

San Juan Public Lands People



Employee News Winter 2006



New Dolores Office to be Ready by Summer

By Ann Bond

DOLORES – The new Dolores Public Lands Office, under construction just east of the junction of Highways 145 and 184, should be ready for business this summer.

The \$5 million facility will house 81 permanent and seasonal FS and BLM employees. The 57-acre site includes an 18,500-square-foot office and an 11,000-square-foot warehouse/carport.

Triad Western Construction of Cortez is the contractor for the project, working with local subcontractors.

"This is the second-largest construction project in the Region to date," said Van Chanay, Contracting Officer's Representative. "It's also the first to incorporate new national facility-design standards."

A straw-bale wall will separate public and employee entrances, and a ramada-style kiosk will offer information in the entry plaza. Trees and landscaping will decorate the building and entryways.

The buildings, roads, and other improvements occupy only



Information Specialists Toni Kelly and Celia Boyd check out the new visitor center area, which will include a bookstore, kids' corner, and conference room.

10 acres of the property. The rest of will remain in a natural state, because of the presence of archaeological sites.

Cultural sites were avoided, where possible, in the layout of facilities. Disturbance of those sites affected was mitigated in advance through data-recovery efforts.

Lane and Company of Cortez will begin construction soon on a 2,400-



The stucco exterior of the new Dolores office features wooden columns, a courtyard, ranch-style windows, and a pitched roof.

square-foot bunkhouse to house up to 10 seasonal employees. Plans also call for a corral, tack shed, hay barn, and perhaps another bunkhouse.

The project necessitated \$700,000 worth of improvements to a half-mile section of highway. Contractor Bechtolt Engineering of Durango worked with the Colorado Department of Transportation to add acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Planning for the new office began in 2002, but ground wasn't broken until 2004, following a land exchange with the Town of Dolores in 2003. The building site was acquired from the town in exchange for two federally owned tracts in town and an equipment yard east of town. Dolores plans to use the equipment yard as a shop and storage facility, and will either sell the vacant lots or develop them into parks.

"Our current office in downtown Dolores will be placed on the USFS Facility Conveyance List under new authority, which provides for the sale of this site, with proceeds to be used for 'acquisition, improvement, maintenance, reconstruction or construction of a facility or improvement for the National Forest System,'" said Jamie Sellar-Baker, Assistant Dolores District Ranger/Field Office Manager.

(Ann Bond is the Public Affairs Specialist for the San Juan Public Lands Center.)

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS NEWS



Della Departs

By Ann Bond

DURANGO - Della Zeller retired this winter after 32 years with the San Juan NF. After starting in personnel in 1973, she was hired the following year as a mail clerk.

Della went on to work as Resource Clerk, Support Services Specialist, Realty Resource Clerk, and, in 1998, became Executive Assistant.

"I'm the first one in the position to work for both agencies, and to work for both the Supervisor/Center Manager and Deputy Supervisor/Associate Center Manager," she says.

Della coordinated leadership team meetings, handled scheduling and screening calls, coordinated Congressional inquiries and official letters, and worked with all staff and districts.

"I consider the position to be the hub of the San Juan. You have to respond to requests at a moment's notice," Della says. "I enjoyed working with all the different management styles, ideas, and points of view."

Della will be taking care of family and enjoying arts and crafts, including crochet and beading. She also plans to spend time quilting, playing piano, and landscaping.

"It's hard to leave, because the San Juan has been my home away from home," Della says. "I don't know whether to laugh or cry."

Dick Retires

By Ann Bond

DURANGO – After 35 years, Dick Ostergaard retired this winter from the USFS, with 26 years of those years as the San Juan's Landscape Architect.

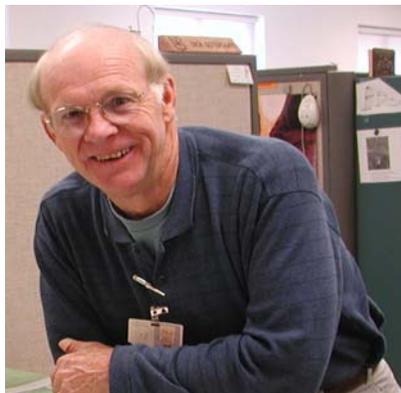
Dick started his career in 1969 as a seasonal on the Uinta and Cache NFs in Utah. His first permanent job was on the Cleveland NF in Region 5. He went on to work in other Regions before landing here in 1979.

Dick handled site-plan design for facilities, scenery management, interpretation, scenic byways, and signage. As a certified interpretive planner, he was honored with several awards and was known for his illustration and layout.

Dick is continuing to work as a consultant for the San Dimas Technology and Development Center on a recreation-facilities catalogue and sign manual. He's also working on an interpretation plan for the Beartooth Highway and artwork for the Western Heritage Foundation.

His family is busy, as well. Wife Jill is working as a school counselor in Colorado Springs. Daughter Heidi, 29, is in Fort Collins; Rachel, 28, lives on a ranch in Utah; Keri, 25, is working as a ski instructor in Utah; Erika, 22, is in graduate school at CSU; and Taylor, 19, is at Casper College in Wyoming, studying agriculture on a Fulbright scholarship.

"It's been a great career," Dick says. "I've especially enjoyed working on programs that benefit the public to make their experiences on public lands meaningful and enjoyable."



Julie Coleman (on right) with friends, Sally Crum, GMUG Archaeologist, and Clifford Duncan, Ute Elder.

Welcome Julie

By Ann Bond

DURANGO – Julie Coleman says she's come full circle with her new position as San Juan Public Lands Heritage Team Lead. That's because Julie started her career as a seasonal BLM Archaeological Technician in 1990, recording historic mine sites on the Alpine Loop.

"I was in graduate school and couldn't believe how lucky I was to get paid to do the two things I loved best – hiking in the mountains and finding historic structures," she says.

Julie returned to the San Juans the following summer to work for the Gunnison Field Office, writing a Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Alpine Loop.

Her first full-time BLM job was in Worland, Wyoming, where she worked with Dave Baker and Jamie Sellar-Baker.

Julie returned to the Gunnison Field Office as Geologist/Archaeologist, where she implemented the Cultural Resource Plan she had written as a seasonal. In 2001, she moved to the Ucompahgre Field Office, where she has been until now.

"With some of the best resources in the nation, the opportunities on the San Juan are outstanding," she says.

She and husband, David, with their dog, Zsa-Zsa, and cat, Rico, have a cozy little cottage in Silverton, but hope to find a place to live in Durango soon.

REGIONAL FORESTER AWARDS



The Business Administrative Support Award was presented in Denver to San Juan Contract Officer Joe Milburn. (Left to right) Regional Forester Rick Cables, Milburn, San Juan Assistant Supervisor Howard Sargent, San Juan Supervisor Mark Stiles, and Deputy Regional Forester Richard Stem.

Joe Honored For His Work

By Ron Duvall

DURANGO - San Juan Contracting Officer Joe Milburn provides excellent support to all areas, administering 64 contracts this year, while working on 23 new contracts/requisitions.

Last year, the San Juan exceeded its fuels target, and Joe's efforts contributed greatly to that accomplishment.

Joe has also played an integral role in moving along the Dolores office building construction contract. He worked through modifications and changes to utility contracts, and coordinated with utility providers on service right-of-ways and hookups.

The San Juan traditionally has a large Capital Improvements Projects workload, which impacts Joe. Because of his good relationship with contractors, the San Juan and the Rocky Mountain Region are able to work efficiently on CIP projects.

Joe's consistency in achieving excellence really stands out. For the past several years he has pitched in and taken over contract oversight and duties for other offices while on fire assignments or other details. Perhaps most important, all of his stellar efforts have been sustained over many years.

(Ron Duvall is the San Juan's Administrative Officer.)

Tracey Recognized For Her Work

By Pauline Ellis

DURANGO - With almost 800,000 acres of public land, the Columbine Ranger District/Field Office welcomes all the help we can get. Luckily, our communities include people willing to volunteer their time, but it takes dedicated employees to facilitate those services.

The hard work of Volunteer Coordinator Tracey McInerney has resulted in hundreds of volunteers accomplishing valuable projects, and she keeps them coming back.

Tracey has been with the Columbine for many years, working in wilderness, timber, and developed recreation. Her current duties include travel management, environmental education, and serving as a Level II Forest Protection Officer.

Tracey works with many local partners, including the San Juan Mountains Association, San Juan Trail Riders, Backcountry Horsemen, San Juan Mountain School, Trails 2000, Colorado Trail Foundation, Rail Rangers, Creeper Jeepers, Wilderness Information Specialists, and Durango Nature Studies.

She also works with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church and school groups, youth groups, and hunter hosts. More than 500 volunteers contributed over 8,000 hours on the Columbine this year, for a value of more than \$100,000 of stewardship projects.

Tracey is a Master *Leave No Trace* trainer and *Tread Lightly* advocate, and coordinates several annual environmental-education events. She has formed close partnerships with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Colorado State Parks on hunter-patrol projects. She also helps volunteer groups apply for grants.

Tracey was instrumental in developing the Rail Rangers Program, whereby volunteers ride the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Train, providing information on public lands to passengers. In 2005, these volunteers spoke with some 68,000 passengers, reaching a population that might not ordinarily come into contact with the agency.

Without sound leadership, volunteerism can be a challenge.

With Tracey at the helm, however, Columbine is able to reap the benefits of an extended workforce that, not only completes projects, but embraces resource conservation and stewardship.

(Pauline Ellis is the Columbine District Ranger/Field Office Manager.)



The Volunteer Leadership Award was awarded to Tracey McInerney, Columbine Volunteer Coordinator. (Left to right) Rick Cables, Mark Stiles, McInerney, Columbine District Ranger Pauline Ellis, Howard Sargent, and Richard Stem.

MORE PLC NEWS

A Work Of Art

By Alan Peterson

DURANGO – San Juan Visitor Information Specialist Art Sanchez has been honored by his peers for his leadership in promoting visitor services.

Art was presented a plaque recognizing him as Team Leader of the Year by the entire San Juan VIS Team, which includes USFS and BLM staff, San Juan Mountains Association staff, and volunteer San Juan Public Land ambassadors. He also received a watch engraved, "VIS Team Thanks You," and a cake decorated with a photo scanned into the icing of him hiking in the backcountry.

The idea behind the award is to recognize and show our appreciation for Art's taking the lead on so many aspects of the visitor services arena at the Public Lands Office, as well as at the Ranger District/Field Offices.

Art's responsibilities include ordering, inventorying, dispersing and organizing edits of annual permits, brochures and maps; keeping the VIS team informed of changes and updates; updating our front offices with a Point-of-Sale system for computer cash registers; making sure employees and volunteers have a safe working environment; building teams to organize special events and celebrations; organizing an annual Visitor Information Workshop for staff and volunteers; providing avenues for us to participate in field trips so we can pass on first-hand knowledge to visitors; and acting as liaison with SJMA.

Art is a great leader because he inspires us to go the extra mile with customers - not because he tells us to, but because he sets an example that excites and enhances our own personal values.

(Alan Peterson is San Juan Mountains Association Visitor Information Specialist.)



(Left to right) Stan Sparks, Art Sanchez, and Alan Peterson stand ready to answer any and all questions about public lands.

COLUMBINE NEWS

Stan Helps Family After Rita

By Ann Bond

BAYFIELD - Columbine Visitor Information Specialist Stan Sparks went home over the holidays to help clean up the damage caused by Hurricane Rita to his family's properties in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Stan, a native of East Texas, says the area sustained hurricane-force winds for almost a full day last fall, knocking down many large trees and damaging homes on their property.

Stan estimates he and family members cut up and removed at least 10 cords of hickory and oak.

"A 40-inch-diameter tree fell and just missed my parents' house by a few feet, and fencing on the property was hard hit," Stan says.

His parents were not evacuated during the hurricane, but lost electricity and water for almost a week. Another family home nearby was totaled by tree damage, but no one was hurt.



One of the properties that sustained damage from Hurricane Rita this fall on the Sparks property east of Nacogdoches, Texas.

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Ann Bond handles content and design; Tom Harris makes sure everything's readable, and publishes the newsletter on our Web site.

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PAGOSA PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE NEWS

Glenn Helps Family After Katrina

By Ann Bond

PAGOSA - Glenn Raby, Pagosa Ranger District Geologist, was born and raised in Louisiana's St. Bernard Parish just east of New Orleans, an area submerged after Hurricane Katrina hit last fall.

Glenn has lived in the Four Corners area for 25 years but still considers New Orleans home, so he headed south this winter to help salvage family belongings at his mother's house.

Glenn's family escaped unharmed, but their properties suffered extensive damage. Before the hurricane, St. Bernard Parish had 25,000 homes and businesses. During Glenn's visit, there still was no electricity, and only one school had reopened.

"We were there for almost a full day and saw only three people," says Glenn. "The weirdest thing was the absolute silence – no birds, no motors, nothing."

Although his mother's house is still standing, it was underwater for six weeks, and the task to find something to salvage was difficult.

"The house is rotting from the inside out," Glenn says. "There are fingers of green stuff growing out of the wood paneling. There's even mold growing on the sidewalk."

His mother does not intend to rebuild the house where she and her husband raised their children, but will stay in the general area.



The kitchen of Glenn Raby's childhood home is filled with mold and mud after being underwater for weeks.

Jo is Out West

By Ann Bond

PAGOSA SPRINGS - Jo Bridges, who served as Pagosa District Ranger for 12 years, left the San Juan this fall for Vallejo, California, to work as Deputy Director for Ecosystems Planning in Region 5.

"This is a promotion, plus I'm closer to my family," she says. "It's a new and exciting job that's completely different from anything I've done before."

Jo came to the San Juan in 1989 as Staff Officer for Planning and Public Affairs before taking the Pagosa District Ranger position in 1993. Prior to that, she worked for two years in the USFS Washington Office as Program Lead for Public Involvement in National Programs.

Before that, Jo was Planner on the San Bernadino NF for six years. Her first USFS job was back in 1980, working on a fire-economics research project for the Riverside Fire Laboratory in California.

"It is so hard to leave," Jo says. "I feel honored to have worked with all of you, but I'm keeping my house in Pagosa and plan to retire here."

Until Jo's position is filled, Dave Dallison, San Juan Timber Staff, is on detail as Acting Ranger/Field Office Manager. Dave will continue to cover his timber staff and planning duties while he commutes back and forth between Durango and Pagosa, so his plate will be full.



Office Gets a Facelift

The Pagosa office has a new look. Laurie Yeager, San Juan Facilities Engineer, who oversaw the project, said a new entrance canopy was added to the front of the building, complemented with cultured stone detail work. The entire exterior was redone with fiber cement, along with new siding and trim. The concrete pad at the entrance was replaced, and new barrier-free handrails were added to the stairs accessing the office from the street.

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE NEWS

Toni Covers the Community

By Ann Bond

DOLORES – The job of Visitor Information Assistant is a busy one at the Dolores Public Lands Office. Toni Kelly, who's held the position for seven years, plays an integral role, not only in the operation of the front office, but also in representing the agencies in area communities.

Toni has served on the Board of Directors for the Dolores Chamber of Commerce for the past two years and is currently vice president. She helps organize Escalante Days Parade, Loggers Rodeo, and Christmas Festival.

Toni also sits on the Board of Mesa Verde Country, the visitor bureau for Cortez, and helps to update its popular brochures on hiking, fishing, and mountain biking on public lands.

"The brochures appear in local restaurants, hotels, visitor centers, and the airport," Toni says. "They also get mailed out worldwide as part of the tourism packets."

Toni writes 'Public Lands Updates' for the *Dolores Star* newspaper, contributes to this newsletter, and has been published in the *Cortez Journal*.

She also works with area arts councils to coordinate the Aspen Guard Station Artist-in-Residence Program, and represents the Dolores Office for the San Juan Conservation Education Program.

"I not only find volunteers, I am one," Toni says. "Besides fulfilling school requests, we participate in annual water festivals, county fairs, and parades."

Toni keeps the Dolores Office running smoothly with the help of SJMA employees; receptionist Roberta Leicester, bookstore manager Celia Boyd, and seasonal Robert DeNyke.

"I love my job and my staff," Toni says. "Without them it would be hard to come to work in the mornings."



(Left to right) Toni, Ericka (aka Sassy), Sam, and Tom Kelly on vacation in Victoria, Canada, this winter.



Frank is New Forester Trainee

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - After finishing up the requirements for the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), Frank Gonzales has accepted a Forester Trainee position at the Dolores Public Lands Office.

Frank spent the summer season of 2004 on the timber-marking crew as part of his experience requirements for the SCEP program.

He recently graduated from Colorado State University where he obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry.

Originally from Santa Fe, Frank began his USFS career in 2003, working on a fuels-survey crew for Region 3 out of Albuquerque. He and his wife, Marquita, have a dog named Tiger. Frank enjoys snowboarding and downhill skiing.

Congrats to Shauna and Mike



Congratulations to new parents Shauna Jensen, USFS Dolores Office Hydrologist, and Mike Jensen, BLM Dolores Office Range Conservationist, who welcomed daughter, Anna Marie, into their lives on Jan. 26, weighing in at 6 lbs., 2 oz.

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ANASAZI HERITAGE CENTER NEWS

Welcome, Bob

By Marissa Karchut

DOLORES - Bob Salter is the new Natural Resource Specialist working with oil-and-gas leases in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Bob has worked all over the country as a Wildlife Biologist and Wilderness Ranger for the USFS, Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Fire Effects Ecologist for the National Park Service on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Bob holds a bachelors degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Tennessee. He enjoys exploring wild places and observing wildlife, alternative construction and energy systems, motorcycles, and backcountry skiing.

(Marissa Karchut is AHC Visitor Services/Volunteer Coord.)



Hello, Logan

By Marissa Karchut

DOLORES - Logan Briscoe is the new Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Law Enforcement Ranger. Logan was born and raised in Cedaredge, where his family has had apple orchards for a century.

Logan received a degree in Criminal Justice and Biology from Mesa State College, where he also played football. Before working for BLM in Montrose under the Student Career Experience Program, he interned with the Colorado Bureau of Investigations.

Logan and his wife, Shanda, have a four-month-old daughter, Kaylee. Logan enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, and bow hunting.



Steve Leaves

By Marissa Karchut

DOLORES - Steve Kandell, CANM Planner, traded in his BLM badge to work for the private sector this winter.

Before working for Canyons of the Ancients, Steve was Land Use Planner for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Kanab, Utah. Prior to that, he worked for the BLM Gunnison Field Office through the Student Conservation Association, was an Environmental Planning Consultant in Brazil, and worked for the Paiute Indian Tribe.

Originally from Florida, Steve holds a masters degree in Environmental Planning and Natural Resource Management from Florida State University.

"I've enjoyed working at two BLM National Monuments over the last eight years, but it's time to pursue a new opportunity," he says.

Students Help Out

By Kellam Throgmorton and Linda Farnsworth

DOLORES - A Field Archaeology class from Colorado College of Colorado Springs conducted an archaeological survey this fall in the Burro Point area of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. Seven students participated in the five-week field class, surveying 110 acres that had never before been inventoried, and documenting nine sites.

Students collected information on an Ancestral Puebloan community near a site called Lightning Tree Tower. They located and recorded a three-acre Basketmaker III settlement, surface pueblos, rock art panels, cliff dwellings, and towers.

They also discovered an extensive rock-art site along the base of a cliff, with motifs depicting birds and bird tracks, an anthropomorphic figure, spirals, and a series of incised grooves and pecked cupules.

The class stayed at Crow Canyon Archaeological Center and used its lab facilities to analyze ceramic and lithic data, type site descriptions, and work on individual projects. Back at school, the field class is helping prepare a final report to be submitted to monument staff. Data generated from the survey will help fill in the gaps in the archaeological knowledge about the prehistoric occupation of the monument.

(Kellam Throgmorton is a Colorado College student and Linda Farnsworth is CANM Archaeologist.)



Students Seth Byrnes and Beck Poore examine an artifact.

DURANGO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

DFEA Events Help Break Up the Work Day

By Laura Stransky

DURANGO - The Durango Federal Employees' Association was busy in 2005. DFEA donated \$250 to hurricane-relief projects, along with additional, separate employee contributions of \$400.

DFEA sponsored a blood drive, as well as several fun food events. There were potlucks, a Valentine breakfast, St. Patrick's Day lunch, a tax-day luncheon, the Cheeseburgers in Paradise get-together, several brown-bag lunch presentations, three ice cream socials, a summer picnic at Chris Park, and the Nine Days of Christmas.

An upcoming event for 2006 is the ever-popular Cheeseburgers in Paradise, scheduled for late May, perhaps in conjunction with orientations for seasonal employees. Details are to be announced, so watch for emails and posters.

Anyone interested in helping with events should contact current DFEA officers: Dee Lewis, Terry Woodall, Stephanie Odell, or myself.

(Laurie Stransky is a Planning Assistant.)



Fire Dispatcher Vera Pena and Forestry Technician Laurie Swisher enjoy Cheeseburgers in Paradise last summer in the San Juan Public Lands Center parking lot. The popular event will return this year.

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