).

Today the barn is located in a rustic setting and is frequented by deer and elk. The easy-access barn is surrounded by shade trees and has room for equestrian use. Restoration activities of the barn include the replacement of worn and broken barn doors, roof repairs, gutter installation, new exterior paint, along with an interior clean out, and remodel for future use. There are future opportunities at the barn for the interpretation of the area's history and natural setting.

Upon completion of the work, the barn will be posted on the National Recreation Reservation Service Web site (<http://www.Recreation.gov>), where the general public will be able to reserve and rent the site for personal use and enjoyment. The rental program supports the

sustainability of historic structures. Funds generated from the rental will be used for the continued operation and maintenance

of the historic barn. Those who rent the barn are providing financial support for the barn's continued preservation.



*ABOVE TOP: The barn before reconstruction, circa 2010.
 ABOVE: View looking west from the corral of the completed barn.
 LEFT: South-easterly view of the Mesa Barn today after restoration.*

Paint colors were carefully sampled and studied to determine the original colors. This added the finishing touch to the barn restoration.



*ABOVE LEFT: The Ranger's house, circa 1930's.
 ABOVE RIGHT: Daughter of the ranger plays in front of the root cellar.
 RIGHT: The Ranger's place taken from the location of the Mesa Barn. The road in front is the current road.*

Lincoln National Forest

Smokey Bear Ranger District



Sacramento Ranger District

Guadalupe Ranger District



SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

3463 Las Palomas Road
Alamogordo, NM 88310
(575) 434-7200

GUADALUPE RANGER STATION

114 South Halagueno Street
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(575) 885-4181

SACRAMENTO RANGER STATION

4 Lost Lodge Road (physical)
P.O. Box 288 (mailing)
Cloudcroft, NM 88217
(575) 682-2551

SMOKEY BEAR RANGER STATION

901 Mechem Drive
Ruidoso, NM 88345
(575) 257-4095

Web site: www.fs.usda.gov/lincoln
Twitter: twitter.com/#1/LincolnUSForest
Flicker: www.flickr.com/photos/lincolnnationalforest/sets

JUST THE FACTS

SUMMARY OF FIRES (past ten years)						
Year	Human Caused		Lightning Caused		Combined	
	Number	Acreage	Number	Acreage	Number	Acreage
2003	20	3,609	61	37	81	3,646
2004	12	26	26	64,516	38	64,542
2005	10	2	22	139	32	141
2006	8	7	29	18	37	25
2007	3	23	17	7	20	30
2008	16	671	19	49,131	35	49,802
2009	11	1,106	30	219	41	1,325
2010	11	205	22	170	33	375
2011	19	54,367	52	25,955	71	80,322
2012	14	27	17	40,503	31	40,530
10-Year Avg.	12	6,004	30	18,070	42	24,074

Acreages are based on USFS acres only

KEY ACREAGE FIGURES				
	Surface Ownership			
	Smokey Bear	Sacramento	Guadalupe	Forest
USFS Lands	277,656	450,657	283,226	1,011,539
Non-USFS Lands	62,505	98,206	5,312	166,023
Wilderness Areas	83,253	0	0	83,253
Total	423,414	548,863	288,538	1,260,815

2012 BUDGET	
CATEGORY	EXPENDITURES
Fire Preparedness	\$ 3,688,867
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	\$ 1,533,781
Restoration	\$ 2,806,938
Forest Support Services	\$ 2,552,240
Recreation	\$ 927,316
Land Management	\$ 796,392
Roads	\$ 620,713
Facilities	\$ 578,777
Range Management	\$ 517,215
Vegetation Management	\$ 401,456
Timber	\$ 159,918
Trails	\$ 144,444
Grand Total	\$ 14,728,057
FIRE SUPPRESSION	\$ 27,810,320

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT				
ROADS	Miles Open to Use			
	Smokey Bear	Sacramento	Guadalupe	Forest
Level 2 (high clearance)	352	278	536	1,166
Level 3 (passenger)	97	197	69	363
Level 4 (paved)	21	14	4	39
Total	470	489	609	1,568
TRAILS	Smokey Bear	Sacramento	Guadalupe	Forest
Hiker/Pedestrian	2	9	1	12
Pack & Saddle	194	31	47	272
Mountain Bike	19	10	0	29
Motorcycle	4	92	0	96
Off-Highway Vehicle	3	81	0	84
Total	222	223	48	493

MONITORING PROGRAM				
	Established Monitoring Areas (acres)			
	Smokey Bear	Sacramento	Guadalupe	Forest
USFS Lands	5,716	4,565	12,902	23,183
Little Bear Fire	44,000			44,000
Total	49,716	4,565	12,902	67,183

VOLUNTEER HOURS										
	Smokey Bear		Sacramento		Guadalupe		Supervisor's Office		Forest-Wide	
	Hours	People	Hours	People	Hours	People	Hours	People	Hours	People
Hours	3,209	37	3,723	131	18,796	19	8,191	264	33,919	451
Monetary Value	69,924		81,124		409,565		178,482		739,095	

“Volunteer hours for the Lincoln National Forest totalled over 33,000 person-hours equalling over \$700,000 in work accomplished.”

**- Peg Crim
Volunteer Program Coordinator**



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Forest Service

Southwestern
Region

Pub #

In the 2011 Stakeholder's Report, the Forest Supervisor's closing letter highlighted the importance of partnerships, community involvement and collaboration. This year, I start from there by reiterating that timely message. Additionally, I feel that transparency is critical to open communication. To make strides toward that, the Lincoln National Forest is currently developing a strategy that links the National Forest System direction, the related local community needs and desires, and the on-the-ground project planning into one cohesive and implementable vision for the future.

As of now, this vision for the future consists of five overarching commitments: Encourage/Support Restoration Industry (i.e. forest thinning projects, timber sales, prescribed burns or other similar activities that depend on industry); Forest Plan Revision Preparation (a multiyear effort to collect needed field data to support a new Forest Plan); Obligations/Legal Commitments (work required by rules and regulations); Partnerships; and Public Service to Local Communities (processing/administering permits, cooperative educational services).

Once this vision is finalized, all projects planned and completed on the Lincoln National Forest will be in support of the objectives. By building transparency into all of our projects, we are striving to ensure healthy communication with our stakeholders, and healthy ecosystems through implementation of the right projects, at the right time, in the right places.

Anthony Edwards
Acting Forest Supervisor