

SourDough Notes



USDA Forest Service
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Alaska Region
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Spring 2005

ON THE COVER:

Geodetic disk placed at Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center in honor of the Forest Service Centennial. Photo by: Teresa Haugh.

SourDough Notes

Quarterly newsletter for the employees and retirees of the
USDA Forest Service

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Spring 2005

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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. Submitted digital photos should be sent as high resolution TIF or JPG. Please contact the Public Affairs Office if you have questions.

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Employee Honor Day Celebration at Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. Top: Juneau Ranger District employees Martha DeFreest and Zach Freiwald provided entertainment for the ice cream social, and Ron Marvin acted as Master of Ceremonies. Bottom: U.S. Coast Guard Honor Guard stood at attention during national moment of silence. Photos by Bob Price and Teresa Haugh.



Employee of the Year

Robert Sheets
Craig Ranger District
For outstanding contributions to his group, and for demonstrating exemplary competencies, skills, and abilities.

Robert Sheets and
Denny Bschor



Maher, Ricci, Ward, Cieciel, Craig, Musarra, Bschor.

New Century of Service Award

Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Staff,
Juneau Ranger District
Larry Musarra, Laurie Ferguson Craig,
Maegan Cieciel, Wayne Ward,
Karen Maher, Steve Ricci

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Forest Service, to recognize a way of working that combines past traditions and core values with new thinking and a fresh spirit of service.

Excellence in Supervision

Cherie Shelley, Regional Office
and Molly Murphy,
Tongass National Forest
For providing outstanding leadership to the workforce in the Alaska Region

Cherie Shelley and Denny Bschor



Sheila Jacobson from the
Craig Ranger District
received an Honor Day
Award for her fisheries
work in Region 1.



Partnership Award

On Your Knees Cave Research Group
Terence Fifield, Tongass National Forest
Rosita Worl, Sealaska Heritage Institute
James Dixon, University of Colorado
Timothy Heaton, University of South Dakota
Millie Stevens, Craig Community Association
Webster Demmert, Klawock Community Association
For innovative and creative partnership and collaborative approaches to planning a successful implementation of Forest Service projects or programs.



Terry
Fifield
and
Denny
Bschor



Denny Bschor and
Marcia Staten

Excellence In Providing Business Operations Support

Human Resources Service Center Staff:
Karlene Hale, Tammy Scroggs,
Roy Morris, Nina Knecht,
Rhonda George, Sophia Chapman,
Warren Pellet, Teresa Richards,
Mary Dowling, Cheri Friend,
Nathalie Rice, Pat Nannauck,
Julie Simpson, Debbie Hallek,
Sally Gregory, Christina Sanchez,
Charisse Eveland, Sandra Meshew,
Penny Coronell, Maria Strafford,
Ada Feak

To recognize individuals, who through their efforts, have made outstanding contributions to their group and who have demonstrated exemplary competencies, skills and abilities required to fulfill their duties.

Regional Forester Awards at Honor Day

By: Regional Forester's Office, Alaska Region

Regional Forester Denny Bschor gave out the first annual Alaska Regional Forester Awards on Employee Honor Day May 3, 2005 at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center in Juneau. Nominations were received from around the region in a variety of categories. Regional award winners were submitted as nominees for the corresponding Chief's Awards which will be presented in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., June 23, 2005.

Chief Dale Bosworth recently announced that the R-10 Alaska Pulp Corporation Cleanup Team will receive the Gridlock Breaking Award for "demonstrating innovative and creative approaches to planning and successful implementation of projects or programs on National Forest System lands," and for, "breaking through the gridlock that is often problematic in the current legal or regulatory framework that governs management of national forests and grasslands."

The team of Deputy Regional Forester Steve Brink, Director of Engineering & Aviation Management Keith Simila, and Deputy Director of Engineering & Aviation Management Ken Vaughan, spent four painstaking months creating a memorandum of understanding with the Alaska Pulp Corporation. The corporation was a potentially responsible party for environmental contamination

associated at 83 former logging camps and log transfer facilities on the Tongass National Forest.

The MOU was signed September 14, 2002 to get contamination identified and cleaned up in an expedited manner. It began the first private-party response action for environmental cleanup in the Forest Service. Sites were visited and evaluated, a final list of 20 clean-up sites was determined, and work plans for a number of these sites were completed by late spring 2003. Never before has a cooperative, private party response action for a cleanup of this magnitude been accomplished by the Forest Service. The jointly-agreed-upon approach, and the supplemental sampling contract conservatively saved the agency \$5,000,000 in site investigation costs and cleanup costs, along with two years or more of administrative time for the actual cleanup. The expedited processes saved Alaska Pulp Corporation five million dollars by integrating comprehensive cleanup contingencies



Ken Vaughan, Keith Simila and Steve Brink accept their awards from Regional Forester Denny Bschor.

into work plans so that work efforts were not delayed by discovery of hazardous substances. This jointly agreed upon removal action at 20 Alaska Pulp Corporation sites was accomplished in 26 months.

Congratulations are extended to the winners of the Gridlock Breaking Award. Other award winners in various categories follow. The newly designed annual tradition of Regional Forester Awards will ensure that the work and innovation of Alaska Region employees will be recognized by their coworkers, supervisors, and friends. ☘



Photos from cleanup at Saginaw Bay. Left: One of six distinct sites where batteries and battery pieces were discovered.

Middle: Abandoned 55-gallon drums were found scattered around site, most empty, however some with contents.

Right: Generator pit where nearly 400 yards of diesel contaminated soils were removed. Initial discovery based on abandoned drum.

McLaughlin Youth Center Plays Vital Role

By Ruth D'Amico, Fisheries Technician, Seward Ranger District



McLaughlin Youth Center kids pounding rebar and attaching fencing. Photos by Eric Johansen and Elizabeth Bella.

The Russian River is the jewel of the Chugach National Forest. The clear waters of the Russian River flow from Upper Russian Lake into the contrasting glacial blue water of the famed Kenai River. Local anglers and visitors from around the world visit the river for the annual sockeye salmon runs.

Typically, 70,000 anglers walk the banks of the Russian River to partake in the two distinct sockeye runs from June through August. Foot traffic has caused degradation of the riverbanks, loss of fisheries habitat, and impacts on cultural resources and recreational areas. Two major components of the successful restoration project are: installation of temporary fencing to protect sensitive areas, and Stream Watch—a volunteer program to educate visitors and anglers about reducing their impacts on the river and reasons for our restoration efforts.

Every spring, prior to opening day on the Russian River, a group of young men from the McLaughlin Youth Center, a juvenile justice facility, provide vital assistance to the Forest Service fish crew and Stream Watch

personnel by installing over one mile of temporary fencing in just one day. If Forest Service personnel were to install the fencing it would take four days!

Installation of this temporary fencing helps protect the riparian vegetation from being trampled. In addition to fencing, other chores include: preparing campgrounds for summer use, removing downed trees, clearing brush, and installing interpretive signs along the boardwalk.



Light penetrating boardwalk with fencing. Photo by Elizabeth Bella.

After a hard day of rebar (steel rod) pounding, unrolling and attaching fence to the rebar, and assisting with placement of re-vegetation signs on the fencing, these guys are ready for a

hearty dinner. After their well-deserved feast, they still have energy for some fun and games around the campfire.

In the fall, the McLaughlin Youth Center folks return to the Russian River to once again assist in this resource project. They take down and roll the still usable fencing for next year's use. They remove and store the rebar, pull fish cleaning stations out of the river, and carry interpretive signs up to the campground for winter storage.

Bringing these supervised young men into the forest for a weekend of hard work with no walls or barbed wire fences, has met with some skepticism, yet has proven to be incredibly successful. All of us who work with these young men look forward to this day on the river. The counselors who supervise these work-related camping trips enjoy these weekends as much as we do.

We attempt to give the young men something special to take home, a day to be proud of, and a service to be commended. All their hard work is for the greater good. They are giving something back to the community and feeling great about their part in maintaining the Russian River. ☸

Reliving Memories

By: Janet Seals, Sitka Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

Subsistence hunting and fishing permits are just another of the routine seasonal “chores” that many Forest Service employees accept as part of the Alaskan way of life. It’s easy to forget, in a modern world big box stores, how deeply subsistence lifestyles influence many people who regularly use the Tongass National Forest to harvest edible plants, fish, and wildlife for personal use. The subsistence foods gathered fulfill not only the physical needs of many families in Alaska, but also provide an opportunity for emotional and spiritual connections that weave a strong thread through generations.

Recently, the Sitka Ranger District issued a subsistence fishing permit to an older resident, Martin R. Strand. Not a big deal, just another smile and a “Here’s your permit, sir, and your copy of the regulations. Remember to return the subsistence report on time.” But this time was different. When the permit was returned, the following letter was attached.

As a water-stained, slightly worn permit was recorded and filed away, it was easy to imagine the father and son of many years ago, threading their way along the muddy riverbank, hoping to bring home a day’s catch of coho. Thanks to Strand, taking a few moments to pen out a simple note, there is a snapshot in time that tells more than any database numbers might reveal. Perhaps even more important, this particular subsistence permit may not have filled the family freezer for the winter, but it warmed a man’s soul to be out once more, tramping the trail along the riverbank, reliving memories of long ago. ☘

In the 1940’s and 50’s, my dad, John S. Strand, and I would fish for jack salmon in Indian River. The month of October and November the rain hit heavy and the river rose to a muddy brown. The jack salmon were a welcome diet for our family. We lived in the “cottages” near Sheldon Jackson school. We would share some of our catch with neighbors and grandma Elsie (Newell) Young would also prepare them for the smoke house.

I was delighted to find out that I could get a Federal Permit to re-live

those exciting days of yesteryear. A sad note: when I discovered the jack salmon were back they were in Park Service property and I was unable to fish there. They were bright just in from the sea. I waited until October 20th to fish upstream and I hooked one black coho and let it go. I came back on the 22nd, but the river was still too low and they were downstream.

I thank the Forest Service for providing this valuable service to we locals. The walk to these treasured places of my youth was worth the effort and nourished my mind. I will gladly try again next year and hope to have better luck.

Sincerely,

Martin R. Strand, Sr.

December 2, 2004



Left: Martin Strand on a hunting trip in 1968. Photo by hunting partner George Prescott (deceased). Bottom: Indian River.

Spot Awards

Chugach

Brian Bair
Brian Meyers

Dona Walker
Elizabeth Bella

Eric Johansen
Jan Spencer

Joseph Williams
Karen Kromrey

Mary Benoit
Samantha Greenwood

Tongass

Angelina Lammers
Benjamin VanAlen
Brad Bolton
Debra Clark

Ginny Lutz
Gwen Baluss
Jared McCormick
Karen Brand

Kelly O'Soup
Ken Post
Laurie Craig
Melissa Dinsmore

Pat Ray
Paul Kain
Pete Schneider

Steve Ricci
Virginia Lutz
William Dyke

State & Private Forestry

Dustin Wittwer

Regional Office

Alyson Miner
Barry Maijala
Frances Preston

Heather Busam
James Lockwood
Janis Burns

Jeffrey Miller
Marc Ramonda

Maria Strafford
Richard Shreffler

Susan Marvin
Teresa Haugh

Wings Across the Americas

By: Ellen Campbell, Wildlife, Fisheries, Ecology, Watershed & Subsistence, Regional Office

The Chugach National Forest and Dan Logan of the Cordova Ranger District recently received a national Wings Across the Americas award in the category of International Cooperation. The award was presented to Dan in March during a special ceremony at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Washington, D.C. The award recognized Chugach employees' significant contributions to the success of the Western Boreal Forest Initiative, a partnership project among Ducks

Unlimited, Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Forest Service.

Chugach employees, and Logan specifically, provide a wide range of support to this international program, including training on forest planning, forest and wetland inventory methods, monitoring techniques, and safety and survival. Additionally, the forest provided Alaska boreal forest data to be compared to data collected in Canada's boreal forests.

The conservation and proper management of boreal forests are critical

to the health of many bird species. Management activities in boreal forest nesting habitats will determine the number of many species that migrate to the United States and Latin America. The wetland research, habitat and bird inventories, and partnerships that are part of the Initiative will do much to help develop sustainable management strategies for boreal forests throughout North America.

Congratulations to Logan and employees of the Chugach National Forest for their part in this important initiative! ☘



Left: Deputy Chiefs Ann Bartuska and Joel Holtrip congratulate Dan Logan.



Right: Dan Logan and Ducks Unlimited Executive Vice President Don Young.

Awards

Extra Effort & Travel Gainsharing

Chugach

Bette Welch
Corriene Brown
Darrell Neil

Debbie Hallek
Jeff Mitchell

Lauro Garcia
Leah Largaespada

Sheila Spores
Sherry Nelson

Terry Reid
Tim Walther

Tongass

Angelina Lammers
Buchanan Willoughby
Carol Goularte
Chris Dowling
Dale Fife

Dennis Rogers
Dennis Vogan
Eva Werline
Gerald Herbrandson
Grace Davenport

Jackie Groce
Kenneth Seymour
Michael Allred
Patrick Heuer

Peter Roginski
Richard Abt
Robert Sheets
Robert Smith

Robin Beebee
Steve Hohensee
Susan Christensen
Teresa Dickey

State & Private Forestry

Christina Sanchez

Regional Office

Bob Ernst
Curtis Edwards
Dan Castillo
Debbie Anderson

Keith Simila
Ken Vaughn
Margaret VanGilder
Mike Llanto

Molly Murphy
Randy Coleman
Richard Fritz
Rose Greenup

Sharon Deja
Stacie Mason
Steve Brink
Steve Patterson

Steve Patton
Todd Johnson
Vaughn Hazel
Winnie Blesh

Keepsake

Chugach

Warren Oja

Tongass

Sheryl Shafer

State & Private Forestry

Jerry Boughton

Regional Office

Cheri Bowen
Chris Johnson

David Zuniga
Dawn Germain

Dora Pacana
Martin Myers

Richard Shreffler
Tim Walther

Tom DePaul

Performance Bonus

Chugach

Debora Cooper

Tongass

Charles Streuli
George Doyle

Kent Cummins
Merrily Jones

Penny Richardson
Sandra Frost

Steven Ricci

William Ulmer

Regional Office

Christopher Hansen

John Burick

Michael Williams

Time-off Awards

Tongass

David Zuniga

Karen Maher

National Centennial Congress

A Once-In-a-Lifetime Event



Editor's Note: This is the final report from Alaska Region delegates to the National Centennial Congress in Washington, D.C., this past January. Among many other activities, delegates were given the opportunity to attend thought-provoking panel discussions. Olleke Rappe-Daniels, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest, reports in this issue.

I attended the panel at the National Centennial Congress called, "Lessons for a Future Forest Service: Assistant and Under Secretaries' Views." The panel was moderated by Jim Moseley, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Panel members included:

- **M. Rupert Cutler**, Former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture (Carter Administration)
- **John B. Crowell Jr.**, Former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture (Reagan Administration)
- **George Dunlop**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
- **Jim Lyons**, Former Under Secretary of Dept. of Agriculture (Clinton Administration)

This was a fascinating panel, not because of the ideas presented by each of the panelists but because of the attitudes displayed by these past political Cabinet appointees. Whereas the panel of former Forest Service chiefs (*Reflections and Visions from Forest Service Chiefs*) was full of humor, candor and introspection as well as respectful differences of opinions, the panel of under secretaries demonstrated a wide split in politics, ideologies and agendas. These clearly divergent values and ideas were particularly evident in the presentations of Mr. Cutler and Mr. Crowell, who, after more than 20 years, share little agreement or respect and continue to demonstrate dislike for each other. Jim Lyons' ideas and behaviors demonstrated bitterness about changes taking place in the Forest Service and strong

criticism of modification to past Clinton programs with the current Administration.

The political differences of these individuals who oversee the Forest Service present a clear picture of the challenge we have in maintaining balance in the management of public lands and the importance of doing so. It also speaks clearly of the value of our Chiefs as apolitical leaders. Regardless of Administration—our mission is to *Care for the Land and Serve the People*.

Finally, let me add that the panel moderator, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jim Moseley approached the situation in a far more positively balanced way than any of the speakers. Mr. Moseley demonstrated the counterpoint that political zeal does not have to drive a professional organization. ☸

Blanchet Receives Director's Award



Award winner Dave Blanchet with his wife, Ellen Toll, and his daughter, Lydia.

Dr. Winifred Kessler, Director of Wildlife, Fisheries, Ecology, Watershed & Subsistence, presented the 2004 WFEW Director's Award to Dave Blanchet March 1, 2005, in Anchorage. Blanchet, the 19th recipient of the award, is a hydrologist on the Chugach National Forest. He was recognized during the awards ceremony held as part of the Big Picture Forum on National Forest Landscapes, Watersheds, and Ecosystems in Alaska, which was cosponsored by WFEWS and Ecosystem Planning.

The director's award was initiated in 1984 to recognize employees who make significant contributions in their professional fields, give of themselves to their communities, and serve to

promote the mission of the Alaska Region.

Blanchet was recognized for acting as the "guiding hand" of the highly effective watershed program on the Chugach, with successes such as the Resurrection Creek restoration project and the Cooper Lake hydroelectric re-licensing effort. Blanchet was also acknowledged for developing good working relationships with the U.S. Geological Survey, the Bureau of Land Management, and other partners.

Following the Forest Service tradition of being a good member of the local community, Blanchet spent the past decade volunteering as a ski coach for the Anchorage Junior Nordic League. ☸

The Fight Against Debris

By: Michael Wilcox, Environmental Engineer, Regional Office

The Alaska Region worked with Channel Construction to remove 440 tons of debris and 1,000 gallons of fuel and gas from log transfer facilities throughout Southeast Alaska.

Channel Construction provided the Alaska Region expertise in the development and execution of a project to remove abandoned vehicles, abandoned property, and debris from the 17-million acre Tongass National Forest.

Channel Construction left Juneau, September 26, 2004, headed to Rodman Bay to begin the removal work. They completed the last removal, in Thorne Bay, October 22, 2004. Material was removed from 15 log transfer locations. In addition to Rodman Bay, debris was removed from Fish Bay, False Island, East and West Sitkoh Bays, Corner Bay, Saginaw Bay, Thomas Bay, Tonka, Anita Bay, St. John Harbor, Roosevelt Harbor, Lab Bay, Naukati, and Thorne Bay. The project cost was \$166,135.

In all, 400 tons of scrap metal, 1 ton of batteries, 6 tons of tires, 33 tons of general debris (tin, washers, dryers, old

tanks) and 1,000 gallons of fuel and gas were removed and recycled or disposed.

Channel Construction provided the Forest Service the equipment and expertise to efficiently and effectively remove the abandoned vehicles and debris. The work was done before the onset of winter. We enjoyed working with

Channel Construction and are glad to rid the forest of the debris.

This project involved the coordination of many Forest Service personnel over several years, including Travis Crickenberger, law enforcement officer, and Wanda O'Hara, project inspector, both from the Thorne Bay Ranger District; and Regional Contracting Officer Caroline Wallace. ☘



Amount of trash removed:

- 75 abandoned passenger vehicles
 - 4 yarders
 - 1 dump truck
 - 2 buses
 - 4 washing machines
 - 2 boats
 - 3 explosive magazines
 - 2 trailers
 - 2 boat motors
 - 3 abandoned storage tanks
 - 1 snowmobile
 - 1 A-frame yarder
-

Top: Channel Construction workers disassemble an A-frame yarder prior to its removal. Photo by: T. Crickenberger. Bottom: An abandoned bus is lifted into a semi-trailer for a trip to the removal barge. Photo by: Wanda O'Hara.

Retirements

Tongass

Richard Cozby

Thomas Krantz

State & Private Forestry

Steve Bush

Terminations

Chugach

Daniel Keeler

Willow Hetrick

Transfer Out

Regional Office

Christina Sanchez

Dora Pacana

Katherine Brown

Time-Limited Promotions

Chugach

Courtney James
Debra Srb

Loreen Trummer

Mary Morgan

Patrick O'Leary

Ron Knowles

Tongass

Jeff Schlee

Jeffrey Tilley

John Neary

Rodd Kubitza

Teresa Campbell

Regional Office

Karlene Hale

Ronald Erickson

Length of Service Awards

35 Years

James Russell

Lyle Krueger

30 Years

Cheryl Smith-Friend
Dennis Rogers

Edward Kasko

John Stevens

Karin Preston

Ronald Marvin

Russell Beers

25 Years

Barbara Stanley
Calvin Casipit

Charles Streuli
Kristi Kantola

Patricia Grantham
Richard Aho

Robin Airozo

William Tremblay

Winnie Blesh

20 Years

Deborah Anderson
Diane Woodling

George Bissett
Glen Ith

Gregory Killinger

Kenneth Mass

Virginia Bowman

Wanda O'Hara

15 Years

Katherine Benning

10 Years

Annette Heckert

Julie Simpson

Mary Young

5 Years

Arlene Steffy

Heather Hall

Jamie Roberts

Karl Welch

Russell Wicka

Thomas Cady

Personnel Actions

Promotions

Tongass

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Dennis Sylvia | Kristen Thweatt | Patricia O'Connor | Robbie Piehl | Russel Wicka |
| James Bauers | Nancy Soriano | Raymond Slayton | Rosalie Grant | Tiffany Benna |

State & Private Forestry

Kay Fermann

Regional Office

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Katherine Brown | Nina Knecht | Raymond Thompson | Robert Francis | Tammy Scroggs |
| Mari Meiners | | | | |

Quality Step Increases

Chugach

Dave Blanchet

Tongass

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Karen Dillman | Olleke Rappe-Daniels |
|---------------|----------------------|

Regional Office

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Mark Chan | Martin Myers | Mary Lihou |
|-----------|--------------|------------|

Reassignments

Chugach

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Roderic O'Connor | William MacFarlane |
|------------------|--------------------|

Tongass

| | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| Bob Ernst | Craig Buehler | Diane Woodling | Jeffrey Robinson | Paul Olson |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------------|------------|

Regional Office

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Ada Feak | David Bruce | Gene Miller | Julie Simpson | Sophia Chapman |
| Cheri Friend | Diana Kuest | Hannah Atadero | Rhonda George | |

Recruitments

Chugach

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Alice Hall | Kathleen Galloway | Shawn Kennedy | Victor Shen | William Luck |
| Jennifer Hagen | Raymond Gamradt | | | |

Regional Office

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| Austin Rickards | Caroline Wallace | Charlette Malacas | Kelly Hall | Whitney Rickards |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|

Resignations

Chugach

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Buku Saliz | Dawn Schoppert | Elsa Gaule | Josh Meister | Kathleen Larson |
| Daniel Valentine | | | | |

Tongass

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Allen Moore | George Ward | Jason Rooney | Larry Barnes | Priscilla Hammon |
| Codey Carter | Grahm Satterwhite | Josh Brown | Peter Greeno | Sharon Webb |

Regional Office

| | |
|------------|---------------|
| Garry Begg | Mike Crotteau |
|------------|---------------|

Training to Be Safe, Every Job, Every Time

By: John Baldwin District Ranger, and Tina Dinzl-Pederson, Hoonah Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

Every spring the call goes out, and every spring people from all walks of life sign up to become Forest Service seasonal employees. The work of many permanent employees takes them out to the field. The Forest Service doesn't just hand you a shovel and send you out on the job. Hoonah Ranger District safety training is done in two intensive weeks by experienced specialist instructors.

Last year, Hoonah Ranger District achieved the accomplishment of no lost-time accidents. Carrying out field work in remote locations using boats, float planes, helicopters, and hiking all without injuries is a tribute to all those performing the hazardous tasks. Many jobs on the Tongass National Forest are physically demanding and hazardous, and frequently require productivity in poor weather and in isolated areas.

**Safety won't cost
you anything...
until you forget it.**

Richard E. McArdle,
Former Chief,
U.S. Forest Service

Each district training session, coordinated by District Safety Officer Chris Budke, concludes with hands-on opportunities. Experience, caution, and the use of proper safety measures and equipment—such as hardhats, eye and ear protection, flo-

tation devices, and safety clothing and boots—are extremely important to avoid injury. Training and practice helps produce accident free workers.

This year's training lineup included: district procedures, defensive driving, boat orientation, CPR and first aid, use of radios, fire refresher and pack test, air operations, rifle training, working safely in bear territory, saw certification, and survival with Personal Immersion Gadget (PIG) training. The PIG water evacuation training simulates what an emergency water landing might be like.

A half day was spent practicing in the pool with life jackets, float jackets, work suits and survival suits. These life-saving outfits provide buoyancy and insulation against cold ocean waters. Having experience with the equipment builds familiarity, so, if the time ever comes, you'll know what to do to increase your chances of survival. Participants practiced getting into a raft from the water and exiting a sinking boat. Participants practiced rafting together to increase chances of survival and also to provide a way for others to get out of the water.

The Tongass National Forest is a rich natural resource. Managing the land requires many different kinds of workers, often in occupations requiring physical strength and stamina, frequently outdoors, and in many cases, as part of a team, walking long distances through densely wooded areas to do their work. We are looking forward to our 2005 field season. ☘



Top: Kelley Shaw, Don Bolton, Ann Francis and Tina Dinzl-Pederson. Middle: Tim Hazlewood (surviving or napping?) Bottom: Tina Dinzl-Pederson works to put on her survival suit. Photos by Sarah Shaw.

Ground Penetrating Radar on the Tongass

By Myra Gilliam, Archaeologist, Admiralty National Monument, Tongass National Forest

In September, a group of archaeologists sponsored a Ground Penetrating Radar training workshop for personnel from the regional office, Tongass National Forest supervisor's office, four ranger districts, and the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. Training was offered by Dr. Kent Schneider, Southern Regional Archaeologist, and Dr. Dean Goodman, author of GPR-SLICE software. Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc., is a world-leader in ground penetrating radar technology, and the Tongass purchased a unit with a 200 MHz antenna that will extend to depths of 10 to 15 feet. To complement the hardware, we also leased and were trained in the use of the GPR-SLICE imaging software.

The GPR equipment digitally records radar reflection profiles. The antenna measures and collects the reflection amplitudes and travel time into a radargram. Deeper objects take a longer time for these reflections to be recorded. By slicing many radargrams

collected across a site, we can see reflections at various travel times, or depths within the ground. Three-dimensional images of the subsurface can then be created.

At the request of the Alaska Native tribe Auk Kwan, the Forest Service is attempting to locate and quantify the number of burials within a historic cemetery site on National Forest System lands. The GPR unit was purchased when members of the Auk Kwan requested information about the cemetery site within their traditional territory, and currently within lands managed by the Juneau Ranger District. In consultation with the tribal members, the Juneau Ranger District is attempting to rediscover the locations of the historic burials before they are impacted.

In order to protect these sacred grounds, GPR imaging is being used to ascertain the extent of lost burials and to determine the number of burials present. The use of GPR-SLICE to image these burials will potentially ensure the protection of these sites.

We started our training by becoming familiar with the equipment. We worked in one of the bays in the Juneau Ranger District, with all the advantages of being warm and dry, and with a flat level surface on which to operate the equipment. We then pro-



Trainees gain practical experience in the application of ground penetrating radar at Auk Campground. Photo by Myra Gilliam.

ceeded to Auk Campground where we set up a grid and completed our field test, gathering data from a 100 meter x 10 meter grid. The data collection involved pulling the antenna along a horizontal line collecting reflected amplitude every 10 meters. This was done on parallel lines every 0.50 meters. Conditions were slightly different in the field, but more typical of actual field conditions, with the undulating terrain, trees to avoid and a slight drizzle.

The following day found us at the regional office computer lab with our collected field data. It was here that we learned the software application and how to manipulate and interpret the data we had collected. By the end of the day, we were all able to input our data and create a three-dimensional color animation of the subsurface anomalies, which we could look at horizontally, vertically, or in cross section.

Ground penetrating radar technology (GPR) allows us to test sub-surface deposits in a non-invasive way, potentially saving time, money and resources, while reducing ground disturbance.



The training workshop for ground penetrating radar was held at the Juneau Ranger District. Photo by Myra Gilliam.

Mushroom Boom

By: Tricia L. Wurtz, Research Ecologist, Pacific Northwest Research Station

Morels are considered among the choicest edible mushrooms in the world, especially in areas where French cuisine is popular. They sometimes fruit prolifically in the years immediately after an area has been burned by wildfire. In the summer of 2004, wildfires burned more than 6.7 million acres in Interior Alaska--more than in any year since recordkeeping began in the 1950s. That season of wildfires, combined with the right moisture levels and temperatures this spring, could mean a “shroom boom,” or an abundance of morels available for harvest. About twenty percent of the burned areas are located along the road system, making them accessible to Alaskans who might wish to harvest morels. Because morels have never been farmed successfully on a large scale, the industry is dependent on the harvest of wild mushrooms.

One of the challenges of morel harvesting is determining where and when they are likely to occur. Research by Pacific Northwest Station scientists in Fairbanks has shown that morel mushrooms are very patchily distributed in the burned areas of Interior Alaska. In addition, the timing of fruiting is dependent on weather patterns leading up to the season.

Someone may go to a site repeatedly and not find the morels, but return at a later date, and find that the mushrooms have appeared. Research has shown the post-fire morels are most likely to be found places where the wildfires were hottest. Cool, overcast weather will allow mushrooms to continue growing longer than will hot, dry weather. The right amount of rainfall will encourage fruiting by increasing soil moisture and relative humidity, but too much rain will speed decay. A hot, dry spell after the mushrooms have emerged will cause them to dry on the stalk, fall off, and decompose. The bottom line: the amount of time that individual morels remain in good “pickable” condition is short. Harvesters must be prepared to work long hours to take advantage of the available mushrooms during the short fruiting period.

Scientists at PNW’s Boreal Ecology Cooperative Research Unit collaborated last winter with The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service to host workshops in rural communities of Interior Alaska. Over 600 people attended the workshops, and learned how to identify edible morel species, how to handle them after picking, and how to dry and market them. ☘



Top: Karl Olson, UAF Fairbanks, Jane Smith, PNW Research Station, and Nancy Weber, Oregon State University, hold up morel mushrooms picked in the areas burned in the 2002 Livengood fire north of Fairbanks.

Center: Weber smells a morel.

Right: Olsen holds buckets of morel mushrooms picked as part of a PNW Research Station research project on the Erickson Creek fire north of Fairbanks.

Rural? Non-Rural?

By: Dr. Winifred Kessler, Director, Wildlife, Fisheries, Ecology, Watershed and Subsistence, and Steve Kessler, Subsistence Program Leader, Regional Office

Alaska is unique in many respects, not the least of which is the heavy reliance of rural people on wild fish and game as a source of nutritious and affordable food. The importance of subsistence hunting and fishing to rural Alaskans is recognized in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which provides a priority for subsistence activities over other consumptive uses of fish and game on the federal lands in Alaska.

The Federal Subsistence Management Program applies to about two-thirds of the state that is under fed-

eral jurisdiction for the management of hunting, trapping, and fishing. The decision-making body that oversees the program, the Federal Subsistence Management Board, is made up of the regional directors of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Alaska Regional Forester, as well as a chair appointed by the Secretary of Interior.

Currently, rural residents may harvest fish and wildlife under federal subsistence regulations if a recognized consistent and traditional subsistence use of that species exists. They may

also barter or trade products to supplement livelihoods. A wide variety of fish and game is harvested including all five salmon and many other fish species, deer, bear, moose, mountain goats, wolves, marten, and others.

Federal Subsistence management is a complex and evolving management challenge. The Alaska Region is actively engaged in developing solutions that serve both the users and the resources. Regulations require that the Board review the rural/nonrural status of Alaska communities on a 10-year cycle, beginning with the publication of the 2000 U.S. Census.

Federal Subsistence Management Program ~ Questions & Answers

Which communities are currently not considered rural?

- Adak
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
- Homer, Anchor Point, Kachemak City, and Fritz Creek
- Juneau, West Juneau, and Douglas
- Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Salamatof, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, and Clam Gulch
- Ketchikan City, Clover Pass, North Tongass Highway, Ketchikan East, Mountain Pass, Herring Cove, Saxman East, and parts of Pennock Island
- Municipality of Anchorage
- Seward and Moose Pass
- Valdez
- Palmer, Wasilla, Sutton, Big Lake, Houston, and Bodenbergs Butte

What criteria will be used to determine whether a community is rural or nonrural?

Population size of each community, with a focus on what has changed since the 1990 Census. Communities with:

- 2,500 or less = rural unless there are significant characteristics of a nonrural nature, or considered to be socially and economically part of a non rural area.
- 2,500-7000 to be evaluated.

- 7,000 or more = nonrural, unless there are significant characteristics of a rural nature.

Which communities could see a change in their status?

Most communities are expected to remain the same, unless there have been significant changes in population or community characteristics.

How long will the review take?

Until December 2006. A timeline follows:

Feb. - Aug. 2005: Initial review by staff of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, with proposed list of communities for study.

Aug. - Oct. 2005: Subsistence regional advisory councils will comment on the results of this initial review.

Dec. 2005 - The Federal Subsistence Board will meet to consider the public and regional advisory council comments and make any changes to the proposed list of communities.

Jan. - May 2006: Federal subsistence staff will conduct in-depth analyses of

communities on the list, to include population density. A report will follow.

June 2006: The Federal Subsistence Board will develop a proposed rule to address any potential changes in the rural/nonrural status of Alaska communities.

July - Nov.: The rule will be published in the Federal Register, and comments will be invited.

Dec.: 2006 - The Federal Subsistence Board will meet to consider the comments received and may make changes to the proposed rule. A final rule will be developed for publication in the Federal Register.

Will there be opportunities for public to comment?

Yes, when the initial analysis is completed, about August 2005. In addition, there will be an opportunity for public comment when the Board drafts a proposed regulation which includes any changes in the rural/nonrural status of Alaska communities, about September 2006.

To read the full text, see:
<http://alaska.fws.gov.asm/home.html>

Ground penetrating equipment is available in Region 8 and Region 10, with units on the Chugach National Forest in addition to the unit on the Tongass. All systems within the Forest Service are compatible. The Tongass unit is housed at the Petersburg Supervisors Office but is available for others

to use and hopefully will work for variety of geotechnical, engineering and archaeological applications.

If you would like additional information regarding the technology or the availability of the GPR for your application, please feel free to contact Tongass

Heritage Program manager, Mark McCallum, by email at mmccallum@fs.fed.us or by phone at (907) 772-5876. Additional information regarding the GPR-SLICE software is available at <http://www.gpr-survey.com/pages/362603/index.htm>. ☘

Programs Impact a Diverse Audience

By Jason Aigeldinger, Seward Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

Heading southbound on the Seward highway, motorists are forced to make a decision on their approach to Tern Lake. There, at what can be considered the literal and geographic heart of the Seward Ranger District, sits a small lake choked by pavement and overseen by U-shaped mountain slopes to the north and south-east. It is a crossroads, a collision point where the world of man has no other choice but to shrink under the influence of the forces of nature.

Each summer, in this place of road noise juxtaposed with green slopes and mountain goats, you will find Seward Ranger District interpreters directing visiting eyes upslope and fielding questions that range from where to take a bathroom break to bear safety. The work does not end when the snow and slush begin to fly. It simply marks a change in venue and a different audience.

The mountains of the eastern Kenai Peninsula currently reside under a donut glaze of ice. The tourists are long gone and behind insulated walls a table is covered with paper props and big, bold signs in crisp, neat lettering.

These are the tools of the trade for Katy Toth-Stauble, Information Assistant for the Seward Ranger District. Today she is organizing a presentation for kindergarten through eighth-graders entitled, *Predator/Prey Relationships: The Big Dilemma*.

Interpretation at the district is a small shop with a large and extremely

important mission: to kindle the bond between the people and their national forest lands.

Toth-Stauble's audience ranges from Elderhostel groups and independent travelers to school children and young adults who inhabit Seward, Moose Pass, Cooper Landing, and Hope.

Toth-Stauble says she really enjoys developing and facilitating the district's In-school Conservation Education Program for students at area schools. She has arsenal of over 70 "ready to go" interpretive programs at her disposal. She also aids area teachers by providing curriculum activities and hands-on education materials like compost thermometers and foam plate tectonics blocks. Toth-Stauble said that she believes educating children about the wonder and importance of their national forest land positively influences the whole family.

"Parents view the Forest Service as white hat in the realm of education," said Toth-Stauble.

During 2004, Toth-Stauble spent 36 weeks of the school year facilitating programs and developed six new conservation education programs on such topics as moose safety and plant classification. But Seward interpretation is not confined to the classroom.

Alice Hall, a temporary seasonal Information Assistant at Seward Ranger District heads up the award winning Stream Watch Program. Started 11 years ago, Stream Watch is a volunteer cadre that helps to inform and edu-



At Tern Lake, Katy Toth-Stauble displays her binoculars that were so brightly decorated no one could take them by accident! Photo by Kristi Kantola.

cate visitors to the Kenai/Russian River area about riparian issues. The volunteers help to control erosion and protect re-vegetation by installing fencing and closing off damaged areas to visitors. The group also informs the public as to why these areas are closed off. In 2004, Hall and her Stream Watch volunteers logged 956.5 hours on the Russian and Upper Kenai rivers between June 15 and August 20. During that time, the cadre made 1682 public contacts, cleaned up 658.5 pounds of trash, and erected and maintained 5900 feet of temporary fencing. ☘

Tongass Trio = Great Team

By Merrily Jones, Public Affairs Specialist, Tongass National Forest



Law enforcement officers Cheri and Bryan Bowen with K-9 Amigo.
Photo by: Teresa Haugh

A unique trio of law enforcement officers patrols the Tongass National Forest's Petersburg and Wrangell Ranger Districts. Two are married to each other, and the third works on all fours—paws, that is.

Officers Bryan and Cheri Bowen, are a husband-wife team. Cheri's other partner is Amigo, a Forest Service K-9. This three-member team brings many advantages to their primary job of protecting the natural resources, Forest Service employees and visitors of the National Forest System.

Cheri works for the Wrangell Ranger District while her husband, Bryan, serves at the Petersburg Ranger District.

Although each human officer works solo most of the time, during special or high-risk operations they work as a team. In addition, Bryan and Cheri provide law enforcement support to both districts when training or special assignments take one of them out of the area.

Cheri said there are many advantages to the husband-wife team.

"In law enforcement, it can be critical that you know how your partner or back-up responds in certain situations," she said. "For Bryan and me, there is no guesswork. We are aware of the strengths that each of us brings to different situations."

Cheri's other partner, K-9 Amigo, is a 5-year-old German shepherd. Amigo was born in the Czech Republic and was bred for police work.

According to Cheri, many police dogs are purchased from European countries because breeding standards are very strict.

"Dogs are measured against a core set of physical attributes, and are only bred if they meet these criteria," she said. "In addition, European police dog agencies are internationally renowned. Before a dog even comes to the United States, it has already gone through rigorous training and achieved an international certification."

Cheri and Amigo are certified for police patrol, which includes suspect apprehension, officer protection, area search, evidence location and tracking. They are also certified in drug detection. Many forests have K-9 units today, but Cheri and K-9 Amigo are the only one on the Tongass.

"K-9 Amigo is a big help when our job is to provide public education on various national forest issues," said Cheri.

Many times throughout the year, Cheri and Amigo will visit the public schools or a community event and provide education on the practices or violations that are detrimental to the health of our national forests.

"A lot of forest users are not aware of the violations that are occurring on federal land," Cheri explained. "Getting the community involved is important to the success of the Forest Service's mission of sustaining the health,

diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Amigo and I make a good team in this area, too."

While this is Amigo's first post with the team, he and Cheri worked together for two years on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest before coming to Alaska. Bryan and Cheri served together prior to working for the Forest Service.

.....
If you have an event or project
for the K-9 unit, please call:

Officer Rich Shreffler.
Patrol Captain
Tongass National Forest
907-228-6235
or
Cheri Bowen
Law Enforcement Officer
.....

Bryan was a police officer and narcotics detective for the Cheyenne Police Department in Wyoming and Cheri worked as an enforcement officer for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. They routinely worked together on special operations dealing with illegal immigrants and drug trafficking.

"Bryan and I feel very lucky to have been given such a great opportunity," said Cheri. "We both love Alaska and our national forests. We are dedicated to doing a good job for the Tongass."

Bryan and Cheri both live in Petersburg, but because of the proximity of Petersburg and Wrangell, patrolling the Wrangell Ranger District is not a problem.

"All of the patrol officers in Alaska deal with the same logistics issues because of how much area is in their jurisdiction," said Bryan. Combined, the

2004: Worst Recorded Fire Season in Alaska

By: Marie Kanan, Public Affairs, Alaska Regional Office

Alaska wildland burned over 6.7 million acres in 2004—roughly an area the size of Vermont and Connecticut. Even with 143 Alaska Region employees called out to contain and extinguish the fires in 190 incidents, support from the Lower 48 states was necessary and welcomed. Of the 706 recorded fires of the season, 11 were staffed with crews. The rest burned in uninhabited and hard to reach areas of the state.

Many agencies and cooperators were involved, and included the Forest Service, National Park Service, National Weather Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Dept. of Transportation, and other state, local, and private resources.

Last year, as an incident information officer 3 trainee, I was part of three separate Type 2 teams on four separate fires. The first team was headed up by Eileen Wallace on the Winter Trail fire, located 20 miles north of Ft. Yukon.

Leaving Ft. Wainwright, in Fairbanks, the pilot and I flew through dense smoke in a noisy, small plane that tossed about like a kite for close to an hour. Suddenly, we broke through the dense, smoke-filled sky to see the ground. Below us, the town of Ft. Yukon sat in the Y of the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers.

Advancing toward the town and river from the north was the Winter Trail fire. It looked like a fiery orange snake as it advanced menacingly toward the town of Ft. Yukon where we would land in a few minutes. It was an altogether frightening thought that we were headed right into that inferno. Crews fought hard, and they, the winds, and the Yukon River helped protect the town.

My second fire was the Wolf Creek fire, commanded by Pat O'Brien. The team was outside Fairbanks, Alaska.

Assigned a jeep, I drove out to the fire, passing through the burning areas of the Boundary fire, and then through areas that had burned the year before. Moose grazed in patches of green that bordered the road, a blue fox dashed across the road, a coyote stood for a second near a clearing before it darted away. Wildlife was on the move, looking for safety and food. Crew tents were pitched in designated camp sites, bare of workers for all but brief night hours.

Tourists at Chena Hot Springs Resort often seemed oblivious to the fires in the distance, just beyond the ridge, although everyone could see the smoke. They looked on the wildfire crews like they would at policemen or fire department crews—knowing they were “safe” because the crews were there.

Locals were more anxious. Setting up a display with maps and the latest fire always brought people over. I learned as much from them as they did from me. Questions came, like, “Tom has a cabin a mile away...would you see that someone finds out about it?” “If you get to Central, would you look up Bob, and tell him “Hi” and that George will be up next month for the planned hunt?”

Working with another incident information officer, Kari Vannice, we would take turns staffing three different displays in the 30-mile area, meeting with locals to inform and gather information, participating in briefings, writing news releases, and keeping the incident commander and fire crew up to date on the latest news of interest.

August 1 -14 was spent on the Central and Circle Complex fires. Inci-



Marie Kanan. Photo by: Ray Massey.

dent Commander Mike Theisen was in charge of that team. These fires were as dicey and unpredictable as the weather. As sole IO on this fire, I set up meetings with the locals in both Central and Circle. People in Central were very open and came with their concerns to all meetings. Many cabins were saved because they would give directions to remote locations.

I drove through flames on the 30-mile winding road from Central to Circle every day, to check on new friends on the fire teams, as well as keep them updated, and to find out as much as I could about the area.

The fires and the people responding to them are memories that are stirred up now as the 2005 fire season has begun. Will this season mirror last year's? We have already had a fire in not-so-rainy Southeast Alaska, near Hoonah. Lightning strikes up north and east of us in drier British Columbia have already produced the first fires of the season. The 2004 Alaska fire season kept Alaska fire crews busier than ever before, and the 6.7 million acres that burned took a terrible toll on the land and the Alaskans who depend on it. ☘

Celebration Award

By: Kay Fermann, Cooperative Forestry Program Specialist, State & Private Forestry, Anchorage

The Fairbanks Arbor Day Committee was presented with The National Arbor Day Foundation's 2005 Celebration Award at a special awards ceremony April 30. The awards ceremony is part of the 33rd annual National Arbor Day celebration held in Nebraska City, Nebraska, home of Arbor Day founder J. Sterling Morton.

Started in 1983, the committee planned what is thought to be the first public Arbor Day celebration in the interior of Alaska and the farthest north Arbor Day Celebration. With four original members still active in the committee, the goal of the celebration has always been focused on school children. The committee offers trees and planting help to local schools each year. As a result, trees have been planted at local schools, libraries, parks, public areas, and in areas that have been burned by forest fire.

The committee also plans a larger scale celebration with the mayors from the cities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. A proclamation is read and trees are planted in a designated location; past trees have been planted at City Hall, the police station, the University of Alaska, and at Habitat for Humanity homes.

The Arbor Day Celebration Award honors school, community and state programs that best represent the spirit of the tree planters' holiday. Each year the Foundation honors individuals and groups from across the country making a commitment to planting trees and embracing education as a way to continue Morton's legacy of environmental stewardship for future generations. ❧

The National Arbor Day Foundation is a million-member, nonprofit education organization dedicated to tree planting and environmental stewardship. More information is available at <http://www.arborday.org>.



Top: Glen Risse, Jim Smith, Peter Simpson, Mike Musick, Ritchie Musick, Kathryn Pyne, Lester Fortune, and John Alden plant a tree for Arbor Day.

Bottom: The big spruce behind John Haas was planted by the Arbor Day Committee on the first Arbor Day in 1983.

Petersburg and Wrangell ranger districts encompass approximately 4 million acres.

Like the human law enforcement officers, the Forest Service K-9 units also provide support to state and local law enforcement when requested. Cheri and Amigo have been involved in finding lost individuals, tracking criminals

who have run from the police, finding evidence of criminal activity and locating illegal drugs.

One of Amigo's most recent successes involved a suspect transporting and selling cocaine. When a local police officer in Petersburg approached the individual to question him about the involvement, he ran from officer. The po-

lice chase continued across a muskeg area and the suspect was apprehended and taken into custody. K-9 Amigo found where the suspect had hidden the drugs from the police in the muskeg. Because of the K-9 unit's involvement, the individual was convicted for his crime. ☘

New Learning Center Open to the Public!

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

On Friday, April 22 the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center hosted an open house to celebrate the completion of their new classroom facility, the Portage Valley Learning Center. The focus of the new center is on educational activities for school children, community members and forest visitors to help them gain a better understanding of their national forest and Alaska's public lands. This made Earth Day the perfect day to host the event!

The open house featured celebratory speeches from Forest Supervisor Joe Meade and special guest, Anchorage Mayor, Mark Begich. Next came the debut of the digitally remastered film, *Voices From the Ice*. The film was played on a state-of-the-art high definition digital projection system, with surround-sound, which was designed and recently installed by an Atlanta, Georgia company. In addition, students from Girdwood's Community Schools Program presented a short play on the history of the Forest Service written by Mark Hall and directed by Stephanie Israel, visitor center employees.

Mayor Begich performed the ribbon cutting ceremony to thunderous applause, and then everyone followed him into the new learning center for refreshments and a look around. Besides the tasty cookies, fruit, punch and coffee provided by Portage Glacier Lodge and paid for by the Alaska Natural History Association, there were several special educational exhibits for the public to view. One of

the exhibits, created by former visitor center employee Anne Sheridan, focused on invasive plants in Southcentral Alaska.

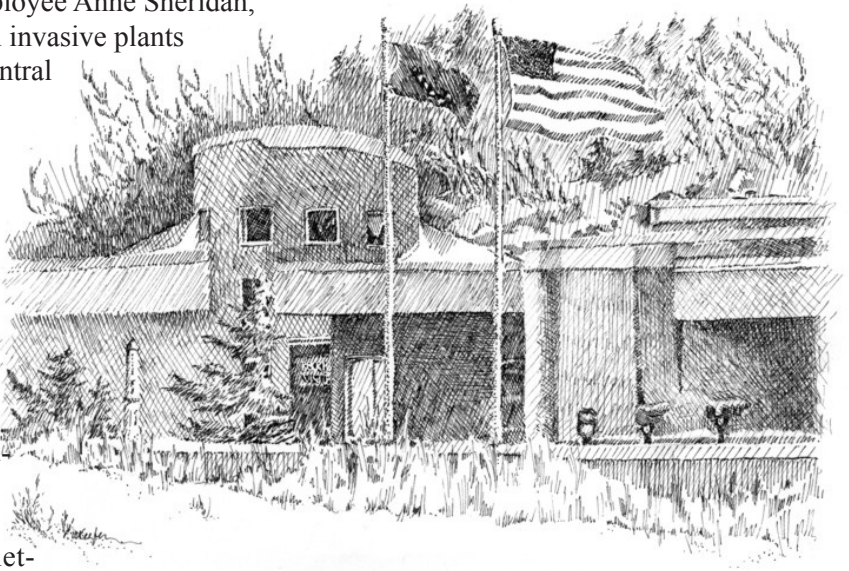
Another poster, created by Stephanie Israel, explained the district's conservation education plan, which she just completed. To honor the

Forest Service in its centennial year, a timeline of the 100 year history of the Forest Service was also on display. Recently the visitor center acquired a new puppet stage to enhance its educational program, and this was prominently displayed together with many of the puppets used in educational shows, much to the delight of the children in attendance.

The new classroom facility can seat up to 100 people, and is designed as a "smart classroom," though the installation of cables will come at a later date. Besides exceptional acoustics, the room provides a space for students to dine. It has a kitchenette, vinyl floors for easy cleaning and long life, radiant heat and ample storage closets. To enhance

presentations, a digital projector and screen will be installed. The learning center is connected to the visitor center by a hallway with additional restroom facilities for both men and women. In addition, there is a beautiful semi-circular anteroom that houses a traditional Chugach kayak, and a historic graphic of a Prince William Sound man and woman, as well as a grizzly bear. Other exhibits will be added to this space in the future to provide another learning opportunity for the public.

Please stop by to see the new facilities if you're in Southcentral Alaska this summer. The whole staff is really excited about this new classroom facility and we'll be glad to show you around! ☘



Time to Be Clutter-Free

By Gary Helmer, Safety and Health Manager, Regional Office

Even in this age of technology, I seem to collect and accumulate more paper than ever. I have piles of this and that on my desk, and can honestly say I don't know what treasures I have (or don't have) right at my fingertips. Disorganized is the operative word here, but I am trying really hard to recoup some semblance of order.

Along with keeping electronic mail archived on my computer, I also save it in paper form. I am not sure why, but I do. I have tried to regulate this habit by keeping the really important ones, but my criteria for what is really important changes; often. Maybe it's because I had a computer crash a couple of years ago and lost some irreplaceable files, or maybe it's just because I need something tangible. The funny thing is I never seem to go back and read those "really important" e-mails. They just keep accumulating, becoming more difficult to manage, and less important with time.

E-mails are the least of it. Agency produced letters, memorandums, policies, etc., are also really important to keep, right? They must be because I have so many of them. It is always an adventure to wade through these piles and learn what I don't know about what I have on, in, and around my desk. I love to come across that one particular memo I just had to keep (and have been looking for ever since), only to learn that it is no longer relevant.

Then of course, there's the box of papers ready for the shredder. Odd, it is much smaller than the heaps of really important stuff. And, what about the things that actually get filed, the paperwork that essentially makes it into a bona fide folder filed under the proper code, and in the right spot in the file cabinet? Well, it's full too – no room for anything else in there (which is probably why I started some of these piles of files in the first place). I know I



A desk heading for clutter chaos.

am supposed to keep some of this stuff for five years and some for two years, but 1988? Hmm, maybe I can get rid of that.

I often wonder how we ever worked without computers but seem to have repressed that memory for some reason. However, I can remember hearing and reading about a "paperless society." Where did that go? I have more paper than ever before and it seems to grow exponentially every year.

Experience tells me that there are basically four categories that office workers fall into:

- **Neat-to-a-Fault:** I am amazed at just how neat some people are! I don't like to enter these spaces for fear of knocking something out of balance. How do they ever get any work done if they are so reluctant to mix it up once in awhile? But they do, and are often just as meticulous about their work.
- **Somewhere-In-Between:** Those in this category can be near-neat to near-disaster depending on the situation. Most want to be neat but lack that last bit of discipline that allows

them to do so. However, they are all excellent at knowing exactly where everything is regardless of the overall condition of their space. Ask for this, they can find it without thinking. Ask for that, and they know precisely where to locate it. They are hard workers that believe in production versus perfection; they do good work.

- **On-the-Verge:** These folks are at the edge, waiting to fall or be pushed into total disarray. They manage to hang on simply on skill and ability, but couldn't care less about how or where anything is kept—they have no time for that. They get their work done but spend an inordinate amount of time looking for it.
- **The Darkside:** Little hope for those that have gone beyond and into the realm of total dysfunction. Their workspaces are incapable of supporting any valid effort to get work done. They don't know where anything is but have plenty of places to look. Don't dare enter these spaces, you may never come out.

Outstanding Graduate

By: Kent Cummins, Public Affairs, Tongass National Forest

Danny Pederson, construction engineer for the Tongass National Forest, received his

master's degree in public administration May 9 from the University of Alaska Southeast, during a graduation ceremony at the Ketchikan Campus.

"I'm very happy," said Pederson. "This has been a long term personal goal."

Pederson also earned the 2005 Ernest Gruening Award recognizing him as the outstanding MPA graduate.

Gruening was a distinguished public servant who served thirteen years as Alaskan Territorial Governor. He later won election as U.S. senator from Alaska. He was a strong support-

er of the University of Alaska and was awarded an honorary doctorate.

Pederson, who's worked for the Tongass for two and a half years, earned his bachelor's in history from Chaminade University of Honolulu in 1990.

His current duties include contract preparation and construction contract administration throughout the forest.

"This would never have been possible without support from my family and everyone in the Tongass," said Pederson. "I have had tremendous support from co-workers and supervisors. I want to specifically thank Jack Oien, Roads Group Leader, and Larry Dunham, Forest Engineer, for their support." ❧



Danny Pederson receives the Gruening Award from Karen Polley, director of the University of Alaska Southeast, Ketchikan Campus.

Strickland Recognized for Service

By Linsey Strickland



Deb Strickland, regional office contract specialist, was recently recognized by the Board of Directors of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians for achieving 20 consecutive years as a Nationally Registered EMT. To maintain her registered status, Strickland had to participate in a biennial recertification program to refresh her fundamental skills and to advance her knowledge of new lifesaving techniques.

By maintaining her registered status and completing regular education courses, Strickland ranks among the most highly trained in pre-hospital emergency medical care in the nation.

Strickland began her medical training in 1968 and worked many days and nights in Hamilton, Mont., with the local ambulance service. Much of her work has been done as a volunteer. To date, Strickland has trained over 50,000 people in to administer first aid, perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, protect against blood borne pathogens, and to use automatic electronic defibrillators.

The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians serves as a national EMS certification organization by providing a valid, uniform process to assess the knowledge and skills required for competent practice by EMS professionals throughout their careers.

❧

Deb Strickland, contract specialist and EMT. Photo by: Teresa Haugh.

Back to Basics

By: Victoria Anne, Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

Painting like masters of long ago...with rocks and egg yolk

Being new to the Alaska Region, and full of enthusiasm as a soil scientist, I offered to take the topic of "soil formation" to students at the Petersburg High School. Soils from Alabama, South Carolina and New Mexico were available for participating juniors and seniors to compare against Alaska's muskeg, for hands-on exercises which included soil texturing by hand.

The project most enjoyed by the students involved making tempera paint like the master painters did from long ago. Rocks were placed inside socks and heavy plastic before being pounded with a rock hammer. The rock fragments and other organic matter (pine cones, dried spearmint leaves and fresh



Students at Petersburg High School created these paintings with tempera paint like master painters from long ago.

tumeric) were then powdered by grinding the material with a mortar and pestle. Egg yolk was used as the binding agent. Upon completion, we had a palette of deep red, orange, yellow, brown, and ivory.



Of course the intent of the instruction was to share the importance of how parent material, biota, topography, climate and time contribute to soil formation, and how important soils are to our environment.

Soil formation and our leaders of tomorrow...

The enthusiasm and interest of a fourth grader is hard to ignore. I was delighted to accept an invitation and an opportunity from Petersburg Elementary School to share with their students information on how soils are formed.

Their interest was keen and their questions endless, especially when discussing the important role of bacteria and fungi in the process of decomposition. Before I could finish my PowerPoint presentations (which they really enjoyed), they were waving their hands in the air and asking questions like, "Will bacteria eat my dog, who mom won't allow in the house?" Once their fears were eliminated, they were excited to learn about the "scientific process," and were quick to begin forming their own hypothesis about

how they believed soils from Alabama, New Mexico, and Oregon would compare to muskegs of Alaska during experiments on weathering and agriculture.

Thank you letters from the students let me know they are aware of processes going on beneath their feet and of the importance of soil productivity. Promises were made to, "never knowingly step on a bug again," and to, "pick up rocks and examine them rather than kicking them." They were wonderful participants and I already feel better about them being our leaders of tomorrow.



Maura Dillman, daughter of Forest Service ecologist Karen Dillman, proudly displays her picture.



The “Dark Side”

Papers and files are not the only problem. I believe that we each have a right to personalize our office or office space; *to a degree*. Pictures of friends and family members, diplomas and awards, and those desk-top items like pen holders and file organizers are all very important in establishing our personalities at work. Some people even like to keep live plants in their space to give it that “homey” feeling. (I would rather not kill anymore living things so I refrain from this practice.)

Collectors of books, magazines, catalogs, newspapers, trinkets, tokens, and signs all contribute to the clutter effect. Some people simply can’t throw anything away which creates a logistical nightmare—where to put all the junk they keep.

- **Safety Hazards:** hat does not fit on top of the desk, might fit under the desk. The problem is that the area under the desk soon becomes “The Land of the Lost”—once it’s under there it is gone forever. Besides

the obvious effect this has on comfort (ergonomically), under-the-desk storage creates a fire hazard. Often electrical cords are hidden under these masses of whatever and can subsequently heat up causing shorts or even fires.

The second problem to such storage is placing or retrieving some object. Typically one would have to kneel and often double-kneel to do this. This causes extra pressure on the knees and back while risking the chance of bumping your head or other body part on the desk while entering/exiting this area. Let’s face it. The space under the desk is not intended for anything other than your legs and feet (properly situated in an ergonomically-sound chair), and the wires and cables to your computer equipment. Anything else creates a hazardous condition.

If I can’t heap it under the desk then maybe I can stack it above the desk and on top of the file cabinets. Flat, level and perfect for long-term storage – well, maybe not. These areas often produce avalanches and can be out of reach causing you to hyperextend your back when attempting to place or remove items. And, there is always that one person who thinks a chair is really a step ladder/stool in disguise. Never mind that it tilts, rolls, and rotates (making the ride more exciting); a chair should never be used for anything but sitting.

Enough is enough! It is spring and I have decided to make a concerted effort to organize my own little corner of the world. After all, I spend most of my waking hours here, so it is important that I figure out a way to make it more efficient and functional. Neat is the goal, so cleaning up is essential. I plan to:

- Filter. I must become more selective in what I keep. If it is something

that must be kept but can be done so electronically, I will do that. Everything else is gone.

- Develop a reading file. I am going to place the “really important” stuff in a folder for reading (at my leisure), keeping the most recent items in the front. After one month, I am going to cycle through it and purge the back half of the folder. I figure, if I haven’t read it by then it is probably not that important.
- File immediately. Any items that are required to be kept for specified periods of time will get a properly annotated folder and be placed in the file cabinet immediately. I have learned that this takes about 49 seconds to do (faster if you know what you are doing). Those files that require indefinite or long-term storage will be taken downstairs to our storage room.
- Shred even faster. If I don’t need it, but it contains sensitive information, I will shred it.
- Print with discretion. I will print only those items that absolutely require printing. Everything else will be saved electronically or deleted appropriately.
- Keep business-only items. I will recycle or dispose of any bits and pieces that are not strictly business related and simply serve to clutter my space. Catalogs, magazines, newspapers, and junk that end up on my desk will not be kept if they have no direct link to what I do.
- Implement a clean desk policy. My desk will be void of extraneous paperwork at the end of each day.

Bear in mind that such a house-cleaning exercise might take some time and may be a monumental task for some. Set aside a day or two, or even a week to tackle the big items and then use your spare time throughout the day to fine tune the little stuff. Recycle where you can and discard the rest. Once you have your space in order, maintain it. Develop the neat habit and strive to be clutter-free! ☘

Measuring Up: Cruising and Scaling in the Alaska Region

By: Jan Lerum, Forest Management, Regional Office



Ken Dinsmore, Regional Measurements Specialist, at work in days past.

Above: Standing in front of a log deck, Corner Bay area in 1994. .

Right: Doing a fall, buck and scale cruise in the Corner Bay area, Sitka Ranger District in 1988.



Ken Dinsmore, Regional Measurements Specialist, describes himself as home grown. He's spent his 25-year career here in the Alaska Region, starting out on the ground and working his way up. In that way, Ken has become very familiar with the history and circumstances that makes working in forest management in Alaska unique. Folks in Dinsmore's position have remarkable tenure; there have been only three regional measurement specialists in the region since the 1960s: Dick Davis, Larry Knecht (husband of HR specialist Nina Knecht), and Dinsmore. Although Dinsmore is part of the regional office's Forest Management staff, his duty station is in Sitka.

Part of Dinsmore's job entails being a check cruiser and check scaler—sampling the work of Forest Service cruisers and private sector scalers to ensure their work meets Forest Service accuracy standards. Not clear about the difference between cruising and scaling?

One way to differentiate between the two processes is to remember standing trees are cruised and harvested logs are scaled. Cruising is the measurement of standing trees to estimate the volume in an upcoming timber sale. Information from the cruise is used to accurately appraise the value of the timber for sale. Scaling is the measurement of cut logs to ensure the government receives full compensation for timber harvested from the national forest.

While cruising is naturally done in the forest, scaling can take place in a number of places: at the sale area; at a central scaling site with logs from varied locations; or at a sawmill. Dinsmore notes there are a unique set of log accountability issues in Alaska connected with moving logs from a sale area to a sawmill. For one thing, we're the only Forest Service region that has manual and handbook procedures addressing water-based transport of national forest logs. To keep track of every log

that is harvested, sale administrators issue load removal receipts (often called "truck tickets") displaying the number of logs or number of log bundles. Sale administrators verify those receipts again when the barge or raft arrives at its destination.

In the realm of "what goes around comes around," Dinsmore notes one of his first responsibilities when he became measurement specialist 6 years ago was to oversee the development of computer software to be used in log scaling. At that time, the region was the last region, nationally, to change from measuring trees and logs in board feet, called Scribner measure, to cubic feet. Then in 2003, the Alaska Region was the first region to go back to using board foot measurement, which meant Dinsmore and the region's cruisers and check scalers had to retrain to once

again use the board foot system. The switch was made primarily because the cubic measurements were two to three times more costly than board foot measurements and the additional costs were not considered justified by the additional precision offered by the cubic measurements. Dinsmore spent most of last winter updating the region's handbooks and manuals for the switch from cubic to board foot measurement and then coordinated several training sessions for all forest management staff involved in measurement activities.

In terms of technology, national forest cruisers in Alaska were the first to use new software developed by the Forest Management Service Center in Fort Collins. Data from the cruise is collect-

ed in a personal data recorder in a software program called "FS Cruiser." An added benefit is the data recorder is multifunctional—the same recorder can be used for stand exams and other forest management applications. Cruisers then run software called "Cruise Processor" to calculate volumes of trees measured in the cruise and produce reports needed for the sale appraisal and sale contract.

In the future, Dinsmore sees all the aspects of his measurements work becoming very integrated and automated with other work in forest management. That's a big step forward from the days when



Ken Dinsmore on a log raft.

each group in forest management had their own data collection methods and devices. ¶

FS Cruiser Gains Acceptance

By: Jan Lerum, Forest Management, Regional Office

Chris Dowling, forester on the Craig Ranger District, reports big benefits after training and testing the latest version of "FS Cruiser," cruise processing software and the Allegro CE hand-held field data recorder.

Tongass-wide training in the new technology took place last summer and included 3 days of lectures, hands-on computer use in the office, and field exercises. Participants in the training were able to give their feedback to one of the instructors, programmer Matt Oberlie of the Washington Office, which created a sense of ownership in the programs and features. Dowling expects that sense of ownership will result in faster acceptance and increased use of the new systems.

Since completing the training, the Craig Ranger District timber group used the new programs and the data recorder on two timber cruises and Chris reports that benefits of the new technology are adding up. As the Craig timber crew becomes more familiar with the systems, they are using more of the features and increasing their efficiency. ¶



Chris Dowling, Presale Forester, Craig Ranger District, tests the new Allegro CE handheld field data recorder.

The advantages seen thus far for the handheld recorder:

- Data is legible and in a convenient format; not a trivial issue when entering and deciphering field data.
- Errors can be identified and corrected in the field, helping to keep travel costs down.
- Using the field recorder can be faster than writing.
- Saved time on data entry.
- Data is immediately available for processing; it can be processed on laptops in field camps and in vehicles.
- The program's audit function can detect mistakes and ensure all required information is entered.
- No more soggy paper field notes!

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Where in the World Are They?



Retiree Rai Behnert of Juneau played the bagpipes at the Employees' Honor Day celebration held at Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center May 3.

Behnert's moving rendition of *Amazing Grace* followed the nationwide moment of silence that commemorated Forest Service employees who have died in the line of duty in the past 100 years. Many Honor Day attendees said that Behnert's music added the perfect touch of respect and solemnity to the occasion.

If you have enjoyed this picture and update of Behnert, please send us one of your own! Your fellow retirees are waiting to hear from you.

Jeresa Haugh
Editor



Retiree's Reunion 2005
Portland, Oregon
September 4-9, 2005

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