

USDA FOREST SERVICE
ALASKA REGION
P. O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802

SourDough Notes



USDA Forest Service
Employee Newsletter
Alaska Region
Issue 490 Late Summer 2004

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Please send your suggestions and comments to Teresa Haugh, Editor (see page 2).

Where in the World Are They?

In the last issue of *SourDough Notes*, we started a new column to bring you updates on Alaska Region retirees—your former friends and colleagues. In this issue, we are featuring Tom Donovan, Mel Dittmer, and Charles Low.

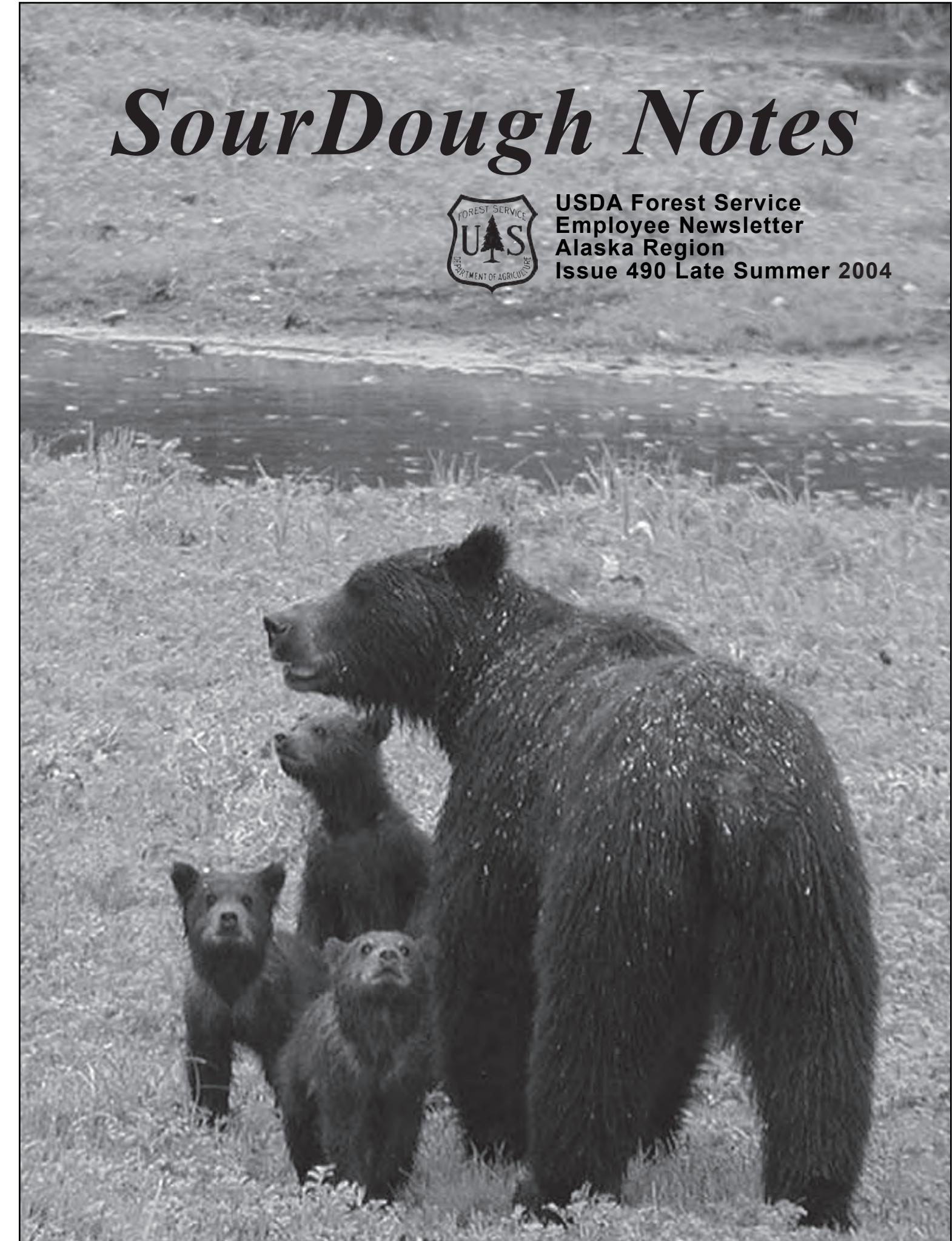
If you look at the photo on the right, you will get a good idea of how Donovan has been spending his time! Before he retired, Donovan worked for ten years in the Alaska Region as a Contracting Officer, first at the Supervisor's Office in Sitka and later in the Regional Office. He left Alaska in 1992 and worked as a Contracting Officer in Region 6 for several years before retiring about eight years ago.

His friend Mel Dittmer said since retirement, Donovan has spent summers in Wisconsin and winters in Ar-



Retiree Tom Donovan and his dog Scruffy enjoy their highway scooter.

cont'd inside back cover



ON THE COVER:

Pack Creek sow and her three cubs cavor on Admiralty Island.
Photo by April Carpenter.

SourDough Notes

Quarterly newsletter for the employees and retirees of the **USDA Forest Service**
Alaska Region
P. O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10>

Late Summer 2004

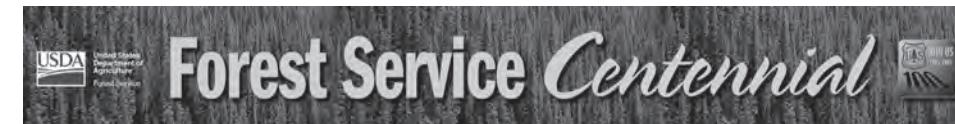
Submissions:
SourDough Notes is written for the employees and retirees of the Alaska Region. Your suggestions, articles, and photographs are welcome. Please contact:

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Articles should be no more than 800 words and may be edited. Submitted articles may not all be printed. Photos should be submitted as gray-scale TIF graphics, 5"x7" and 300 dpi.

INSIDE:

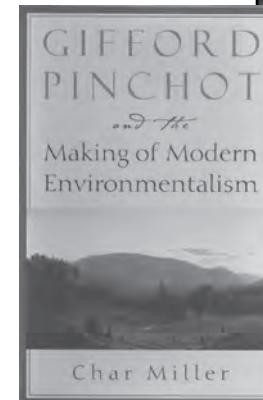
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The Forest Service will celebrate its centennial in 2005 and launch its New Century of Service to the American people and the extraordinary landscape under its management. But what of its past century of service? What is the relationship between the Forest Service's land management practices, then and now? And how might a discussion of its historic challenges help us better understand its contemporary dilemmas and future prospects?

Dr. Char Miller—historian, author, professor and Forest Service history expert—will deliver lectures throughout the country about the environmental and political history that developed and shaped the Forest Service. The talks illustrate the agency's past and speak directly to the present. Using photographs, cartoons, and other illustrative material, he weaves an exciting tale about the Forest Service's contributions to the nation and the controversies that swirled around its actions.

Dr. Miller is chair of the History Department and the director of the Urban Studies program at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. He is the



author of *Gifford Pinchot and The Making of Modern Environmentalism* (Island Press, 2001).

Dr. Miller will be in Alaska in October, and everyone in the community is invited to participate.

Here are the dates. Please watch for more information in your town.

- 10/06/04Anchorage
- 10/07/04Girdwood, Cordova
- 10/09/04Juneau
- 10/10/04Sitka
- 10/12/04Craig
- 10/13/04 ...Ketchikan

Transfers Out

Regional Office Susan Oliva

Resignations

Chugach

Charles B. Davis
Keith Friel

Chad Praetorius
Rebecca L. Rauwald

James Salzman

Michael T. Shugrue

Brent Touchstone

Tongass

Cody Angerman
Daniel W. Candelaria
Jon Drimel

Andrew Dupre
Michael Farago
William C. Green

Kaelene M. Harrison
Matthew McCluggage
Ryan Rooks

Adam S. Thompson
Bryce A. Timm
Jill Walker

Terri Walker
Kathy Wills
David E Wilson

Regional Office

Justin Salazar

John Wooton

Where in the World Are They? (cont'd from back page)

izona. In Wisconsin, Donovan visits his four brothers. In Arizona, he lives in a camper with a dog that "only Tom could love." He rides his highway scooter, and according to Dittmer, is "totally dedicated to living a life of leisure."

Donovan took up golf shortly before he retired. He plays with his friend Dittmer, and in spite of buying every hi-tech golf club he can find to help him improve his game, the only person he could beat in their foursome was a

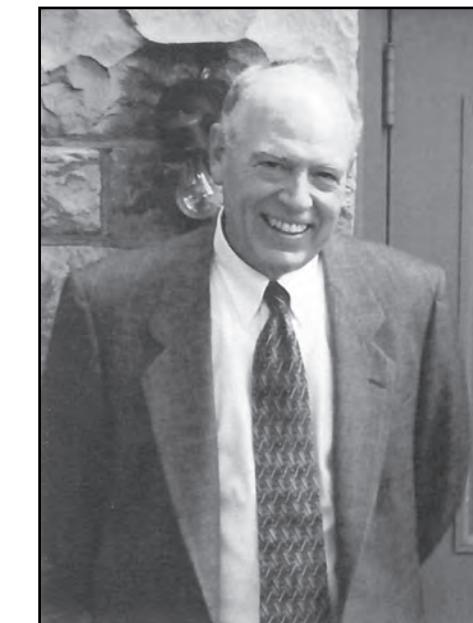
93-year-old man (and sometimes lost to him!).

His friend Mel Dittmer worked in the Alaska Region as Assistant Director of Engineering for over seven years, until he retired in December 1988. He handled all the engineering training and certification, and frequently used his friend Tom Donovan for teaching, and as a panel member when doing oral certification exams.

Since retiring, Dittmer has built a couple houses, including the house he

and his wife Ginger now live in near McMinnville, Ore. Dittmer spends much of his summers farming his ten acres of hazelnuts and 30 acres of timber. Ginger volunteers part time at the hospital.

Would you like to see him and catch up on old times? Dittmer said he plans on attending the Retiree's Reunion in Portland, Ore. in September 2005. For more information on the reunion, visit: <http://oldsmokeys.org>, or <http://www.fsx.org/schedule.html>.



Alaska Region retiree Charles Low worked on the lands staff until 1991.

Charles Low recently sent us a photograph and a report on his life after lands (the regional lands staff, that is).

Unlike Nita Nettleton, who was shown in our last issue lounging at her home on the beach, Low took a different direction after retiring from the Forest Service. He started another career! Low said, "I am easy proof there can be a second, different career after the Forest Service."

After retiring from the Forest Service in 1991, Low attended law school at the University of Tulsa. He has been a practicing attorney in Tulsa for more than 10 years. He focuses on the petroleum transportation business, and most of his practice involves real estate matters.

Low has been a faithful reader of *SourDough Notes*. He said, "Thank you for continuing to send me news of Alaska Region. I am always amazed that through the decades, the real issues never change."

Low sends advice back to his friends in Alaska. He said, "If there is something else out there you are considering—then do it!"

Charles Low, former Alaska Region employee, is just one of the many reasons the Forest Service will be commemorating its history and heritage in 2005.

Teresa Haugh

Editor

Personnel Actions

Promotions

Chugach

Corinne A. Marzullo

Carl J. Skustad

Tongass

Kent Cummins
Jacqueline Foss
Karen Hopfer

Jeff Garnette
Robert Gubernick

Joni Johnson
Joshua Latham

Lance Lerum
Kerri Roepke

Kristen Thweatt
Lance M. Watkins

Regional Office

Macky McClung

Ray Massey

Priscilla White

Time-Limited Promotions

Chugach

Glenn Stubbs

Tongass

Kerri Mills

Irene Powell

Michael Shira

Regional Office

Renee Flanagan

Raymond Thompson

Michael Wilcox

Rebecca Wright

Reassignments

Tongass

Daniel Bussard

Faith Duncan

Valorie Nelson

Regional Office

Cheri Friend

Debbie Hallek

Janice Lerum

Recruitments

Chugach

Steve Barry

Joshua O. Milligan

Christopher R. Stinson

Tongass

Callie P. Domek
Ryan S. Gerstenberger

Ian Gill
Matthew Goold

Leah M. Lentz
Joy Marcum

Allen Moore
Gareth Reese

Robert J. Shaff, Jr.

Regional Office

Ada Feak
Letasha McCoy

Colby Marvin
Stacie Mason

Adam K. Morgan

Raymond Thompson

Casey Walsh

Details

Chugach

John D. Barger

Anthony S. Conte

Joel Sather

Tongass

Ken Blackman
Linda Christian

Larry Dunham
Jennifer Kevil

Charles Klee
Gary Lawton

Susan Marthaller
Peter Roginski

Erik Van Walden

Regional Office

Gary Lehnhausen

Willie R. Thompson

The Bears of Admiralty Island

By: April Carpenter, Tongass National Forest/Admiralty National Monument

I've decided that I am, beyond a shadow of a doubt, blessed. I live and work in the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska. The Tongass is the nation's largest national forest, and the world's largest temperate rainforest. It has 17 million acres of forest and more than one hundred inches of rain a year. Almost every day I see old growth, moss, infinite wildflowers, glaciers, waterfalls, bald eagles, marine mammals and the aurora borealis.

With 11,000 miles of coastline, two national monuments, 17 wilderness areas and close to 150 maintained hiking trails, there are unlimited combinations of things to do on the Tongass. But one of the best is to view North America's largest carnivores on Admiralty Island, at the place where Pack Creek runs into Seymour Canal.

Harry Tullis, who leads the Pack Creek bear viewing project, asked me to go to Admiralty Island in July so I would know how to describe my experience to visitors who ask. After all, I am the Information Receptionist at the Juneau Ranger District and Admiralty National Monument. (What does that mean in English? I answer the phone, greet visitors, and tell people where to go.)

Pack Creek has a peak season which starts in mid July. When Tullis asked me to go, the rangers over there had not been seeing many bears. I thought I should wait until August, but I found myself agreeing to go right away. Tullis laughed, and said, "Well, you probably won't see a bear, but at least you can describe the place better. You can watch my bear videos when you get back."

Pack Creek is a completely primitive estuary. The only evidence of humans there are the ruins of an old house and garden, and the bear proof boxes

buried on the beach. There is one man-made building on the site, a small tower you can climb into and look across the estuary to see the bears and other wildlife. I didn't make it to the tower, because I saw the show of my life right on the ground.



Pack Creek bears and the people who want to watch them. Photos by April Carpenter.

One Saturday I packed up my rain gear, bug repellent and rain boots. I took candy, a peanut butter sandwich, and water for lunch (which gets stored in a bear proof box). I met Pack Creek Ranger Don MacDougall and helped him load the truck with supplies for the camp. We carried gasoline, groceries, propane, and camping gear for the rangers at Pack Creek. We drove to the float pond, and boarded a De-Haviland Beaver float plane. We had smooth flying.

After 25 minutes, we landed on Windfall Island and unloaded the supplies. Then, we got in a little skiff and headed for the mouth of the estuary. Chad Rice of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game greeted us. Pack Creek is run cooperatively with the ADF&G and the Forest Service. All the rangers carried loaded rifles!

I picked out a spot to sit on a log. I had decided to enjoy the scenery, even if there were no bears to see. The other 15 people that were there quietly smiled "hello" to me. We whispered and made small talk. We sat and waited.

Then suddenly, we saw movement—a sow with two cubs. We were so busy frantically clicking our cameras we almost missed a second sow. And she had three cubs! The sows seemed much more wary of one another than they did us. The sow with two

cubs kept coming closer. They came so close I could smell them. Even though the sow wasn't nervous, we were getting a little jumpy. We all said loudly, "WHOA BEAR!" The sow made a harumphing sound, turned away from us, and led her cubs back to the flats.

It was an incredible day. Now I know how to describe my experiences to prospective visitors. I say, "If you come to Alaska, you must consider visiting the bears of Admiralty Island." ☺

Rising to the Challenge

By: David Sanders, Chugach National Forest

Sea kayaking is an exceptional way to get out and explore the natural world and is uniquely suited for those with disabilities.

Prince William Sound is a world-class sea-kayaking destination lying within the boundaries of the Chugach National Forest, the second largest national forest in the United States. In addition, the western sound is designated as a wilderness study area and falls within the Glacier Ranger District, one of three districts comprising the Chugach. The sound's protected waterways, labyrinths of islands and passages, dense temperate coastal rainforests and abundant marine life and tide-water glaciers, provide unforgettable wilderness experiences for thousands of kayakers every year. The sound is a remarkably accessible wilderness area and its relatively calm waters and abundance of gradual, protected beaches offer a unique wilderness kayaking experience. Sea kayaks can be modified to accommodate a wide range of abilities and provide an exceptional degree of personal independence and freedom.

On July 4-8, Challenge Alaska and the Forest Service partnered to provide a wilderness kayaking opportunity open to anyone with a disability. Six participants took up the challenge. They signed up to camp at a remote location far from the comforts of home, knowing they would have to face many obstacles and fears associated with kayaking, the sea, and wilderness. Everyone rose to the challenge, gained confidence in their abilities, made new friends, and came away with a memorable experience.

Our staff consisted of Heather Hall (Chugach National Forest Archaeologist), David Sanders (Glacier District Sea Kayak Ranger Program Coordinator), Kelly Frick (Glacier District Lead Interpretive Ranger), Jennifer Ertel (Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator), and volunteers. The group depart-

ed from Whittier, bound for Derickson Spit in Port Nellie Juan. The spit is a large glacial moraine that has now been exposed due to the retreat of Nellie Juan Glacier. The quarter-mile-long gravel bar juts out across Derickson Bay, nearly sealing off a salt-water lagoon that is full of drifting bergs

cast off by the calving of the glacier. The landscape surrounding the spit is dramatic and dominated by post-glacial exposed granite slopes lending it the nickname "The Little Yosemite" of the Sound.

We paddled almost every day from our base camp to explore the surrounding area. On our first day we caught the incoming tide and were quickly swept through the narrow entrance to the lagoon to emerge amongst giant icebergs and large flocks of surf scoters and harlequin ducks. Harbor seals cautiously peeked their heads above the water to observe us and came quite close to a few of the kayaks as these curious animals often do. Windy conditions made for challenging paddling, and with good teamwork and a positive can-do attitude, we were able to negotiate the shifting ice and tricky currents.

On the second day we departed again, this time bound for Deepwater Bay about four miles away. Deepwater Bay would entail an 8-mile roundtrip paddle and would require everyone to put in a strong paddling effort. Everyone stepped up to the challenge, and soon we found ourselves within the bay, looking back at the massive gran-

ite monoliths that rise gray and devoid of vegetation like stone sentinels from the forest. After a nice lunch break on a unique granite conglomerate beach (a rarity in the Sound), we returned to camp for a tasty dinner of fresh silver salmon provided to us by some visiting friends.

On day 3 we again entered the glacial lagoon on a fast flooding tide and even experienced river-like conditions as we were whisked through the passage. Strong katabatic winds dropping off the icefield forced us to make a landing soon after entering the lagoon, so, we landed and relaxed in the sun, ate lunch and played games like speed rock stacking, beach rock golf, and the classic game of hit the passing iceberg with a rock. After the tide slackened and began to ebb, we paddled back to camp for our last night camping in the wilderness. A beach fire, chocolate marshmallow s'mores, and tasty aluminum foil wrapped meat, cheese and vegetable dinners, as well as lots of good conversation and laughs, was a perfect ending to this wonderful experience.

On the last day, we awoke, made blueberry pancakes, and spent a lei-



Disabled paddlers rose to the challenge of navigating Prince William Sound. Photo by Dave Sanders.

Awards

Spot

Chugach

T.J. Friend

Elsa H. Gaule

Denise F. Smith

Tongass

Gregory T. Albrecht
Kurt A. Aluzas
Larry Barnes
David Beatley
Brad L. Bolton
Earnest Greek
Jessica Brogden
Austin B. Brose
Kyle Brownlee

Daniel W. Candelaria
Nathaniel Catterson
Stephanie Clemens
Jacqueline V. Foss
Angelia Lammers
Kaelene M. Harrison
Kayleigh A. Hartwig

Chad C. Hood
Sally C. Hunter
Lauren E. Johnston
Daniel H. Kraemer
Esther Kim-Ambuehl
Jennifer Hagen
Michael Reichenberg

Nick R. Miller
John Neary
Austin O'Brien
Susan A. Oehlers
Robbie Piehl
Diane L. Rock

Kevin Schaberg
John H. Stevens
Lynda D. Thomassen
Elizabeth Thynes
Terri L. Vore
Howard Wiseman
Sarah B. Yamamoto

Regional Office

Cal Casipit
Orion Dix

Mickie L. Dutton
Brian Goettler

Linda Kelly
Susan Oliva

Austin Rickards
Justin Salazar

Walter E. Ullmayer

Extra Effort & Travel Gainsharing

Chugach

Michael F. Thom

Tongass

Mike Allred
Kevin C. Casey
Dale Fife

Sandy Frost
Dee Galla
Peter Griffin

Tyler Gunn
Susan Howell
Alec J Pempek

Regional Office

Susan Alexander
Debbie Anderson
John Burick
Trish Clabaugh
Dawn Collinsworth

Sharon L. Cordell
Curtis Edwards
Michael Goldstein
Jackie Groce
Emily C. Howard

Dawn L. Heutte
Lake Koelling
Bruce Landon
Pam Leschak
Maria Lisowski

Karen Maher
Mari Meiners
Shirley Matson
Warren Oja

Dennis Sylvia
Karl Welch

Chris Pack
Mark T. Philipp
Cynthia Sever
Jim Ustasiewski

Time Off

Tongass

Brenda McDonald

Length of Service 25 Years

Tongass

Annemarie LaPalme

Brenna Abbott, Junior Ranger

By: Janet Seals, Tongass National Forest

On Friday, July 16, Brenna Abbott had the distinction of becoming the first Sitka Ranger District *Junior Ranger*. Six-year-old Brenna turned in her completed Tongass National Forest Junior Ranger workbook to Sandy Russell (district recreation) and Janet Seals (district information receptionist) to receive her certificate and embroidered sew-on patch. The newest "Ranger" on the district happily announced she wanted mom to put the

patch on her Brownie Scout uniform for all to see. On-hand to see Brenna awarded her certificate and patch were her parents, aunt and uncle, siblings and cousins. The Alaska Region Junior Ranger program was started in 2003 as part of the Forest Service interpretive program for the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system. ☺

Brenna Abbott is congratulated by Janet Seals for receiving her badge Photo by David Abbott.



Art Greeley, Regional Forester, Remembered

By: John Sandor, Retired Regional Forester



Many long term Forest Service employees are sharing stories and remembrances of their friend and colleague Art Greeley, who passed away this summer.

Greeley was the Alaska Regional Forester from 1953 to 1956. He moved to Juneau from the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station to replace B. Frank Heintzelman, who was appointed Alaska's Territorial Governor by President Dwight Eisenhower.

Greeley was in Alaska during a period of transition. The completion of the Ketchikan Pulp Company in 1953, the development of road transportation system plans, and the award of the Region's second long-term Alaska Pulp Company sale (to Japanese interests) occurred during Greeley's tenure. The Alaska Region's timber sale harvest was 60 million feet in 1952 and rose to 200 million feet by 1956.

During Greeley's tenure as regional forester, he began the diversification of professional and support staff, bringing in more wildlife, fisheries, engineering and recreation professional expertise.

Greeley had a keen sense of history, emphasizing long-range plans and the need to resolve Alaska Native land claims.

Greeley was always a man of deep faith; very active in his church and in community affairs. His positive outlook and integrity earned the admiration and respect of the community at large as well as the Alaska Forest Service family. Greeley moved to Milwaukee, Wisc. in 1956 after his daughter died as the result of injuries received in a tragic snow sledding accident. He was appointed Regional Forester in the

North Central Region, replacing P. D. (Pete) Hanson. The death of his daughter significantly influenced his decision to enter the ministry. He is still fondly remembered in Alaska by the many people whose lives he touched fifty years ago.

From a personal standpoint, it was Greeley who telephoned me in early 1953 to offer me a transfer from the PNW Forest Survey staff in Portland to the Timber Resource Review of Alaska's national forests. I accepted, and moved to Juneau in 1953. I transferred to the forest management staff in 1953 after completion of Timber Resource Review field surveys on the Tongass.

Thus, I was working in the Alaska Region throughout the time Greeley was regional forester.

Greeley was an outstanding and compassionate Forest Service leader and an effective advocate for the various missions of the U.S. Forest Service. He was also an effective communicator and leader in the communities in which he lived. And after entering the ministry, he continued to serve with great distinction as a pastor and counselor. His service will continue to be a source of inspiration to those who knew him. ☺

surely morning breaking down camp and preparing for our charter pick up. Soon, we found ourselves back in civilization, negotiating the hustle and bustle of Whittier's busy docks. We made the 8 p.m. tunnel opening back to Bear Valley, grabbed some ice cream in Girdwood, and got everyone back to the Challenge office in Anchorage by

10 p.m. It was a long day, but a fine ending to a truly enjoyable and rewarding experience for everyone. We learned a lot on this initial trip and look forward to fostering a continued partnership with Challenge Alaska. ☺

Paddlers relax at camp after a long day. Photo by Dave Sanders.



Award Winning Barge Hosts

By: Rita Byrer, Tongass National Forest

In July, District Ranger Patty Grantham presented an award from the national Director of Senior, Youth and Volunteer Programs presented Lee and Kathe Villers a Retiree Volunteer Service national award for their exemplary volunteer service to the Petersburg Ranger District. The Villers have served as volunteer hosts on the *Nakwasina* barge since 2000.

The *Nakwasina* is a self-contained 2,912 sq. ft. crew quarters mounted on a 31 x 85 ft. steel barge. It is used by field crews as a base of operations in remote areas during the summer field season. When in the field, the barge is accessible only by float plane or boat.

When the Petersburg Ranger District acquired the barge in 1999, it was decided, considering the large investment the barge represented, that the Forest Service needed to somehow ensure the security of the barge when anchored in the field at remote locations. It would take special people, however, to fill the job, given the isolation and the remoteness of the duty. After considering the alternatives, we decided to use volunteers. Volunteers Lee and Kathe Villers have consistently and reliably served as barge hosts, spending one summer in Thomas Bay and two seasons at Three Mile Arm on Kuiu Island.



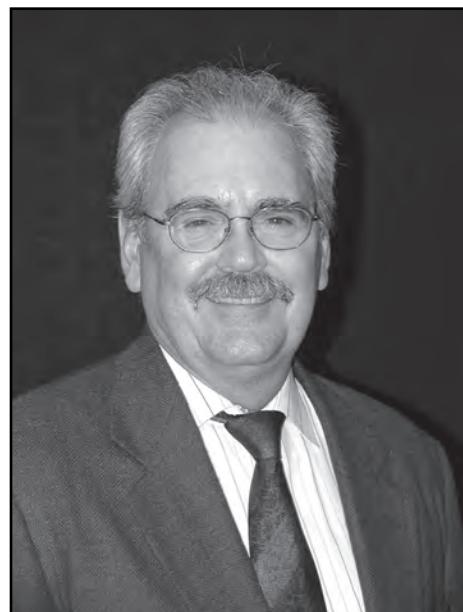
Top: District Ranger Patty Grantham and award winning volunteers Kathe and Lee Villers. Photo by Jim Seward. Bottom: Nakwasina barge, the home away from home for Petersburg field crew. Photo by Eric Larson.

tor and maintain logbooks on the barge systems, complete weekly and daily tests on the alarm and safety systems, and complete monthly safety checks on all the fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. They assist with maintenance on the genera-

tors and other work, which reduces the number of costly trips that facilities personnel have to make to the barge. They keep logbooks on the numerous support systems that help evaluate systems efficiency and aid in the managing of barge occupancy. They even provide the crew with a ferry service from the barge to the shore.

In their spare time, the Villers indulge their passion for fishing, shrimp and crabbing. Lee carves wood nymphs from unusual tree branches, and Kathe is an excellent health-conscious cook who occasionally treats the crew to her wonderful cinnamon rolls and other baked goods. The Villers' humor and loyalty do wonders for the attitudes of the crew. Visitors from commercial and private boats that drop by are full of questions about the area and the purpose of the *Nakwasina*. The Villers represent the Forest Service with pride. A veteran forester says that staying on the barge with the Villers is the best duty on the Tongass!

Since 2000, the Villers have volunteered for a combined total of 7,580 hours. ☺



Thoughts from the RF

By: Denny Bschor, Regional Forester

It's been a busy summer in Alaska, and employees region-wide have been working hard to make the most of the field season. We have welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to the two largest national forests in the system. We have offered entertaining and educational interpretive programs to countless children and adults. We have contributed to interagency firefighting efforts for one of the busiest fire seasons ever in the state.

In July, the Greenpeace ship arrived in Southeast Alaska, and as you know, several activists chained themselves to logging equipment near Petersburg. While this column in *Sour-Dough Notes* is not long enough to address all the issues surrounding their protest, I do want to take the time to commend our district, forest, and law enforcement personnel for the professional and levelheaded manner in which they did their jobs despite the protests. We will continue to go forward with our forest plans that were developed through extensive scientific review and coordination with other resource agencies.

What we do in Alaska will continue to attract attention in Washington, D.C. During the week of July 19-23, the Tongass National Forest supervisor was asked to travel to Washington to brief the Senate Energy and Natural Resources staff on Tongass is-

sues, particularly timber harvesting, road building and returns on investments to the Treasury. Supervisor Forrest Cole agreed to go, and took others with him, including Petersburg District Ranger Patty Grantham, Engineering and Aviation Staff Officer Larry Dunham, and Partnerships and Public Affairs Staff Officer Dennis Neill. Senator Lisa Murkowski's office was interested in what the Tongass group had to say, and asked them to add briefings to other Senate offices to their schedule.

In total, they met with staffs from all three members of the Alaska Delegation, and staffs of Senators from Arkansas, Arizona, California, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington. In addition, they briefed various leaders in the Washington Office, starting with Chief Bosworth.

What did they share? They said that the Tongass is a wild, remote, productive forest that will stay that way, while providing a reasonable amount of raw materials to support the communities and people of Southeast Alaska. This story seemed to resonate with most of the Senate staffers, and with many people in the Washington Office.

That is a synopsis of what has been happening in natural resources, but we have had a lot of issues on the operations side of the house, too. The development of the performance accountability system, *Credibility through Accountability*, has taken up a lot of time and energy. An update of that program is on page 23. We are reviewing our way of doing business in every arena.

The Chief's office began a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) effort to look at changes in financial management, human resources, and information technology.

In that respect, if you have been in the regional office in the past few months, you may have wondered why

Jacque Myers, Deputy Regional Forester for Operations, was locked up on the 9th floor. It's not what you think! Jacque was not in trouble with the law enforcement guys up there, she was just looking for a quiet place to work. For a few months, she turned her normal duties over to Mary Cummins, and assumed a national leadership role in streamlining human resources through BPR.

Unlike competitive sourcing, BPR does not force a competition between the government and the private sector. It is similar in one aspect, however. BPR insures that we operate with the most efficient organization that we can achieve. BPR is one of several tools we can use to achieve efficiency. This reengineering will result in reorganization of human resources and will affect employees in the region and nation. BPR is one of the challenges that we are meeting along our road to achieving greater credibility and accountability.

I want to thank Mary Cummins for filling in for Jacque as Acting Deputy Regional Forester. She did a great job, and has returned to being Director of Information Resources Management. She got back just in time for a long-awaited announcement. On July 27, we learned of the results of the Information Technology A-76 study. After careful review of proposals from both public and commercial bidders, the Forest Service's Most Efficient Organization (MEO) was selected as the service provider to carry out the agency's IT infrastructure work.

The new IRM organization will be comprised of two parts. The first part of the organization, called the Information Solutions Organization (ISO), will act as the service provider. The second part, called the Continuing Government Activities (CGA) organization, will perform the inherently governmental functions. Details about the new orga-

What Doe CTA Really Mean?

By: Pam Leschak, Public Affairs

Alaska Region staff has worked hard to develop the *Credibility Through Accountability* model that will lead the Forest Service implementation of performance-based management.

Alaska built the national model methodically and with active participation from nearly every region, station, and area, as well as the Washington Office. The model is flexible enough to work in any unit in the agency with a little tweaking to take local issues into consideration.

CTA workshop participants from across the country discussed in detail the issues facing the Forest Service, the purpose of its programs, the services rendered, customer focused outcomes, crosscutting program issues, and partners who help in achieving outcomes. The result is **Business Plan Elements**, a written structure for the agency's programs and activities that defines what the agency does, describes the results we desire, and provides a means to consistently measure performance.

The Business Plan Elements were used to develop the Region's **Strategic Business Plan**, a blueprint that outlines a unit's contribution to achieving the agency's goals. Units and programs will no longer operate independently, so it is important that they tie their work to the National Strategic Plan (NSP). The NSP helps refine the focus of the work and align all efforts so we all work toward the same larger results even as we accomplish regional outcomes.

Once the strategic outcomes are defined and past performance measured, the funding follows to where results can be demonstrated. As Denny Bschor told the national leadership recently, "**In the past budget drove our performance. In the future performance of results drives budget.**" Currently, we allocate funds and accomplish as much

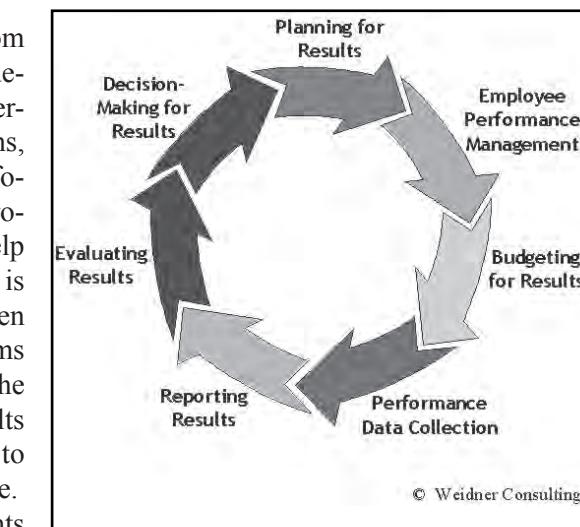
as possible with those funds within individual programs and units. By using the NSP regional and strategic business plan goals as the structure for defining our desired performances, **integration across programs and units become the norm**, rather than single programs and units working alone. Some of the accomplishments are tied to our emphasis areas and some are not. Performance-based management means we do the work that helps accomplish the goals identified in the regional and na-

Hyperion Scorecard™ is a database connected electronic "report card" that mines **WorkPlan** and other information systems (like INFRA, NIFPORS, FACTS, STARS, Lotus databases) to show how a project is or is not progressing. Status is shown clearly with a green light (project is progressing on target), a yellow light (caution, project is delayed or facing some problem) or a red light (problem, targets aren't being met). Project status information is always at hand, updated monthly at a

minimum. Managers and employees alike can use the system to inform themselves and others about performance and make trade-off decisions based on that information. The term "get to green" represents the project result.

The next step for Alaska employees is implementing the process and working out the bugs – that begins in October. Alaska has a year to put the CTA process into practice with the Regional Strategic Business Plan in real situations across all programs and units to make performance accountability the standard operating procedure before it is implemented nationwide.

Regional Forester Denny Bschor recently presented the Alaska model to the Executive Leadership Team and to Washington Office Directors. They liked the results of our work. The next step in handing the baton over to the Washington Office is national program directors working with Alaska staff to finalize the national Family of Measures everyone will use in doing our work. Strategic Planning and Resource Assessment (SPRA) in the Washington Office is ramping up their efforts to educate more of the Forest Service about performance accountability and set the stage for national implementation in 2006. ☐



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tional strategic plans and we measure what we did. The work is defined by specific outcomes desired; then, funding follows the activities that contribute to those desired outcomes.

How does this lead us to performance-based management? First, we define what we do in terms of national and regional goals. Then, we request funding based on demonstrated past performance results and future performance capability. Throughout the year, we measure what we do at the program, activity, unit and the individual level.

This allows for corrections during the year—a vital change from past practices. The foundation of what we do and our budget is tracked through **WorkPlan**, a software program that ties estimated resources to identified goals, objectives, and performance measures.

Castillo New Director of Forest Management

by Jan Lerum, Regional Office Forest Management

Dan Castillo was named new Director of Forest Management by Regional Forester Denny Bschor in April.

Castillo brings a wealth of expertise and good humor to the region's forest management program. Dan hit the ground running in Alaska, applying the experience he accumulated working in a wide variety of forest management positions in the Northern Region and the Pacific Northwest Region, including a two different stints as district ranger in Idaho and Oregon. Castillo's focus in Alaska is working with the national forests, forest industry, and communities to get good work done on the ground—ranging from providing cost effective timber sales in challenging market conditions to forest health and inventory projects.

Castillo transferred to Alaska from the Northern Region, where he was Assistant Director of Forest and Range,

responsible for all aspects of the timber program: inventory, pre-sale, evaluation, and contracts. One of his important achievements while in the Northern Region was his leadership in developing and implementing national policy and procedures for stewardship contracting. He was also responsible for the implementation of the Payments to States program in that region, where he became an enthusiastic supporter of the work "RACs" (the citizen committees formed under the Payments to States legislation) can accomplish in noxious weed and invasive species control. Castillo was also known as a strong supporter of conservation education in the Northern Region—both with time and dollars.

An avid fisherman and hunter, Castillo has friends in southeast Alaska and made a number of visits to the state before moving to Juneau. And if the new Yamaha 150 horse engine on his boat



New Director Dan Castillo has been in Alaska long enough to enjoy the fishing. Photo by Dennis Campbell.

keeps working (his first major purchase after transferring), he'll be the threat to fish that he wants to be. ♫

Tuesday for Tots

By: Kaelene Harrison, Wrangell Ranger District

Tuesday for Tots is an exciting children's program that was developed and began in 1998 by Steve Robertsen. Every Tuesday morning in the summer, preschoolers and their caregivers are invited to attend Tuesday for Tots, a two-hour conservation education program where plenty can happen. Designed just for them, it encourages young people, ages 3-8, to interact with their forest and become excited about its wonders. Most sessions involve a craft, a hike, and a lot of imagination. While the kids are an obvious focus of the program, the caregivers are just as important. Adults that come with children to Tuesday for Tots end up getting several important conservation messages. The most important perhaps is that the outdoors is a great place for family recreation.



Ashley Allen, Tuesday Tot. Photo by Kaelene Harrison.

nizational structures and the potential impacts on individual employees will be shared over the next few weeks. Implementation is expected to begin during the first quarter of fiscal year 2005. I know our employees here in the Alaska Region, as well as those in the rest of the Forest Service, have a huge stake in the implementation of this new organization. I am committed to helping you through this transition.

This fall also promises to be busy. In the spirit of our 100th anniversary in 2005, we are hosting a regional cen-

ennial forum in Anchorage November 12-13, and participating with Region 6 and the Pacific Northwest Research Station to host a regional forum in Stevenson, Wash. on November 19-20. Invited delegates from government agencies, organizations, industry, and the Forest Service will meet together to discuss the future of the Forest Service in the next 100 years. The knowledge and wisdom that we gather at those meetings will be sent to the national centennial congress in January 2005 in Washington, D.C.

We are anticipating a Chief's management review in June 2005. We have not had a management review in the region in over a decade. This review will cover every area of our work in the Alaska Region. I will share more information with you, as we get closer to June.

The seasons are changing. Change is not always easy, but it is a challenge we can meet. Stay tuned, ask questions, and be a part of our new century of service.

Denny

Anglers, Salmon and Bears—Oh My!

By Annette Heckart, Chugach National Forest

Imagine a beautiful summer evening along the banks of the Russian River, when on your third cast, you land the most amazing sockeye you've ever laid eyes on. Now, imagine sharing that same experience with a 600 pound brown bear!

Every year over 70,000 people make their way to the Russian and Kenai Rivers during the summer season to fish elbow to elbow in hopes of limiting out on salmon. And every year there are a reported 15 to 20 negative bear encounters in the area. These en-

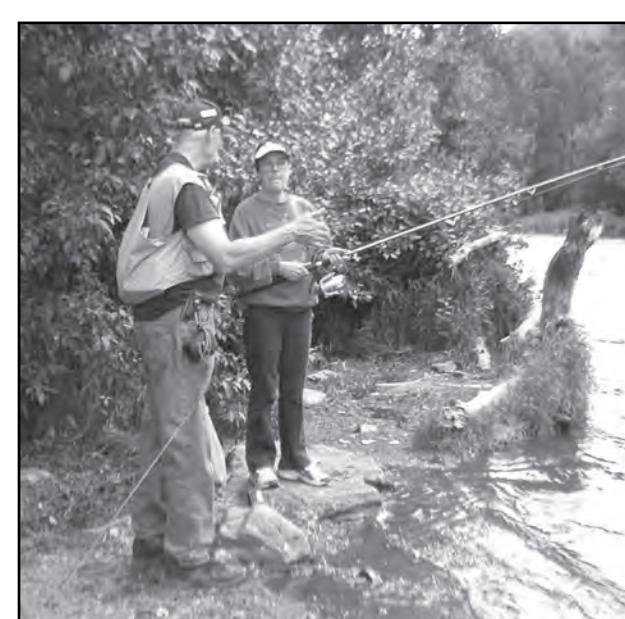
counters often result in at least one bear being shot in defense of life and property.

In an effort to reduce the number of bear encounters with anglers along the Russian and Kenai Rivers, the Seward Ranger District, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Alaska Recreation Management joined forces to create an educational working group to address the problem.

The educational group developed a concise set of messages tailored specifically for anglers. These key messages focused on being bear aware and fishing responsibly in bear country. Once the messages were finalized the only thing left was to get the messages to the masses. Brochures, cards, posters, tags and signs were developed to remind users that their actions and behaviors do make a difference, not only for themselves but those around them as well. Stream watch volunteers, concessionaire staff, and agency personnel, help reinforce the messages through personal contacts on a daily ba-



A friendly reminder from one of the "locals" greets anglers before they head down to the river to fish.



A Streamwatch volunteer reminds an angler of the importance of fishing responsibly in bear country.

Remembering Susie Payne, Volunteer Interpreter

By: Lezlie Murray, Director, Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, Chugach National Forest



Volunteer Susie Payne will be fondly remembered as someone who loved her job as an interpreter in Alaska.

Every now and then, you get to work with someone who really brightens everything around them, and has that "extra sparkle." Susie Payne was one of those rare people. On Friday, May 18, Susie, who worked as a volunteer with our interpretive program at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, lost her life in a tragic kayaking accident on Portage Creek. She was 52 years young.

I first met Susie at a National Interpreters Workshop in 2001, and saw her again last fall at NIW's Job Fair where I was seeking seasonal employees. This time, Susie had completed her degree, her son Jacob was soon to graduate from college, and she was ready to spread her wings and fly north.

Susie was not a typical interpreter, but discovered the field later in life. Once she knew that's what she wanted to do, she set her course. She took one class at a time for 11 years, earning a B.S. in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism: Interpretation in 2002

from Colorado State University. She accomplished this as a single mom, while working full time.

Susie tackled her work at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center enthusiastically. She worked as an interpreter aboard the Alaska Marine Highway's M/V *Aurora*, Holland America's M/V *Ptarmigan*, and the Alaska Railroad's *Glacier Express*. She worked at visitor center introducing the movie *Voices From the Ice*, and put together programs on public lands. One of her programs focused on the cultural heritage of the Chugach People, for whom the Forest is named.

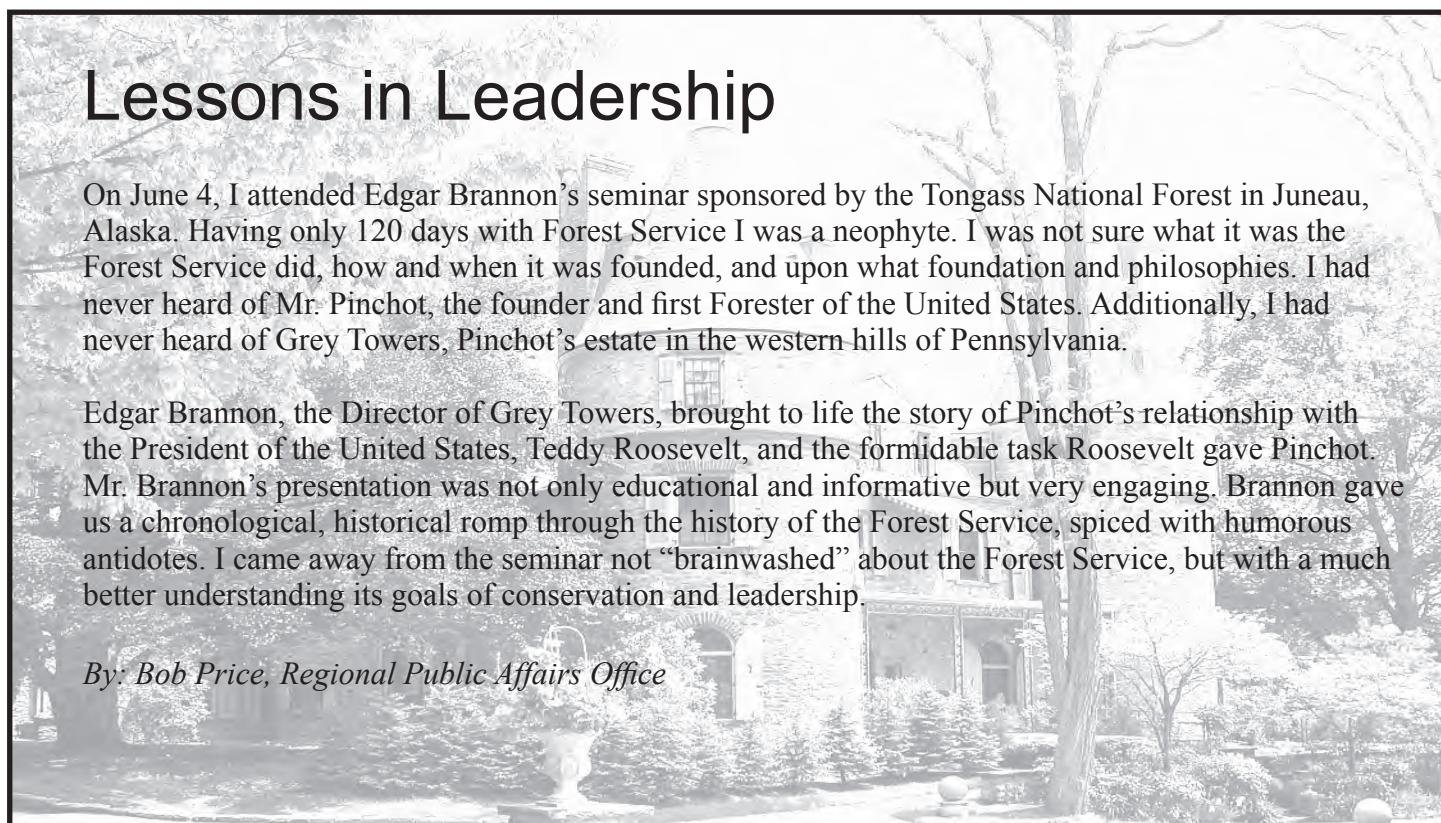
Susie's memorial service was held at Fort Collins, Colo. on June 25. Though her family misses her deeply, they are grateful that she was able to realize her dream of becoming an Interpreter. I, too, am grateful to have known Susie and had the pleasure of working with her. She was an exceptional person and the staff and I will never forget her. ☺

Lessons in Leadership

On June 4, I attended Edgar Brannon's seminar sponsored by the Tongass National Forest in Juneau, Alaska. Having only 120 days with Forest Service I was a neophyte. I was not sure what it was the Forest Service did, how and when it was founded, and upon what foundation and philosophies. I had never heard of Mr. Pinchot, the founder and first Forester of the United States. Additionally, I had never heard of Grey Towers, Pinchot's estate in the western hills of Pennsylvania.

Edgar Brannon, the Director of Grey Towers, brought to life the story of Pinchot's relationship with the President of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt, and the formidable task Roosevelt gave Pinchot. Mr. Brannon's presentation was not only educational and informative but very engaging. Brannon gave us a chronological, historical romp through the history of the Forest Service, spiced with humorous antidotes. I came away from the seminar not "brainwashed" about the Forest Service, but with a much better understanding its goals of conservation and leadership.

By: Bob Price, Regional Public Affairs Office



SourDough Notes ~ Late Summer 2004

Forty Years in the Wilderness

By: John Neary, Tongass National Forest

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act so that future generations could enjoy pristine environments that showed no encroachment by man. This past June, more than 200 people met on the shores of Mendenhall Lake in Juneau to celebrate the Act's 40th anniversary.

The day started with a kayak and canoe armada across the lake that attracted about 50 paddlers. Then, 35 enthusiastic walkers took a hike along Crystal and Moraine Lakes. Food and informational booths were open from noon until 3 p.m. At 1 p.m., double kayaks and a traditional Tlingit canoe were available for paddlers who wanted to cross the lake. Various musicians performed (including our Regional Forester Denny Bschor, along with

Cheryl Bschor, Martha DeFreest, and Alan Michaels). The Tlingit *Children of All Nations* dance group performed on the beach. It was a day packed with options, all

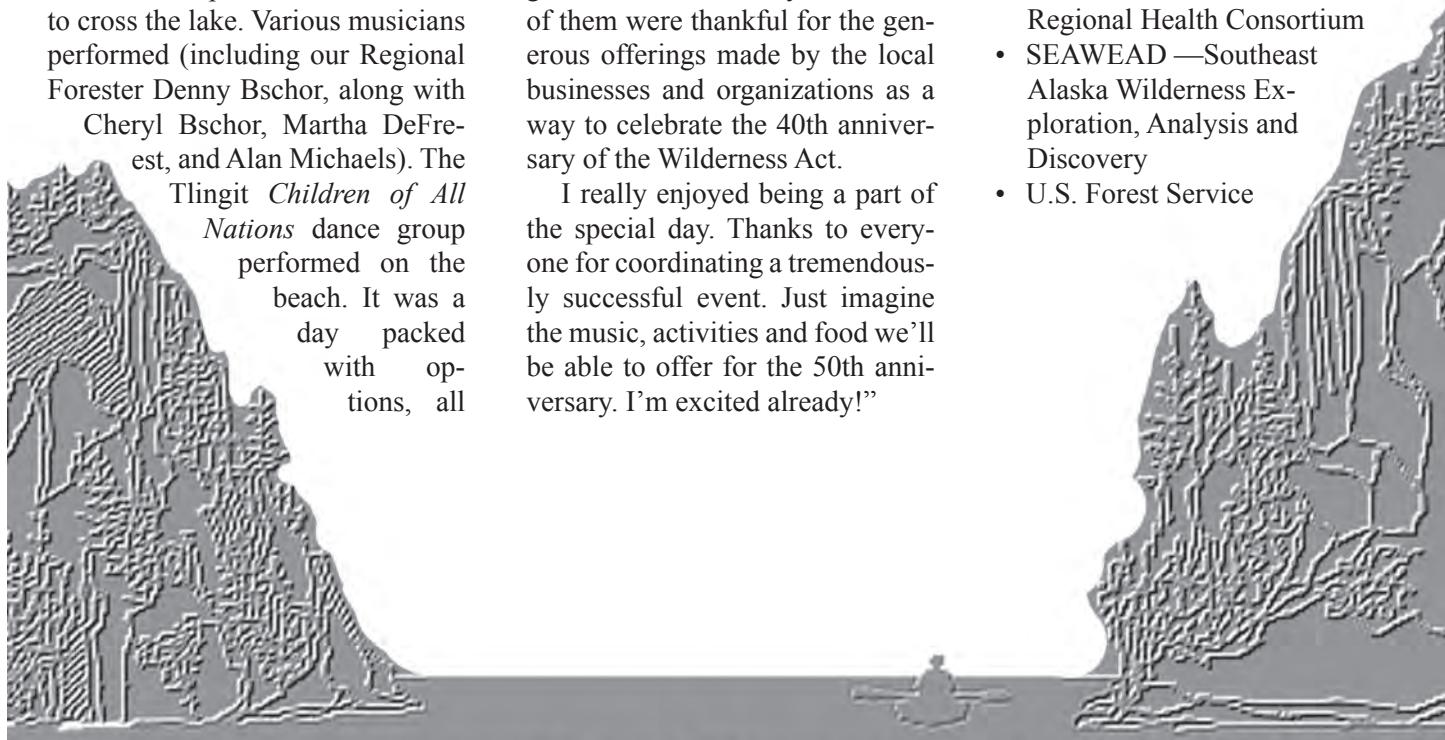
fitting within the normal bustle of one of the busiest visitor centers in Alaska.

Andrea Reynolds of Alaska Discovery staff said she came away with the feeling that the event was a huge success. She said, "Many people kayaked for the first time of their lives! They were thrilled for the opportunity to get out on the water and paddle amongst the bergs and experience the wilderness firsthand. We had a really wide range of age groups and abilities. The lack of wind and rain definitely helped us to attract a nice mixture of boaters. I talked to Juneau locals, cruise ship passengers, RV'ers and many others. All of them were thankful for the generous offerings made by the local businesses and organizations as a way to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

I really enjoyed being a part of the special day. Thanks to everyone for coordinating a tremendously successful event. Just imagine the music, activities and food we'll be able to offer for the 50th anniversary. I'm excited already!"

Partners in the 2004 Wilderness Fest:

- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Discovery—oldest wilderness guiding company
- Discovery Southeast—nonprofit natured education organization in Juneau
- Juneau Raptor Center
- SAIL—nonprofit organization providing independent living services to people with disabilities
- ORCA (Outdoor Recreation and Community Access)—the recreation program of SAIL.
- SEAAC—Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
- SEARHC—Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
- SEAWEAD —Southeast Alaska Wilderness Exploration, Analysis and Discovery
- U.S. Forest Service



40th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act 1964 - 2004

Alaskans Celebrating Wilderness

Leave No Trace in Glacier Ranger District

By: Jocelyn Gretz, Chugach National Forest

The national forests of Alaska have users from many walks of life: artists, sport fishermen, hunters, backpackers, rock and ice climbers, kayakers and snow machinists, to name a few. Although people may use National Forest System lands in different ways, each user is connected with the other users in *where* they recreate and *how* they recreate.

The Glacier Ranger District chose *Leave No Trace* as a theme for its float in this year's Forest Fair Parade, promoting wise and respectful use of our National Forest System lands. The float was designed to be an exemplary campsite with a mountain backdrop, completed with *Leave No Trace* banners along the sides, and signs throughout the campsite that listed the seven *Leave No Trace* principles. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl were also on the float, promoting their key messages of forest fire prevention and caring for the land. Forest Service naturalists walked alongside the float passing out candy, *Leave No Trace* information cards, and handouts explaining our bear resistant food container program.

Promoting Key Messages

Woodsy Owl's familiar message of "Lend a hand, care for the land" is closely related to the theme of *Leave No Trace*. As we see an increase in the number and type of users to the Chugach each year, encouraging users to follow the basic principles of *Leave No Trace* will help keep the forest healthy for wildlife and for future generations.

Smokey Bear's message of preventing wildfires goes hand in hand with the *Leave No Trace* principle of "Minimize Campfire Impacts." A pamphlet issued by *Leave No Trace* puts it



Woodsy Owl and Information Assistants Gwen Herrewig and Jocelyn Gretz riding on the Chugach National Forest float in the Forest Fair Parade. Photo by Kelly Frick.

best: "The legacy of campfires too often are trash-filled fire rings, charred rocks, damaged trees, and uncontrollable wildfires." This *Leave No Trace* principle encourages campers to reconsider having campfires and cook over a camp stove instead. In addition, *Leave No Trace* lists a number of ways users can keep their campfires safe including: following local fire regulations, using existing campfire rings, keeping a campfire small and under control and putting out campfires completely. These tips mirror many of the concepts Smokey has been promoting for 60 years.

Bear Resistant Food Containers Promoted

Encouraging *Leave No Trace* principles also provided the opportunity to showcase our bear resistant food container program. Forest Service interpreters used the containers which they clearly marked "Bear Proof" to store the candy and information they handing out to spectators. The *Leave No Trace* principle to "Respect Wildlife" reminded users never to feed wildlife,

whether they do so directly by baiting or indirectly by improper food storage.

The summer of 2003 marked the first year that the Glacier Ranger District offered bear resistant food containers free to check-out for users of the Chugach National Forest. In 2003, the containers were checked out a total of 48 times, with 46% of the containers checked out by users from out of state, 40% by locals from Anchorage, Girdwood and Portage, and the remaining 14% by Forest Service employees. The majority of parade-goers were locals, and expressed appreciation for this service.

Addressing the mutual interest of all users in keeping the national forests clean is central component of the *Leave No Trace* message. In the celebratory atmosphere of the parade, we were all reminded that everyone benefits from responsible recreation.



Smokey was on hand for the Forest Fair parade in the Girdwood Ranger District. Photo by Kelly Frick.

Students Take Flight

While Discovering The World Of Birds

By Kathleen Toth-Stauble, Seward Ranger District



A student enjoys the "Build a Sea Bird Activity" at the 2004 Bird Academy in Seward. Photo by Kathleen Toth-Stauble.

Inspiration Strikes

The National Audubon Society's Anchorage Chapter presented a "Bird Academy" facilitators' workshop in Seward in 2003. I attended along with other agency personnel, local teachers, and birding enthusiasts.

Two venturesome fourth grade teachers from Seward Elementary School decided we should test out our newly found knowledge, so they recruited me, along with Alice Hall, our district's Stream Watch Volunteer Coordinator. We planned a "shoot from the hip" test run on their 48 students. As

a result, the next two days were filled with nerve-racking excitement and more than a little chaos.

On the second day I thought, "If I volunteer to organize and coordinate this event for *all future fourth graders*, perhaps there will be less chaos and more learning." And so I did. The two teachers were thrilled with the Seward District's In-School Resource Education Program's offer to coordinate next year's Bird Academy. Alice Hall and I began planning presentations for Bird Academy 2004.

The inside of the Sea Life Center was very different than the outside. The center had been transformed. It was springtime. The makeshift mud flats were covered with migrating shorebirds (students with tweezers, clothes pins, and chopsticks probing through tubs of cornmeal). Birdcalls were drifting down the hallways. In one area, fledgling ornithologists practiced catching songbirds in mist nets (using fake birds), then weighing and banding them. Other students acted as predators, prowling through flocks of birds (also students). In the far end of the building, student birders with binoculars identified various birds by their distinguishing field marks.

These were just a few of the scenarios that took place at the Second Annual 2004 Bird Academy. Day One began with a grand welcome, and a fabulous story, *She's Wearing A Dead Bird On Her Head!* by Kathryn Lasky. After the opening ceremonies, the students broke into their

pre-arranged bird groups and began rotating through the five bird-related discovery stations. Each presentation lasted 30 minutes.

The Pay Off

On Day Two, we witnessed learning at its best! At each station, students were fully engaged, frantically waving their raised hands, wiggling side to side in their seats, and begging to be called on to give answers. It was clear the students were learning and making connections. These fourth graders were submerged into this world of birds, and were thinking and asking questions. It was inspiring.

Attending the Bird Academy was only one component of a semester long bird unit for these fourth grade students. The Forest Service's In-School Program provided the teachers with pre-academy resources in addition to the yearly scheduled 11-Step Bird ID presentations and assisting with the annual Bird Watching Field Trip.

Only two days after the Bird Academy, I received a call from one teacher requesting my owl presentation. She said the kids couldn't get enough and wanted to learn specifically about owls. Four days later I was in the classroom with a very receptive audience, a host of owl props, activities, and information galore.

Bird Academy 2004 Takes Flight

Outside was snowy and cold, while inside, a cohesive team of eight eagerly awaited for the budding fourth grade ornithologists. Two Forest Service biologists, an interpreter, three educators from the Sea Life Center, a Park Service interpreter, and a volunteer from the community made up the team.

Day One began with a grand welcome, and a fabulous story, *She's Wearing A Dead Bird On Her Head!* by Kathryn Lasky. After the opening ceremonies, the students broke into their

September will soon be on our doorstep and planning will commence for Bird Academy 2005. The Bird Academy will be part of the 2004-2005 curriculum for the other three small schools on our District.

This summer I believe there are 42, nine and ten year olds out in their national forest and in their backyards looking at birds in a whole new way. I hope they are developing a life-long appreciation and awareness for birds. Some of them, I know, are dreaming about becoming ornithologists. **gg**

Wilderness Paddling in Yakutat: the Australian perspective

By: Linda Thai, Volunteer, Yakutat Ranger District



Volunteers Linda Thai and Thom Kain prepare to kayak.

Being from Oz, I've never seen much ice before. Mate, I've seen snow three times in my 27 years, and walked on ice once. All this cold stuff is exotic for me. And what are kayaks? We surf-ski down under... so how did this happy little Vegemite find herself volunteering for the U.S. Forest Service in Yakutat, Alaska, and helping to organize a Wilderness Kayak trip?

I was in Yakutat volunteering with SAGA (Southeast Alaska Guidance Association). Word got out that I used to work in corporate marketing (all rumor and innuendo of course); so when my tour of duty with SAGA finished, I was quickly pressed into service.

Yakutat District Ranger Tricia O'Connor wanted an event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act with a "Paddle for Wilderness" event on Harlequin Lake in the Russell Fiord Wilderness. The Yakutat Press Gang had already rounded up kayaking expertise in the form of fellow volunteer Tom "The Kayaking Guru" Kain. If you ever get the pleasure of meeting Tom, you'll sus out (figure out) pretty quickly that he's a very basic guy, hence The Guru part of his moniker - and perhaps because he's sickeningly good in a kayak. So here I am, from the land of sun and surf, learning about kayaking and ice, and I was keen as mustard!

We kicked off on July 16 with a kayak clinic at Sandy Beach, located within Monti Bay in the heart of Yakutat's throbbing commercial, night-life and fish canning district. I ran the sessions on Kayaking History and Hypothermia. The Guru ran the practical sessions: kayaking basics, paddle strokes,

and rescue procedures (Tom was the rescuee, I was the rescuer). I botched up the first rescue, so The Guru demonstrated the importance of mastering self-rescue!

We followed up the Kayak Clinic with a Wilderness Paddle at Harlequin Lake the following arvo (afternoon).

Now, let me describe Harlequin Lake for you. It's ringed by the Wrangell-St Elias Mountain Range to the north and has a gigantic ice machine (supplied by Yakutat Glacier, Inc.) dumping ice of colossal proportions into her waters—a real beaut (really beautiful), and the perfect location for a wilderness kayak trip.

On Saturday, July 17, the crew of 14 people assembled at Dangerous River where The Guru and myself assisted those who required kayaks, safety equipment and safety briefings. Tricia O'Connor spoke about the Wilderness Act from her kayak on Harlequin Lake. She said, "Forty years ago, conservation leaders enacted legislation unique to the world. As a result, the Forest Service has become the pre-eminent leader in the conservation and stewardship of wild



Tom Kain teaches kayak basics.

landscapes. I'm proud that the Forest Service has been entrusted with these treasures and that we have employees capable of caring for perpetuating wilderness."

Two traveling Manhattanites who walked into the Yakutat Forest Service Office three days prior, had no idea they were soon to be accosted by Kevin Schaberg and me for a rip snorting adventure. They'd never ever been kayaking before, and I figure that no matter where else they go kayaking in the future, nothing will match the scenery or unexpected nature of this particular trip.

Kayaking amongst the icebergs on Harlequin Lake is a magical experience. Caleb ("I like being comfortable") Wiseman and I both stopped paddling to be still with the majesty of the moment. As for everyone else, all I have to say is: what gives with paddling all the time? Kayaking is not about paddling. I was getting quite aggro (aggravated) and my blood would've boiled if it wasn't for the house-sized frozen slushies around me.

All feeling a bit peckish (hungry), we disembarked at a shoreline which had nothing particularly special to offer, apart from lots of driftwood. Chris

Sitka Ranger District Celebrates Summer

By: Janet Seals, Tongass National Forest



Zimri Hinshaw and Ben Homgren get set for Kid Fishing Day in Sitka. Photo by Janet Seals.

Gary Brons set up a fish print booth that turned out to be very popular with kids who wanted a break from fishing. District Ranger Carol Goularte joined the fun. Michael Stringer of the Sitka Tribe volunteered his services as entomologist for the "View-a-Bug" station. Fish & Wildlife employees stocked the lake in advance, and weighed and measured the fish on check-in. The Rotary Club announced the winners. This year's grand prize was flightseeing trip for three, donated by a local air charter company. A total of 90 registered youths ages 3 to 12 checked in 120 cutthroat, rainbow, and Dolly Varden trout in three hours.

In June, we began the summer "Campfire Talks" at the Starrigavan Amphitheater, hosted by Jim Case, the new Information/Education technician. Jim offers a new topic every Saturday evening, along with a campfire, marshmallows, and roasting sticks. Case's topics have included:

- "Dungies: How to Handle a Crabby Customer" (catching, cooking, and eating dungeness crabs)
- Kings, Silvers, Reds, Pinks, and Dogs—the Life and Times of Salmon"
- "Handloggers, Trappers, and Fur Farmers in the Tongass National Forest"
- "Perilous Tides—Stories from our Shorelines"

In addition to the Saturday evening campfires, Case has also helped with a number of new interpretive events in the Sitka Ranger District, including guided hikes and talks during the week.

On June 19, in conjunction with national Take-a-Kid-Fishing Day, the 61st Annual Kids' Swan Lake Fishing Day was held in Sitka. The Forest Service joined the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Rotary Club to make a memorable event for local junior "anglers." Corrine Ferguson helped organize the program and recruit volunteers to register the kids. Sammy Salmon (aka Jared Nunery), Jim Case, and



Employees Buck Seals, Pat Heuer, Linn Shipley, Greg Killinger, Ken Coffin, Hans vonRekowski, and retiree John Sherrod escorted new flag. Photo by Lyle and Jacqueline Hodges.



Michael Stringer volunteered to be the entomologist at the "View-a-Bug" Station. Photo by Janet Seals.



The 40th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act is remembered at the Fourth of July parade. Photo by Janet Seals.

sea breeze keeps the sun cool, and the mosquitoes away.

Two Blue Jays accompanied me on my fire pit rounds. They were more interested in my bag of trash than what I had to say to them. I told them all about the mountains in view from the other side of our peninsula. "They're transparent," I told them. "They are there, far across these ocean waters. They float on the sea behind Fire Island. They float like you fly. You wouldn't like it there—cold, and snowy. No trash. Why is Fire Island called Fire Island, Jays? Have you been there before? Is it burning?" The Jays spoke only silence.

Gulls are squawking ridiculously to my left, below, and I wonder if they are playing in the mud. Reveling in it. One comes up from below me and startles me onto my back. An invitation to play? If only I could fly. I'd fly to those translucent mountains beyond.

I will sleep on this rock tonight. I will dream of the wild roses and the mud flats below. I will dream of the gulls and the eagles and the lone black crow. I spread into the breeze, and the ancient writhing of the mossy hemlock trees. I will dream of the middle current, blue, headed out to sea, and of Denali's mass I can barely see. In the morning I will wake and wonder if I am still dreaming.

After dinner but before sleep I skirt the cliff banks on the northwest of Gull Rock and find a path down to the mud flat beach. I stroll upon the dry mud towards the water, completely oblivious to the guttural quicksand that could be lying below. My feet do not leave impressions in the dry, hardened silt, thus the naked footprints that appear in this soft mud seem to be of immaculate conception. The mud flat lays in a broad crescent shape, maybe 120 yards

long. Around the rocky corner of the western crescent tip a smaller peninsula of rocks supports a throne of sand amongst tide pools.

In the warmth of the sun my body melts into Mountain pose. Staring into the sun with my eyes closed, I turn my palms to the sea. Thirty seconds? Two minutes? Thirty minutes? I spend many breathes as a mountain. From there I cross my legs and seat myself in the sand. Finally I rise. Mud squishes through my toes, kelp pops under my weight. I rinse my feet in the sea and am surprised to find its temperature hospitable.

I inhale, and upon exhaling the whole of my body tingles with energy. This was not the picture I had of a summer in Alaska: midnight beach bum. I'll take this picture instead though. I'll frame it too, I believe, and sign it with invisible ink. ☺

Nature Condos

By: Matt Moran, Yakutat Ranger District

The seventh grade students of the Yakutat School District and their teacher Deb Caron, helped the Forest Service hang owl boxes this spring. The kids and the Forest Service hung twenty-five boxes along Forest Highways 10, 9968, and 9969, approximately 10 to 30 feet from the ground. The boxes were installed in areas with large spruce trees near water. I found these areas to be the most productive during owl surveys conducted last year. These boxes accommodate small owls such as saw-whet owls, northern pygmy owls, and northern screech owls. In addition, other species such as the American kestrel or squirrels may be found utilizing these new homes.

Jay Sin, Kyle Dierick, and teacher Rod Ryll built the nest boxes in shop class. The seventh grade class then added 2-3 inches of saw dust to cover the bottom of the box for bedding before hanging them in the trees. Everyone in the seventh grade class now

has a personalized box with their name inscribed on it, and will be able to monitor them for the next couple of years to see "who" is using them.

Because wind-throw is common on the Yakutat Ranger District, retention of snags is often difficult in certain areas. Previous timber harvest on pri-



Esther Eshenshade has fun hanging an owl box.
Photo by Matt Moran.

ate will help us identify species utilizing these areas and provide outdoor education opportunities for our seventh grade nature lovers as well as the residents and visitors of Yakutat. ☺

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Left: The kayakers leave for a paddle around Sandy Beach. Right: Kayakers paddle with a scenic iceberg backdrop. All photos by Chris Grove.

Grove, Supervisory Resource Assistant, put his years of smoke jumping and fire fighting to good use, building a beach-fire to be proud of. Food was taken out of the esky (Eskimo box, or cooler box) and passed around, and hot dogs were cooked on sticks. By the way (I'm putting on my serious tone of voice here), cooking sausages on sticks is not done in Australia. It's just not cricket! In case you're wondering, we

throw the snags (sausages) on the barbecue.

We Aussies don't get too serious about much, so please accept my kindly-meant advice on cross-cultural relations: Fair dinkum (truly roolly honestly), if you're cooking a hot dog on a stick in Australia or around Australians, don't be offended if we look at you like you are freak from another planet.

As you can tell, I was about to have a spack attack (spastic attack), so I found a comfy pozzie (comfortable position) and had a kip (nap). When I woke up, almost everyone was making tracks, except for Caleb and Erin Shanley. We set up camp for the night, and woke up next to an iceberg-filled lake. Life doesn't get much better than this!

So, as we say down under: Mate, what a ripper of a day! ☺

Handicapped Accessible Fishing Piers

By: Rob Spangler and Liz Copeland, Chugach National Forest

Fishing in Portage Valley will be easier this year for anglers with disabilities, thanks to the cooperative efforts of Challenge Alaska and the Chugach National Forest. Challenge Alaska, a non-profit organization seeking to improve opportunities and public awareness for people with disabilities across the state, and the Glacier Ranger District worked together to replace and improve the design of two fishing piers at Alder Pond. Challenge Alaska provided support to purchase some of the construction materials as well as valuable input on project design. The Glacier Ranger District Fisheries Staff lead by Merlyn Schelske, teamed up with Supervisor's Office Engineering Staff members Vanessa Alao-MacLeod and Kent Kohlhase to make sure construction was completed in time for National Fishing Week. The site, located in Portage Valley, is a popular fishing hole for rainbow trout and is stocked annually by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Currently, there are few fishing opportunities for the physically challenged in Alaska, especially in more remote settings that many Alaskans and visitors enjoy. Improving fishing access for all ages and levels of physical mobility is an area we are placing more emphasis on. The fishing piers at Alder Pond are a part of a larger

network of projects to be constructed by the Glacier Ranger District in Portage Valley. In the future, all-accessible trails and other infrastructure will link Alder Pond with other areas, such as the Moose Flats day use area. Heather Plucinski, Fund Development Direc-



Accessible Alder Point is a great place for the physically challenged to enjoy a day of fishing. Photo by Rob Spangler.

tor for Challenge Alaska, commended the project saying, "We are very pleased and look forward to future collaborative projects with the U.S. Forest Service to develop accessible fishing, camping, and hiking opportunities for people with disabilities." ☺

Hoonah Ranger District Assists Pelican

By: John Baldwin, Hoonah District Ranger

Hoonah Ranger District employees and their families attended a double totem raising ceremony in Pelican this spring.

District personnel assisted in carrying the heavy totems, on wooden supports, down the Pelican boardwalk to two separate locations. The bear totem was erected at the top of the harbor ramp and is holding a halibut, which represents the towns fishing heritage. The raven totem was erected in front of the community building. About 75 people attended the ceremony.



Left: The raven totem that will be raised at the Hoonah community building. Right: District employees support the heavy bear totem that will be raised at the harbor. Photos by Tina Dinzl-Pederson.

The two totems were carved by Tsimpshian master-carver Stan Marsden. Mr. Marsden made the most of the opportunity by instructing Pelican

school students and other community members in the art of Totem carving during the two years it took to complete them. ♫

Recycling News

By: Kerri Roepke, Environmental Engineer, Tongass National Forest



Leslie Swada pitches in to aid the recycling effort. Photo by Kerri Roepke.

The Environmental Engineering group has started a new recycling program at the Ketchikan and Sitka Supervisor's Offices and updated the existing program in the Petersburg Supervisor's Office. The Ketchikan Office now recycles white paper, mixed paper, aluminum, glass, and cardboard. The Petersburg Office recycles white paper, magazines, cardboard, toner cartridges, aluminum, plastic and glass, and the Sitka Office recycles white paper, cardboard and aluminum.

All three offices have also taken on a battery recycling program. Alkaline, lithium, nickel cadmium, mercury, lead, silver, cell phone batteries, laptop batteries, PDA's, camera batteries, calculator batteries and cordless tool batteries can all be recycled. When the boxes are full, volunteers send them to a battery recycling center in California.

At the Ketchikan recycling center, receipts are obtained each time a load has been taken for recycling. Since recording began in January, a total 4,960 pounds of cardboard, paper, glass and cans that has been recycled! Great job, Ketchikan, for using all of those new bins.

The program could not be successful if it was not for the volunteers at each office. Thanks are extended to Karen Hopfer and Emil Tucker in Petersburg and Tom Krantz and Robin Beebee in Sitka. If there is any District on the Tongass that would like help with an existing program, or to start a new recycling program, please contact Kerri Roepke. kroepke@fs.fed.us.

As Forest Service employees we should set an example of environmental conservation by utilizing opportunities such as these. Thanks to everyone who has been supportive of the recycling program. ♫



Left: Typical oak forest in central Armenia. Right: Armen Gevorgyan, Ruzanna Martirosyan, and Artashes Manaseryan. Photos by Cynthia Snyder.



Our team:

- **Cynthia Snyder**, Forest Health Protection, Alaska Region
- **Gerard Hertel**, Forest Service retiree, now with West Chester University of Pennsylvania
- **Armen Gevorgyan**, World Bank Natural Resources Management & Poverty Reduction Project
- **Ruzanna Martirosyan**, translator
- **Artashes Manaseryan**, Hayantar State Noncommercial Organization (Armenian equivalent of the Forest Service)

Backcountry Ranger

By: Cisco Tharp, Volunteer Backcountry Ranger, Chugach National Forest

(Editor's Note: We don't usually publish poetry or prose, but this excerpt from the writings of Cisco Tharp is included by popular demand! I hope you enjoy this departure from our usual style. Let me know what you think.)

I am on Gull Rock. It is a small peninsula that juts out from the Turnagain arm of the Pacific Ocean. To my north is a civilized world: Anchorage, which is directly across the arm. Behind Anchorage, through a smoke like haze, is the ghost of Denali. My feet are swaying off a grassy hump into 60 feet of air. The ocean is slowly eroding the rocks below. The currents of the sea are three: one blue be-

tween two brown. One flowing in between two flowing out. The moon pulls them, asserting its presence in the midnight sun, struggling to not be forgotten. I have finished ranging for the day. Here I tended the fire rings. Four in all: north, south, east and west. I shoveled the ashes of cremated earth, spreading them into the winds. I spread them south, downwind, into the hemlock and ferns. It is a fitting ceremony for such a place.

Gull Rock is a spider web of trails, and like the spider's web the ferns and broadleaf shrubs that mark these trails sparkle in the hemlock filtered sunlight. The trails lead in many directions. Some to a vista, a buena vista. Others to a bon-fired camp site. Some, however, seem to lead nowhere. Perhaps only the seagulls and bald eagles, circling above, offer their reverence here. Wild roses shudder in the wind on the lips of the sea cliffs. I shudder with them. The

Forests of Armenia

By: Cynthia Snyder, State & Private Forestry

The Republic of Armenia is located in the southern Caucasus Mountains in southwestern Asia and is the smallest of the former Soviet republics. Since its independence in 1991, Armenia has emerged as a strategically important country in the Caucasus. U.S. ties to Armenia are many and varied, ranging from the cultural bond of the large Armenian-American Diaspora community, to diverse commercial interests and political relationships.



Prior to the 1992 opening of the first U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia suffered a number of devastating incidents. They included a major earthquake in 1988 that killed 25,000, a trade embargo imposed by neighboring Turkey because of the conflict with Azerbaijan, and a total economic collapse following independence in 1991. To address these combined crises, U.S. programs from 1992 to 1995 focused on humanitarian assistance through USAID (United States Agency for International Development.) From 1995, U.S. assistance has increasingly emphasized systemic reform and institution building.

Federal programs administered by the USDA are in place in Armenia to promote and support agriculture, however, the Forest Service has not been a part of that effort. On May 31-June 13, 2004, the Forest Service sent a team to

evaluate not only the insect and disease problems in the forested regions of Armenia, but also the organization for how these problems are currently evaluated, and to make recommendations for how best to deal with future problems.

The forests of Armenia are composed primarily of oak, beech and hornbeam with various pine plantations. Although fuel and some wood products, such as parquet flooring and furniture, are derived, the primary goal of forest

management is ecological benefits including soil and water conservation, climate regulation, wildlife habitat, recreation, and harvest of traditional foods and medicines. The importance of forests to the Armenian people can be seen by the many religious sites scattered all through the landscape.

Armenian forests are concentrated in the north and far southeast regions. Since the beginning of the 20th century, forest cover has decreased dramatically from 25% of Armenia's land area to barely 9%. This has been a result of industrial growth from 1930-50 and the energy crisis of 1991-94 following the Soviet collapse and the energy blockade as Armenian people relied on wood for heating and cooking. In Armenia, 70% of the wood harvested is still for fuel (500,000 m³ annually). The World Bank estimates that at the current rate, Armenia's forests will be eliminated in 20 years. This seems to be an exaggeration considering the remoteness, inaccessibility of many of the forests; however, this does not minimize the serious impacts people are having on the forests.

We conducted interviews with Hyantar officials and foresters at ten forest enterprises (the equivalent of national forests), NGO's, universities, and local pest specialists. We reviewed current publications dealing with Armenian forests and their associated problems. From these sources we came up with the following conclusions:



Gerard Heter and Cynthia Snyder were a good team in Armenia. Photo by Cynthia Snyder.

Both legal and illegal cutting exert pressure on the forests. Experts estimate that 1,250,000 cubic meters are harvested legally and illegally each year in Armenia. Livestock grazing prevents forest regeneration in many locations. Tree nurseries are few and little tree planting is done by Hayantar (Armenia Tree Project, a Yerevan-based non-government organization, or NGO, has tree nursery and planting programs for selected community lands).

Many sources refer to the poor condition of Armenia's forests; however, these do not point out the impacts of insects and diseases. It is believed by local specialists that unless due consideration is given to pests, efforts at forest management will result in insects and disease devastating the remaining forests.

Little forest management activity is done. Forests exist to protect various ecosystem functions, not for sustainable tree harvesting. At present, sanitation cuttings (removal of dead trees) are the only accepted forest manage-

An Observer and the "Last Great Viking"

By: Jim Case, Sitka Ranger District, Tongass National Forest



Left: The "White House" in Sitka operates as an interpretive center. Photo by Sandy Russell. Right: Roald Amundson and Dr. H.M.W. Edmonds. Photo courtesy of the Sitka Historical Society.



Sitka Ranger District has developed a "mini interpretive center" at the Forest Service House located in downtown Sitka at 210 Seward Street. A volunteer interpreter greets visitors at the home (formerly known as either the "Geomagnetic Survey House" or the "White House") Monday through Friday during summer months. The two large rooms on the first floor are dedicated to display information related to the history of the Forest Service House in Sitka and the Sitka Ranger District.

This building, managed by the Forest Service since 1961, is on the National Register of Historic Places. It has served as quarters for scientific observers employed by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. The building has been occupied by the U.S. Army, Alaska Communications System, and most recently, as housing for staff from the Sitka Ranger District.

This gambrel-roofed, cottage-style, two-story home was originally built in 1916 by one of the scientists assigned to observe magnetic and seismic instruments for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Prior to 1916, the observers lived in another dwelling just around the corner from the present site of the

Forest Service House. The first observer, Dr. H.M.W. Edmonds arrived in Sitka in 1901. That year, he built several small buildings at the top of Observatory Street to house the instruments used to help make accurate adjustments to magnetic compasses. In 1901 the magnetic instruments and seismograph were the closest such tools to the North Pole. Navigators, surveyors and a host of scientists were reliant on the regular data provided by the observers in Sitka.

By 1906, Dr. Edmonds had collected five year's worth of solid data. That year, a famous visitor arrived in Sitka. Roald Amundson, a renowned polar explorer had just completed the world's first navigation through the Northwest Passage. At the end of this three-year exploration, Amundson came to Sitka to verify the accuracy of his magnetic instruments by comparing his readings from the Arctic with the geomagnetic data in Sitka. Amundson spent several days in Sitka meeting with Edmonds and socializing with the townsfolk. Amundson went on to become the first person to fly over the North Pole in a dirigible and the first person to reach the South Pole. His visit to Sitka helped establish world-wide scientific prestige among researchers who would later inhabit the Forest Service House. ♫

Oja Recognized

By Mike Novy, Chugach National Forest



Warren Oja, forester on the Chugach National Forest, was formally recognized in Soldotna by Kenai land managers for his leadership in the formulation of the interagency "All Hands/All Lands" hazardous fuels reduction plan. The plaque was signed by all agency representatives. Congratulations, Warren! ♫

Warren Oja is honored by Dale Bagley, Mayor of Kenai Peninsula Borough, for his work on "All Hands/All Lands."

Yakutat Weeds in Serious Danger

Due to Efforts of Determined Locals

By: Tom Heutte, State & Private Forestry, and Tricia O'Connor, Yakutat District Ranger

The collective cry went out: "We need to rid Yakutat of these invaders!" The invaders, in fact, were plants.

If you are like most Alaskans, you have little to no experience with invasive species. You may not realize that even daisies can be considered an invasive plant. Dedicated Forest Service employees, however, are trying to change public awareness of this growing problem.

On July 8-9, I traveled to Yakutat to conduct an invasive plants inventory, monitoring, and management workshop. At first, it took some effort on my part to convince everyone that "those beautiful white and orange flowers" they found could be a threat. However, with some striking, vivid examples, by the end of the day, everyone was ready to go on the offensive.

On Thursday, the group learned about:

- the ecology of invasive plants
- the threats and harms invasive plants pose to plant communities
- which plants are of concern in SE Alaska
- methods for managing invasive plants, and
- tips for community action groups wanting to manage invasives.

On Friday, participants went on a "Search, Document, and Destroy" field trip. Staff from the ranger district and Salmon Board traveled the Yakutat road system and checked out a variety of weed locations reported by members of the group. The first stop was



Group members from the Yakutat Salmon Board and the Yakutat Ranger District enter data in the invasive plants database. Photo by Tom Heutte.

near the coastal spit to check out a report of oxeye daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) growing in a marshy area. Oxeye daisies, although seemingly innocuous, are capable of forming dense stands in undisturbed areas where they

near the coastal spit to check out a report of oxeye daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) growing in a marshy area. Oxeye daisies, although seemingly innocuous, are capable of forming dense stands in undisturbed areas where they

ive grasses. It is always necessary to have a plan for establishing desirable plants in an area when removing invasive weeds.

While pulling up the daisies, the group found reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), which presented an opportunity to get acquainted with this grass species. Reed canary grass was planted as a soil stabilizer in many areas throughout Southeast Alaska, and is spreading in some places out into native plant communities. Everyone spent time learning how to document weed locations using Global Positioning System and what kind of information to collect for Alaska's statewide exotic plants information clearinghouse.

Next stop was the road to the airport in search of a patch of orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) that Ranger Tricia O'Connor had attempted to pull last summer. They finally spotted the distinct vermillion flower heads growing in a patch several square yards in size. Orange hawkweed is an attractive flower, but can be very invasive in undisturbed meadow habitats. For example, on Camp Island in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, it has taken over native meadows. Since this plant is very resistant to mowing and hand pulling, the group decided to talk to the local Department of Transportation maintenance staff to see if the site could be treated with herbicides. This type of site is ideal for herbicide use because it is a plant that is difficult to treat by hand or mechanical methods,

and it is a very small, isolated population that can be dealt with early, using a very small amount of chemical, before the population gets too large to control. If herbicides could not be used, other treatment methods would be pursued.

There is more survey work to do as well as more effort to educate local residents about the threats of invasive plants. However, while "downtown" Yakutat does have its share of alien weeds and a few invasive species, the area surrounding it seems to be largely free of these pests.

The workshop was a collaborative effort with the Yakutat Salmon Board and the Yakutat Ranger District. The project was funded through the Yakutat Resource Advisory Committee, or "RAC." The RAC is made up of 15 dedicated Southeast Alaska residents

who are responsible for recommending projects for funding through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, also known as "Payments to States" legislation. Projects must improve infrastructure maintenance, implement stewardship objectives that enhance forested ecosystems, or restore and improve land health and water quality. The invasive plants project was recommended by the RAC as ideal, and approved by Tongass Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole this past spring.

This type of collaborative project—one that protects and restores native ecosystems and brings together communities—is what the Payments to States legislation and Yakutat RAC funding is all about. ☈



Worker pulls daisies at the local elementary school. Photo by Tom Heutte.

A Taste of the Stikine River

By: Patty Grantham, Petersburg District Ranger, and Chip Weber, former Wrangell District Ranger

Regional Forester Denny Bschor recently visited central Southeast to review the newly-established sockeye salmon subsistence fishery on the Stikine River. He was joined on the trip by Tongass Deputy Forest Supervisor Olleke Rappe-Daniels, personnel from the Wrangell and Petersburg Districts and the regional office, fishery proponent Dick Stokes, and members of the local press. The trip provided an opportunity to monitor subsistence activities as well as celebrate this important event. The Stikine is a traditional use area for subsistence fisherman in local communities. The fishery commenced July 1 and was scheduled to last the entire month. Twenty-six permits had been issued by July 15 and 40 fish had been harvested.

The visit allowed Forest Service officials to meet with some of the fishermen pursuing the wiley sockeye, including Dick Stokes, a Tlingit elder from Wrangell who proposed this fishery and worked hard to make it happen. "It was great to visit this site and



Local subsistence fisherman John Murgas shares some of the fruits of his labor--fresh from the smoker! From left to right: Denny Bschor, John Murgas, Olleke Rappe-Daniels, and Dick Stokes. Photo by Patty Grantham.

talk with the people who benefit from the outcome of those long meetings I participate in," said Bschor, referring to his membership on the Federal Sub-

sistence Board. "This makes it real and gives me a nice sense of satisfaction that the work we do makes a difference to folks." ☈