

San Juan Public Lands People



Employee News Summer 2006



Workforce Planning Underway for San Juan *Effort Focuses on Getting Ahead of the Curve*

By Howard Sargent

The San Juan Public Lands Leadership Team has been researching workload and budget since 2004 to come up with a plan to restructure our workforce to reduce fixed costs. Since 2001, Congress and the Administration have intensified scrutiny on domestic spending, because of national and international pressures. BLM and USFS expect to see shrinking and performance-based budgets in the foreseeable future.

The consensus of the Leadership Team is that an across-the-board reduction is not what is needed. What is needed is a tailored realignment of our workforce. This will include abolishing some positions, creating new ones, and realigning others. It is estimated that the effort will save an estimated \$1.8 million over the next three years.

The Workforce Plan is designed to assign people and resources to areas of greatest need and to share positions across the unit. It

identifies a Target Organization and a Schedule of Implementation, based on the amount of funding and type of work we expect to be asked to perform in the future.

The Target Organization will be reached through a realignment of skills. The Schedule of Implementation will take place over the next three years. If we act now, we can operate on an extended timeline with gradual, rather than abrupt, reductions and changes.

The goal is a 75% fixed-cost ratio under the following scenario: a 3-4% decrease in budget coupled with a 2-3% increase in cost-of-living expenses. Of those expenses over which we have control, salaries make up the largest portion (64%) of our fixed costs.

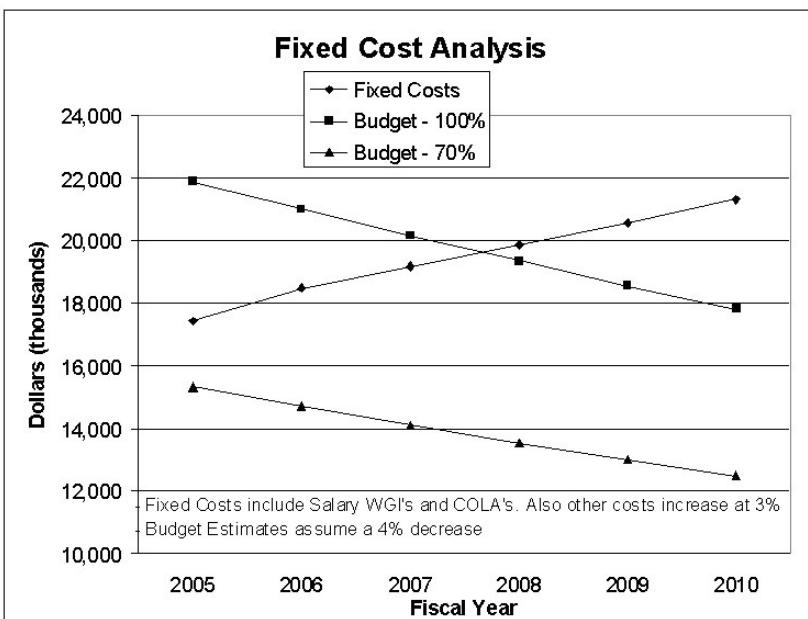
Decisions were based on making sure we're doing the right work, spending funds in our highest priority areas, maintaining field capability, and supporting the agencies' work and strategic goals.

A Civil Rights Impacts Analysis (CRIA) will be conducted this summer to analyze civil-rights impacts on the San Juan workforce. All employees will receive a scoping letter asking for their input. The CRIA will help facilitate the identification of adverse and disproportionate impacts on protected groups.

Employee comments should focus on quality of the work environment; attitudes, beliefs, and values; social organization; and workforce characteristics

We encourage employees to ask questions and seek guidance. Additional information will be posted on the San Juan's FS and BLM intranet Web sites. Employees can also speak directly with a member of the Leadership Team or with the Personnel Office.

(Howard Sargent is the San Juan Public Lands Associate Supervisor/Area Manager.)



The goal of the Workforce Plan is to avoid abrupt workforce reductions so the San Juan can position itself to avoid a collision course, where fixed costs overtake available budget, as shown above.

PUBLIC LANDS CENTER NEWS

Liz is New Executive Assistant

By Ann Bond

Elizabeth Haydon is the new Executive Assistant for Supervisor/Area Manager Mark Stiles and Associate Supervisor/Area Manager Howard Sargent in the PLC. Liz moved here from Indiana where she was a secretary for the U.S. Trustees' Office, a component of the Justice Department. She and her husband, Rick, lived in the Denver area until 1995, and she's glad to be back in Colorado. Her son, James, lives in Aurora, and her daughter, Brandi, is in the Navy.

"I'm enjoying the blue skies and sunshine," Liz says, "and busy getting to know everyone here at the office, as well as learning all the agency systems and ways of doing things."



Jennifer is New LA

By Ann Bond

Jennifer Burns, formerly Landscape Architect for the Arapaho-Roosevelt NFs, is now Landscape Architect for the San Juan Public Lands Center.

Over the past 23 years, Jennifer worked for the Mt. Hood, Coconino, Deschutes, and Prescott NFs. She also worked for the National Park Service at Grand Canyon National Park.

"I enjoy working with others to solve problems that incorporate good design that's light on the land and meets peoples' needs," Jennifer says.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Renewable Natural Resource Management and a Masters in Landscape Architecture, both from the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Jennifer is originally from Massachusetts and has two heelers, Dusty and Gumby.

Tom's Enjoying Retirement

By Ann Bond

Former San Juan Writer/Editor Tom Harris says retirement is "like being a kid again." Tom retired this spring after more than 30 years with the USFS. He started with the agency in 1970 on an engine crew on the Klamath NF in northern California. He worked seasonally in helitach until his first permanent position on the Happy Camp RD in 1976. "That was the end of my leisurely winters until now," he says.

After working 11 fire seasons, Tom went to work as Administrative Trainee in the Kalamath Supervisor's Office, where he met former wife, Jeanie, San Juan Personnel Officer. During a stint as a Business Management Assistant, he critiqued his supervisor's writing abilities and was rewarded with a detail as a Writer/Editor in Planning.

"I was pleased to have finally landed a job based on my Bachelor's degree in English from the University of California at Berkley," he says. But his next job was Budget Analyst for Cleveland NF in San Diego, followed by a move to the Quincy RD on the Plumas NF as Administrative Officer.

After acquiring a mountain bike and a love for the sport, Tom discovered Durango in 1990 and came to the San Juan on a detail working on the Regional Air Quality Management Plan. Over the years, Tom worked supervising the mailroom, for ISM, and finally as Writer/Editor in Planning.

Tom says retirement has been very, very good to him. "The freedom and relaxation are delightful," he says. "My dog, Tess, and cat, Katrina, have adapted readily to our new schedule of sleeping in, and I've been catching up on my reading, although not biking as much as I expected."

Tom plans to attempt his first ascent of a Colorado 14'er this summer and has been working on his camping skills and photography.

(Readers and writers of this newsletter alike thank Tom for his years of service offering urbane comments, careful criticism, and expert wordsmanship as he cast his magic proofreader's net over the contents of this publication.)



COLUMBINE NEWS

Jesse is Hand Crew Supervisor

By Stan Sparks

Jesse Ramirez is Columbine's new permanent Hand Crew Supervisor. Jesse started his USFS career in the summer of 1999 when he joined the Columbine as a seasonal on the timber crew. In the summer of 2000, he joined the fire crew as a crewman and has worked for the past year and half as acting Hand Crew Supervisor.



Jesse grew up in Lebow, Kansas, where he says, "the grass grows and the wind blows." He graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in Systematic Ecology in 1998 and has been living in Southwest Colorado since 1998. Jesse is looking forward to the continuing challenges of his position.

"It's great!" he says. "I do the same thing and get paid more for it."

Jesse spends his spare time hiking the public lands of Southwest Colorado and enjoying the local cultural scene.

Mike Promoted to Engine Foreman

By Stan Sparks

Mike Herin is Columbine's new Engine Foreman after serving as Assistant and Acting Foreman since June, 2004. Mike came to Columbine from the Dixie NF, where he worked for one year as Squad Boss on the Cedar City Hotshots.

Prior to that, Mike worked for one year at the Dolores Public Lands Office as Assistant Engine Foreman. He started his USFS career on the Tonto NF, working on the Payson Hotshot Crew from 1995 to 2000. Mike would like to thank everyone who has kept him busy in the off seasons, and made his time here enjoyable since his arrival.

"It's a great place to work, and the people here make it that way," he says.

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Juli Joins VIS

By Stan Sparks

Juli Zatorski is the new San Juan Mountains Association Visitor Information Assistant on the Columbine.

Juli brings with her an extensive background in customer service, as well as a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado.

Her background includes a variety of jobs, all specializing in customer service. She managed a Starbucks in Denver, interned at a nonprofit photographic gallery, and worked with adults with developmental disabilities for a non-profit group. She currently also works part-time at Nature's Oasis in Durango.

"I've wanted to be involved with public lands work since I was little and feel very fortunate to work for such a passionate and instrumental group as SJMA," Juli says.

Although raised in the Denver metro area, Juli spent a large portion of her childhood camping and hiking in southwestern Colorado.



**San Juan
Public Lands People
is published by the
Public Affairs Office
San Juan Public Lands Center**

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DOLORES NEWS

Tom's Back from Hawaii

By Toni Kelly

Straight from the Big Island of Hawaii is Tom Kochanski, who will be a Resource Information Specialist in the Dolores Public Lands Office. Tom worked for the San Juan as a Forester in the early 1990s, handling aerial photo interpretation and working for the Integrated Resource Inventory Project.



"My duties will include providing GIS support to the Dolores Office and Canyons of the Ancients," Tom says. "That includes offering map and data query products, and training coworkers in the use of ArcGIS software."

Tom worked most recently at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park as a GIS Specialist. Prior to that, he worked for the City of Cortez as a GIS Coordinator for five years.

Tom started his USFS career in 1990 on the Santa Fe NF as a seasonal Forestry Technician, performing old-growth inventories using aerial photography and satellite imagery.

Tom obtained his Masters degree in Forestry from the University of Massachusetts. He moved to Durango in 1992, then to Dolores in 1994. His wife, Laura, is currently working at the Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park on the island of Hawaii.

The Kochanskis are owned by Koa, their black Labrador. Tom enjoys woodworking, bicycling, hunting, fishing, and volleyball. "I'm looking forward to being part of the Forest Service family again, as this has been a dream of mine for a very long time," he says.

Moving Day Gets Closer

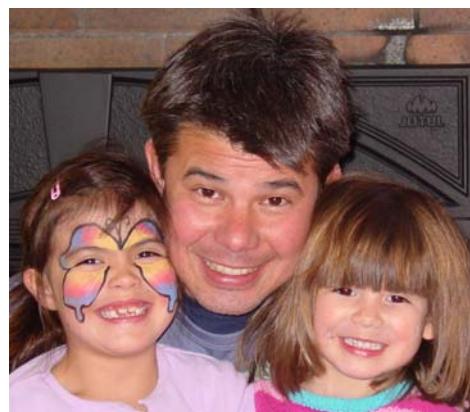
By Toni Kelly

The latest projection on the move into the new Dolores Public Lands Office is that the migration of employees will occur by early August. Project Engineer Van Chany asks those who want an upfront tour to schedule a time to minimize disruptions to the contractors still working onsite.

"I have been getting a lot of requests and have heard of unescorted and unscheduled site visits taking place," Van says. "I know everyone is curious about the building and what cubicles look like, but the contractors are still working and need space to get their work done. A bunch of folks wandering through the building is not what they need right now."

If you or your staff want to visit the new building, check with Juliet Craik in advance so she can coordinate your visit with others to reduce the amount of field trips needed. No visits to the site will be allowed during off-duty hours.

PAGOSA NEWS



Kevin Returns as Ranger

By Ann Bond

Former San Juan National Forest Landscape Architect Kevin Khung is the new Pagosa District Ranger/Field Office Manager.

"We look forward to adding Kevin's strong leadership and management to the San Juan," says Howard Sargent, SPLC Assistant Forest Supervisor/Area Manager.

Kevin started on the San Juan as a temporary in 1991, went permanent in 1992, and left in 2000 to become Landscape Architect for the Region 9 Technical Service Team, stationed on the Green Mountain NF in Vermont. The team handled design for recreation and administrative sites for NFs and Grasslands in the Eastern Region.

In 2002, Kevin moved to the Bighorn NF in Wyoming as Recreation and Lands Staff Officer. He also handled Acting Forest Engineer duties.

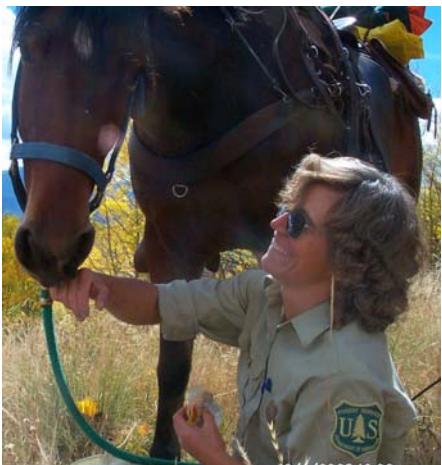
Former Pagosa District Ranger Jo Bridges says Kevin is an excellent choice. "I can't think of anyone who will do a better job. His combination of practicality, ability to accomplish work, environmental ethic, and willingness to collaborate is ideal."

Kevin and wife, Lara, have two daughters, Delaney, 7, and Peyton, 3. Lara has telecommuted to Durango to work for the architectural company, Reynolds Larson & Associates, since they've been away, so moving to Pagosa is ideal.

"We're looking forward to returning to such a beautiful place," Kevin says, "and especially to working with old and new friends."

Kevin holds Bachelor's degree in Environmental Design from the University of Massachusetts, and a Master's of Landscape Architecture from Kansas State University.

PAGOSA NEWS



Ann Rides Away

By Liz Parker

Ann Shepherdson left the Pagosa Office this spring after 16 years to help husband, Jim, home-school their two sons, Dan, 12, and Tim, 10. Jim was Wildlife Biologist and FMO for the Pagosa District until 2003.

Ann's federal career began as a college intern in Montrose working with Clyde Johnson. She worked seasonal positions for both BLM and USFS for several years across the West. The jobs included BLM Land Surveyor, BLM Engine Fire Crew, Range Tech, Wilderness Information Specialist, and Youth Conservation Corps Crew Leader.

Ann began working in Pagosa in 1989 as a permanent Range Tech, and was later promoted to professional status. She'll be available as a casual firefighter and will miss riding the range and working with permittees.

Alice Chavez is very glad to be back at work and wants to thank everyone for their generosity in leave donations, cards and letters, gifts, telephone calls and visits.

"Your support has been phenomenal and has certainly helped in my recovery," she says.



Congrats to Anthony

By Mark Ball

Wildlife Biologist Anthony Garcia has been named Rocky Mountain Region Wildlife Biologist of the year for 2006. Anthony was recognized for his professional demeanor while dealing with difficult issues under demanding timelines. He always maintains high standards in carrying out the complex role of a wildlife biologist in the USFS today.

Anthony's involvement on controversial projects has helped advance our approach to dealing with complex management issues. He takes on more than his share of support work, yet also manages to accomplish his annual program targets. Anthony is successful in obtaining outside partnership grants for fuels-reduction projects with significant wildlife-habitat enhancement benefits.

His perpetual good humor, organized and highly productive work ethic, technical expertise, and professional demeanor combine to provide leadership by example that makes Anthony a highly valued team member.



Ben is New Wildlife Bio

By Liz Parker

PAGOSA - Ben Hernandez is a new Pagosa District Wildlife Biologist, who will be helping Anthony Garcia with NEPA work on fuel-reduction and range-land projects.

Ben will conduct surveys for threatened and endangered species, such as the Southwest willow flycatcher and Mexican spotted owl, and later in the summer will assist the Colorado Division of Wildlife with bighorn sheep monitoring.

Ben moved here from Idaho, where he worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the Weiser Ranger District of the Payette NF. Before working for the USFS, he was an aircraft mechanic in the Navy for six years. Ben holds a Bachelors degree in Range and Wildlife Management.

Jake's the New Engine Operator

By Liz Parker

Jacob Thelan is Pagosa's new Supervisory Engine Operator. He'll be the module leader of a Type 4 Fire Engine and Fuels Module Leader.

"It's going to be a new and exciting challenge," he says of his new duties.

He and his wife, Sarah, have been married for almost two years. If you're looking for some fun on Friday nights, Jacob is a "vinyl DJ" at a local dance club in Pagosa.



ANASAZI HERITAGE CENTER NEWS

Making a Difference



(Left to right) BLM Colorado Associate State Director Doug Koza; Kathe Hayes, SJMA; Marissa Karchut, AHC; Ruth Lambert, SJMA; and Dan DuBray, BLM Assistant Communications Director, at a Washington D.C. ceremony honoring our local BLM volunteer programs as recipients of a *Making a Difference* national award.

Antiquities Act Centennial

By Marissa Karchut

AHC staffers and volunteers are busy this summer celebrating the anniversary of the Antiquities Act of 1906, the first law passed to protect and preserve cultural properties in the U.S.

Derrick Baldwin spearheaded a Web site and table-top display to promote the Centennial. Volunteer Judy Verbeck scanned BLM publications, many out of print, to make them available on the Web site.

We're also working with SJMA on four projects funded by a grant from the Colorado Historical Society State Historical Fund. The exhibit, *Archaeology Grows Up: 100 Years in Montezuma County*, was designed by Michael Williams and Chris Kantner. Also in the works is a video on how to respectfully visit archaeological sites from a Native American perspective. The video team includes Victoria Atkins, Margie Connolly from Crow Canyon, and Dr. Shirley Powell.

A digitization project underway will help preserve special archives. Documents are being duplicated, and maps made into digital records to allow access for research, education, and interpretation. Finally, a site-stewardship workshop for landowners this spring was put together by Ruth Lambert from SJMA, and AHC staffers Deb Jensen and myself.

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