SourDough Notes

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ON THE COVER:

In celebration of National Public Lands Day, Meghan Mullaly assists the Glacier Ranger District ecology crew in replanting native vegetation at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center. Story on page 3. Photo by Kathleen Keusenkothen.

SourDough Notes

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Acceptance of articles does not guarantee publication. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit all articles for journalistic standards and space consideration. Articles will be edited to Associated Press style, with consideration of GPO guidelines.

INSIDE:

Forest Service History Quiz Winner

Congratulations are extended to Gwen Marcus from State & Private Forestry for winning the run-off drawing in the last history quiz. Gwen received a cozy Forest Service fleece throw to help ward off the chill on cold winter nights.

We held the year-long contest about Forest Service history in Alaska to help bring attention to the National Museum of Forest Service History that will soon be under construction in Missoula, Mont. The quiz prizes were provided by Western Heritage Company.

You can keep up with the progress of the museum by visiting http://www.nmfs-history.net.

The last question:
What were the names of the last two Forest Service ranger boats built for the Alaska Region, and when were they built?

The answer: *Tongass Ranger* and *Sitka Ranger*, 1958-1959

A lot of employees and retirees knew this answer! Here is a nod and a thank you to:

Steve Kessler
Bill Dougan
Scott McDonald
John Standerwick
Katie Benning
Andrew Schmidt
Paul McIntosh
Christy Gardner
Deborah Riggs
Dana Smyke
Kim Kiml
Patrick Heuer
Dawn Collinsworth
Sue Jennings
Valorie Nelson

Hard Working Girl Scouts Shine
on National Public Lands Day

By: Nick Racine, Lead Interpreter, Glacier Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

In the days leading up to September 26, 2009, the sun remained hidden, the clouds dominated the skies, and the wind whipped aggressively as it often does in Portage Valley. However, as the sun rose on National Public Lands Day, the Girls Scouts of Alaska (formerly of the Susitna Council) and staff of the Glacier Ranger District were treated to mild temperatures, calm winds and abundant sunshine. These have been the conditions for the last few years and good weather was once again on our side.

This year's service-learning project was centered on native vegetation and exotic and invasive plants. Outside the Portage Valley Learning Center wing of the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, a garden that contains a variety of native plants such as Nootka lupine, heather, and willow species, has been established. Over time, and mostly due to the aforementioned weather, there has been a loss of soil, and these plants were becoming more and more exposed. Additionally, the grade has sloped towards the building which has made drainage less than ideal.

So this year, the Girl Scouts lent a huge assist to improve this garden. The tasks of the day included delicately removing all the plants. Then, a rock wall was constructed around the entire bed and a second tier was added on the back half of the bed. Soil was filled in on the upper tier to improve the drainage and position the slope away from the building, and also on the lower tier to raise the grade level. Then the plants were re-bedded and carefully positioned by Betty Charnon and her ecology crew with an emphasis on plant size, color of the flowers and the timing of the bloom. This will allow plants to bloom at different times throughout the growing season. By teaching the girls about the plants' unique characteristics, and why we favor them over non-native and invasive species, their understanding of the importance of native Alaskan vegetation was enhanced.

To say that the girls put forth a hard day's work would be an extreme understatement. Almost immediately after the initial briefing and safety discussion, the girls jumped into the work with great enthusiasm. The youngest girls, nicknamed the "Marmots," worked on removing the plants. The oldest girls and therefore the strongest, were the "Bears," and they worked on the rock wall construction. This was one of the toughest jobs of the day and the end result was a beautiful yet very sturdy set of walls. The third group was the "Moles," and they were charged with applying and churning new soil into the existing soil. Forest Service employees contributed by supplying the "Bears" with rocks and the "Moles" with soil, but the majority of the work was done by the girls with support from parents and troop leaders. Amazingly enough, all of this work was conducted, including the lesson briefing and safety session, in four hours.

Forest Service employee Jim Sumner inspects the hard work done by Girl Scouts building a rock retaining wall at Begich, Boggs Visitor Center. Photo by Kathleen Keusenkothen.

I would like to extend gratitude to Betty Charnon and her ecology crew: Kate Mohatt, Timm Nawrocki, and Kelly Bandoch, and to BBVC staff members Jim Sumner, Saralynn Fenwick, and Farah Renno for their help with the day's event. In addition, the Glacier Ranger District cannot thank the girls and their parents enough for their hard work and dedicated effort for this year's National Public Lands Day. We plan to erect a plaque that gives credit to the girls for their efforts on this project. We are confident that when the girls visit the center in the future they'll remember the lessons they learned and take pride in the accomplishments they achieved on that beautiful day in September.

Southeast Tribal Leaders Optimistic
Following White House Tribal Relations Conference

By Editor Teresa Haugh and Lillian Petershoare, Regional Program Leader, Tribal Government Relations

As Alaska Region employees, we recognize the benefits that have come from the Forest Service's partnerships with the Alaska Natives. The fact that they live, work and depend on the two national forests, their ancestral lands in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska, make them very valuable partners.

Woody Widmark, President, Sitka Tribe. Photo by Michelle Putz.

While government-to-government consultation is mandated, Region 10 strives to go beyond that legal requirement. We foster and build positive working relationships with Alaska Natives, as emphasized in goal four of our mission statement. Achieving mutual cooperation and understanding between our agency and our Alaska Native neighbors has been an important aspect of many of our accomplishments in the Alaska Region.

With this in mind, we recently met separately with two Tribal leaders in Southeast Alaska: Woody Widmark, President of the Sitka Tribe, and Bill Martin, President of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. They shared their experiences of working with the Forest Service, and their trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with President Barack Obama this past November. President Obama invited leaders from each of the 564 federally recognized tribes to attend a day-long forum and departmental summits to meet with senior administration officials. With 90% of all tribes attending, it turned out to be the most widely attended gathering of Tribal leaders in American history.

After President Obama's introductory remarks and a subsequent question and answer session, forum attendees joined agency leaders in discussing areas of concern to Native Americans. Agency heads included Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, along with the Secretaries from the Department of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Commerce, and Energy. Promising more than "lip-service" in addressing the needs of Native Americans, Obama gave agency heads 90 days to create a plan to improve tribal consultations. Woody Widmark said the agencies are "on the fast track to make things happen." Bill Martin simply said, "They are scurrying!"

Widmark said though he usually doesn't enjoy traveling to Washington, D.C., he was glad to make this trip, which was a "three-day rush hour." He officially learned about the forum during the October National Congress of American Indians annual meeting in California. A White House spokesperson addressed the tribal leadership and made the announcement on Columbus Day.

Widmark's trip to D.C. from Sitka was long. Registration for the event, along with a lot of socializing and picture taking, started promptly at 7 a.m. the next day. Travel time and expenses were even greater for Tribal representatives from the Interior and outlying coastal villages of Alaska. Each Tribe had to fund its representative. Tribal leaders were varied. There were some young leaders (under the age 50) and some were women.

Widmark well remembers the anticipation shared by the Tribal leaders moments before the president appeared. "They gave us a flyer saying it's not encouraged to take pictures of the president," he said. "Well, forget that! Everybody took pictures."

Not everyone in D.C. was a fan of the event, however. Protesters surrounded three large teepees that were pitched near the White House. An undercurrent of Native drum beats added to the drama.

Widmark returned to Alaska with the message that one person cannot accomplish all the work alone. He said, "The president needs Tribal input, partnership, and true collaboration. It's a two-way street. A lot of Tribes who have complaints about the government just vent. The two entities must work together to solve problems."

On the local level, Widmark has seen Alaska Natives and Forest Service employees work well together. "There are success stories out there," he said, "and we don't get them out as much as we should. There are good staff members at the Tribe and good people at the Forest Service, too."

Bill Martin, President, Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Photo by Teresa Haugh.

Widmark speaks from experience since he is a former Forest Service employee. He was a self-described "timber beast" who did silviculture and planting, conducted surveys and layouts of timber sales at the Sitka Ranger District, and acted as a self-described "Woody of all trades."

"I did some stream cleaning," he said. "Back then, we cleared debris from the streams, but we now we have come full circle. We found that salmon need the woody debris, and employees are putting it back in!"

Widmark, who studied at Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka and the University of Montana Missoula, said his work with the Forest Service was quite educational. His insight into Forest Service history and decision-making processes has contributed to his success as leader of the Sitka Tribe. "I have a good relationship with the Sitka Ranger District," he said. "It is a two-way street and both parties work out problems to get a 'win-win' situation. We have worked hard at it."

Central Council President Bill Martin's trek to the forum in D.C. also started in October 2009. He had heard the exciting news that something was going to happen, that big news was coming. He said the Native community felt like the President would "keep his word" to work with the Native Tribes within the first year of his administration.

Martin acted as spokesperson for about 80 Tribal leaders from Alaska, a state with 229 federally-recognized Tribes. In fact, Alaska Natives comprise 41% of the federally-recognized Tribes in the U.S. Martin emphasized that not every Tribe could afford to send someone to D.C., even though there was some corporate assistance.

Martin said the excitement level was higher for this particular trip to D.C. than for other trips he has made. He attended an all-Tribes meeting the day before the forum so the Native leaders could get organized. He attended the dedication of the new "Native American embassy," a building on Embassy Row to house the offices of the National Congress of American Indians. He also met with the Alaska senators and congressman, and attended the summit with the Secretary of Agriculture. He described to them that the relationship between the Central Council and the Alaska Region of the Forest Service "worked well."

Martin said the excitement of all the Tribes being assembled in one place was tremendous. Some people wore their traditional regalia, including men with elaborate headdresses and Athabascan women in beaded buckskin dresses.

Martin was seated in the front row. He was recognized by the president, and stood up. He said his voice sounded shaky as he realized he was being given the opportunity to speak to the President of the United States on behalf of Alaska Natives.

He asked first for the president's support of fishing and subsistence rights, an issue he considered paramount to Alaska Natives. Then he quickly outlined the need to provide basic infrastructure service in villages, to mitigate the effects of climate change on communities, to improve health care, and to address the very high suicide rate in Alaska.

"At one point I paused and looked at the president," Martin said. "He was staring me right in the eyes. I thought, 'Oh my God, he's really listening.' It gave us hope. It gave everybody hope. We left that meeting, thinking, 'Maybe this time.'"

Everyone in the meeting laughed when President Obama said he wanted to visit Alaska, but only in the summer. Martin said that every Alaska Native has a special place to "get away from it all." The president said he often wants to get away from it all.

Given more time, Martin said he may have talked about his "special place"—a lagoon in Kake out in Portage Bay. In 1951, a Tribal and religious leader in Kake went duck hunting for Thanksgiving. He had a heart attack coming on. He sat under a tree and died looking out on water. That elder was Martin's grandfather, Charlie Newton. Charlie's son, Dick Newton, later worked for the Forest Service and helped put together what is now a Forest Service classic, *Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee*, Our Food is Our Tlingit Way of Life.

Martin was surprised when Obama came down to shake his hand and thank him for his comments. "It was very emotional," Martin said. "So many times we thought, 'Maybe this time,' but never with so much conviction that things will change."

Alaskan Wood for Alaskans

By Terry Fiske, Forester, Hoonah Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

The Tongass National Forest provides much of the wood used by local businesses in Hoonah, Alaska. Local yellow cedar, hemlock, and Sitka spruce are cut and milled to produce beautiful lumber that can be seen all over the town of Hoonah and beyond.

Wood produced by Icy Strait Lumber and Milling is sold all over Southeast Alaska. Over 98% of the wood used in refurbishing an old cannery into the current Icy Strait Point—a popular cruise ship port of call—came from Icy Strait Lumber and Milling. Visitors to Icy Strait Point cannot tell the difference between the old existing wood pieces and the new lumber because the wood pieces were milled to match. Many beautiful homes and cabins around Chichagof Island use this lumber. Icy Strait Lumber and Milling also makes prefabricated cabins. These cabins are often sold to out-of-town businesses and individuals, including replacing cabins at the Eagle River Boy Scout Camp near Juneau and a Forest Service cabin for 8 Fathom under the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

In addition to the lumber and milled pieces, local wood is also used to make wooden boxes, cribbage boards, and other carved wood pieces. Sue Tyler, co-owner of Icy Strait Lumber and Milling, carves the items with a laser saw, converting them to works of art with an Alaskan theme. The carved items are sold at a store at the Icy Strait Cannery.

Another mill in Hoonah, D & L Woodworks, provided the timber for an emergency shelter outside of Pelican. Although D&L Woodworks is smaller, it still provides an economic benefit to the people of Hoonah.

About 98% of the wood used to refurbish this site in Hoonah came from the Tongass National Forest. Photo by Terry Fiske.

Tongass wood was used in the construction of this emergency shelter at Bohemia near Pelican. Photo by Forest Service Recreation staff.

Wood products from the national forest are also important for traditional use. Everything from yellow cedar bark and spruce roots for fine basketry to large cedar logs for canoes and totem poles are gathered from the Tongass National Forest. These items and their manufacture are very important to local Tlingit people, and enrich the culture of the town of Hoonah for everyone who lives here.

Alaskan forest products form an integral part of the lives of the people of Southeast Alaska. These products are often cut and milled only a few miles from where they will be used, providing critical jobs and materials for the townspeople.

Purple Is to Dye For

Karen Dillman, Tongass National Forest and Erin Cooper, Chugach National Forest

Since before medieval times, lichens have been used to dye wool and other natural fibers in many cultures around the world. Specific lichens produce a rainbow of permanent colors on all types of fibers, producing shades of red, gold, brown, yellow and purple. This ancient but still thriving craft was introduced to Alaska fiber artists through workshops held in 2009 during the Cordova Fungus Festival in Cordova and the Tongass Rainforest Festival in Petersburg. Participants learned the history, technique and sustainable collection practices of lichens for their use as natural dyes. The hands-on workshops were conducted by one of North America's prominent lichen dye historians and lichen dye experts, Dr. Karen Casselman of Nova Scotia, Canada. Casselman has worked for over 25 years in the history and technique of lichen dyes. She has written many books and research articles on the subject.

What makes lichens a desirable medium for fiber artists is that they contain unique pigments and chemicals that fix the color to the fiber without the added step of preparing the fiber to receive the natural pigment, called mordanting. They are also generally easy to find year-round when other natural dye materials such as mushrooms and plants are under snow or dead. Lichens are also one of the few natural dye sources in the Alaska Region that produce the often sought after purple hues. During the workshops, participants used two methods to extract color from lichens. The boiling water method produces a variety of earth tones, while other lichens fermented in ammonia produce the purples.

The workshops provided excellent opportunities for participants to connect with the natural world and learn about the variety of lichens in their habitats around Petersburg and Cordova. Participants learned about how lichens cycle nutrients within an ecosystem, as well as other ecological functions such as providing nesting material, food, and shelter for animals in Alaska's temperate rainforest.

For the arboreal lichens which produce the earth tones, sustainable collecting practices include scavenging for lichens on roads, yards, or in ditches after a windstorm or firewood cutting. For the purple producing lichens which primarily grow on rocks, portions of the lichen body can be severed while leaving the rest to grow. They can also be gathered from the base of the rocks where lichens fall after being dislodged by animals or other natural processes. A dyer only needs about one-half cup of purple-producing lichens to dye one pound of wool or silk.

A workshop participant learns how to remove fiber from the dye bath. Photo by Karen Dillman.

Dr. Karen Casselman holds the lichen "Lobaria oregana" that is used for natural dye.

Volumes of lichen-dyed silk and wool were produced during the workshops, which will eventually be used in projects by the artists including quilting, knitting and crocheting. Although time consuming, arts and craft enthusiasts in remote Alaskan communities enjoy learning and using handcrafted processes which hark back to earlier times and reinforce their appreciation of nature. In fact, indigenous cultures of Southeast Alaska used lichens for dying basket material and mountain goat wool, a process some still use today. It is unknown what the future the craft of using lichens as natural dyes will be but one thing is sure; fiber artists of Cordova and Petersburg now see lichens and the color purple in a whole new light.

For more information on the **Cordova Fungus Festival**: http://www.cordovachamber.com.

Tongass Rainforest Festival: http://tongassrainforestfestival.org

Plant Production in Alaskan Nurseries

By Diane L. Haase, Western Nursery Specialist, Region 6

Greetings! I am the U.S. Forest Service Western Nursery Specialist. I provide expertise to forest and native plant nurseries in the 17 western states and the Pacific Islands as a member of the national Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetics Resources team, *aka* "The RNGR Team" (http://rngr.net). Previously, I was the associate director for the Nursery Technology Cooperative at Oregon State University. For nearly 20 years I conducted dozens of projects to develop nursery growing practices, increase seedling quality, and maximize growth and survival after outplanting.

Alaska nursery plants

In August 2009, I had the pleasure of visiting Alaska at the invitation of Patricia Joyner, Community Forestry Program Director, Alaska Division of Forestry. The purpose of the visit was to tour nurseries from Palmer to Fairbanks and become familiar with Alaskan plant production systems and their associated challenges and opportunities. I returned several weeks later to participate in a workshop for growers: *Grow it in Alaska: Producing, marketing, and using Alaskan grown trees, shrubs and perennials for uplands and wetlands.* Following is an overview of my observations.

Alaska Plant Production—Past and Present

Most of the nursery plants in Alaska are imported or produced from salvaged (wild dug) plants. Unfortunately, imported stock is often an inappropriate species or seed source for the outplanting site. For example, Colorado blue spruce is frequently planted in projects, but can turn red within a year.

Plants produced by Alaska nurseries are both native and non-native species for landscaping, roadside revegetation, and other uses. There are currently no nurseries growing seedlings for reforestation following harvest or wildfire. Those are imported from Canadian nurseries which use shortened photoperiod for inducing spruce budset; this results in a quality seedling suitable for Alaska's narrow growing window. In the past, the Plant Materials Center in Palmer operated as the State's forest nursery and there was a Forest Service nursery in Petersburg. There was also a State forestry greenhouse constructed in the 1990s to replace the one at the PMC. It provided seedlings for research and reforestation, but only operated for a short time.

Challenges and Opportunities to Nurseries in Alaska

Very cold winter conditions result in limitations to nursery operations including a short growing season, high heating costs, and potential for freezing damage to young plants. In addition, wind can result in severe desiccation and snow or ice can cause physical damage to plants and nursery structures. Pest damage can also be a big factor (from aphids, rollers, miners, moose, beetles, and sawfly). Other difficulties are the slow growth habit of natives; fluctuation in demand coupled with little or no advanced ordering; insufficient communication among growers, contractors, and architects; and inadequate resources and information.

Marketing is a big issue for Alaska nurseries. Large projects often use imported plants instead of locally grown, less expensive plants. However, many growers are small-scale, do not have a website, and do not have the resources and/or desire to market their plants on a broader scale. Local growers could be more visible and take advantage of being "Alaska Grown" and work to get their stock into retail garden centers, highway revegetation projects, or other venues that are currently using imported stock.

As the public focuses increasingly on sustainable, ecologically sound environmental practices, nurseries are in a position to provide plant materials for biofuel production, restoration of native plants and fruits, climate change mitigation, and educational programs. As the national economy recovers, this will be a great time for a new generation of growers to embark upon the

exciting and rewarding field of plant production.

Future Plans

The September workshop covered many critical topics including: the Alaska Grown standards program, propagation techniques, marketing strategies, plant specifications for municipal projects, and nursery practices in other states. Additionally, a website has been developed to support locally grown Alaska plants (http://sites.google.com/site/aksnapp). The website includes listings of available/needed plants, a calendar of events, and a list of projects underway.

There was also much discussion at the workshop regarding barriers to growing and marketing and how to overcome them. It's very important that growers be able to compete with imported plants. It would be helpful if government agencies provide incentives for supporting local growers and for using native plants in projects. There needs to be a brokerage for plants (someone who coordinates supply/demand) along with a growers' cooperative.

There will continue to be workshops, presentations, and other trainings designed to take action on the items identified at the workshop, to help Alaskan growers explore ways to create markets for locally grown trees, shrubs, and perennials (especially native plants), and to learn about industry standards and ways to meet requirements that will increase sales. For further information about future events, contact Patricia Joyner (patricia.joyner@alaska.gov, 907-269-8465).

I look forward to continued work with Alaskan nurseries. Please feel free to email me at dlhaase@fs.fed.us, call (503) 808-2349 or mail to:

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Begich, Boggs Reopens in Winter

By Lezlie Murray, Director, Begich Boggs Visitor Center

The Begich, Boggs Visitor Center in Portage Valley is happy to announce our return to a winter weekend schedule from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition, center staff will be there to assist the public during *Anchorage Fur Rendezvous* February 26-March 7.

Begich, Boggs Visitor Center in Portage Valley. Photo by Burnie Schultz.

Winter operation has been a tradition since the center first opened its doors in 1986, however, the past two winters the center has been closed due to budget cuts. Thanks to increased revenue, stemming from the change to the Recreation Fee Program this last summer, the Chugach National Forest has made the decision to reopen this winter. The decision to open for subsequent winter operation will be decided on an annual basis. No recreation fee will be charged for the movie and the exhibits during this winter season. The center will return to a recreation fee for adult visitors next summer from May 24-Sept. 30.

The facility offers award winning exhibits on the natural and cultural history of the Chugach National Forest, and the classic film, *Voices From the Ice,* which plays 13 times per day on the half-hour from 10:30 a.m. through the 4:30 p.m. showing. The Alaska Geographic Association bookstore offers compelling books, DVDs, maps and other educational products to enhance the visitor's knowledge about their public lands. In addition, the center is sponsoring a special exhibit, *20 Years after the Spill*, developed by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, as well as an exhibit on climate change from the National Park Service.

If you have questions about the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, its educational programs, or about facility rental, please contact Lezlie Murray, Visitor Center Director at llmurray01@fs.fed.us or at 907-754-2316.

Baffling Busy Beavers

By Ed Grossman, Recreation Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

Try to say that five times fast. Juneau's upper Mendenhall Valley has become excellent beaver habitat over the last 50 years as the famous Mendenhall Glacier has retreated. The retreat has allowed vegetation to become established where there was once only ice and rock, and it also exposed an altered landscape that is now quite varied with kettle ponds, sloughs, and channels all of which beavers enjoy. Human-made ditches and ponds, which led to the naming of the area as Dredge Lakes, have also benefitted beavers.

Beavers are renowned for their ability to modify habitat to their own benefit. By building dams, they create ponds within streams or increase the depths of existing ponds, which provide enhanced protection from winter elements and predators. This is where beavers often come into conflict with humans, as dammed streams often lead to the flooding of roads and trails, and the blockage of fish passage. Also, their logging activities, for food and construction materials, can dramatically alter the landscape.

Marc Scholten, who oversees the Juneau Ranger District's Developed Recreation and Trails Programs, has battled beavers most of his career. He has had a lot of help trying to keep culverts clear, trails dry, and fish moving. Everyone, including Scholten, will attest to the tenacity of these rodents. Crews have spent hours removing obstructions only to find their efforts were completely for naught by next morning.

Lethal trapping of beavers in specific areas of the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area was proposed as a tool a few years back to reclaim some of the recreation area, but this proposal faced great opposition by locals. Even the Governor stepped in to protect "nature's little loggers." A group of volunteers approached District Ranger Pete Griffin, and asked to take on the daily task of clearing culverts. Pete agreed as long as objectives were met. These folks have since admitted they underestimated the scope of the task, but have managed to evolve and improve the efficiency of their efforts.

With their hardened experience, the volunteers came to the Forest Service Recreation and Fisheries shops with their concerns regarding of a couple problem culverts that were bottlenecking the Dredge Lakes drainage. The Fisheries folks noted one culvert was completely plugged, and the other was undersized, making it an easy spot for beavers to flood the trail and

One section of a double culvert arrangement on the Dredge Lakes system is completely plugged.

Peter Cross works on a replacement arch culvert.

The finished product

prevent adult salmon passage. It was determined that a bottomless arch culvert in this location would make dramatic improvements to alleviate many problems on the system.

Fisheries personnel Pete Schneider, Thor Eide, Chad Hood, and Carol Mahara worked on design, permits for in-stream work, silt fencing, and clearing the construction site of fish. Recreation's trail crew members Peter Cross, Matt Adams, Adam Kackstetter, Dale McFarlin, Bill Muir, Sarah Roop, and Aaron Yeaton then staged materials, ran the machinery, and completed the installation. Andy Vanderheuel and Matthew Thompson of the Fire Crew also lent a hand. Re-vegetation efforts around the new culvert are scheduled for Spring 2010. So far, all are pleased with the success of the joint effort, that is, with the exception of the beavers.

Scholten still attempts to baffle beavers in other parts of the recreation area, and co-workers and others never miss a chance to chide him about his efforts. Some one left him an *Ode to the Beaver* which reads, "Wood chopper, tree dropper, tail flopper, stream stopper," and they added a few lines for his benefit that read, "culvert topper, mud slopper, and vein popper."

Incrementally, thanks to lots of team work through volunteers and between Forest Service programs, the war has subsided to battles, and recreationalists and fish can now better reclaim and hold their ground.

In 2009, two of our volunteers, Mary Willson and Bob Armstrong, published a book called, *Beavers by the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska*. You may want to check out a copy should you wish to learn more about these industrious critters.

Management and Labor Agree

By Ken Dinsmore, President, Local 251

The term "partnership" is defined as the state or condition of being a partner; participation; association; or joint interest. This definition describes the workings of your Alaska Region Partnership Council.

If you have not heard, the Council involves equal representatives from the National Federation of Federal Employees Local 251 and Alaska Region Management Officials. The goal of the R10 PC is to have labor and management collaboratively and effectively solve problems affecting the working conditions of employees. The Council is an effective way to seek solutions to problems that are regional in scope.

RF Denny Bschor and Barney Freedman, Vice President of the Forest Service Council, sign an new Partnership Council agreement in December 2009. Photo by Ray Massey.

The R10 Partnership Council was initiated in 1996 and was nationally recognized when it received a 2001 Chief's Award for achieving the highest level of Partnership in the Forest Service. The council was temporarily suspended in 2007 and re-established in 2008, and is currently meeting on a regular basis.

On December 8, 2009, Vice President of Forest Service Council Barney Freedman and Regional Forester Denny Bschor signed a new Partnership Council Agreement to extend the partnership indefinitely. Current members of the Council representing the Union are Teresa Streuli, Debra Srb, Ken Dinsmore, and Barney Freedman. Representing management are Chris Savage, John Inman, Kim Saner, and Forrest Cole.

For almost 15 years, the Council has addressed and worked on many issues that are regional in scope. Some of the recent issues that the council is working on or have completed include: reestablishing the region's Central Billing Account; new region-wide Violence in the Workplace Policy; providing supervisor training to employees; developing a disciplinary digest for the region; reinitiated the publication of Length of Service Awards within the *Sour Dough Notes*; providing future training for developing a Positive Work Environment; and providing information on the new OPM regulations affecting employees with the transition from COLA to locality pay.

Employees are encouraged to attend local face-to-face meetings. Region 10 employees may forward potential agenda topics to Council members for consideration.

Prince of Wales Students Study Wilderness

By Victoria Houser, Recreation Planner, Craig Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

For most Prince of Wales students, Wilderness is their backyard. It's what their houses look out at across San Alberta Bay. It's all those places on the map with the funny Spanish names and no houses, lights or people. For many of them, it's a place they have never been. But for the Craig High School natural history class, Wilderness has become a whole lot more.

Students take a break at the Karta River.

Over the course of the 2008-2009 school year, the class spent one or two days a month with Tory Houser, Craig Ranger District Recreation Planner and Wilderness Ranger, learning about many different aspects of Wilderness management and theory. Their teacher, Cheryl Fecko, worked with the Forest Service to develop a curriculum for her students that would look at Wilderness concepts on a national scale and how they relate to the five local Designated Wilderness Areas: Coronation Island, Karta River, Maurelle Islands, South Prince of Wales and Warren Island Wilderness Areas.

The class was introduced to the idea of Wilderness and Wilderness management on a field trip to the Twentymile Spur Trail, which is located outside of Wilderness but is adjacent to the Karta River Wilderness. Students were ask to consider differences they anticipated seeing between a non-Wilderness and a Wilderness area. Students recognized the physical differences easily, but the social differences initiated some debate.

Following their hike, the students visited the Forest Service and were able to work on a mapping project, which helped them visualize the various land designations used by the Forest Service to dictate the management techniques used in each area. The students built GIS maps of the five Prince of Wales Wilderness areas and studied the National Wilderness Preservation System map to understand where Wilderness areas have been designated throughout the country.

Studying maps and the Wilderness Act led to a discussion of social norms and why the American public felt the need to create a Wilderness Preservation System. The students used a timeline activity to apply context to the Wilderness Act decision and later had a debate about whether to add more Wilderness to the Wilderness Preservation system. The students had to prepare for the debate by figuring out some of the social and managerial conflicts that may be associated with designating an area as Wilderness and restricting its use.

After the students' debate, the class direction shifted to monitoring and evaluating social and environmental effects in Wilderness. As a result of the debate, a section of the school yard, referred to with some affection by members of this class as the Panther Wilderness Area, was designated as a Wilderness area.

Like many true Wilderness areas, Panther Wilderness Area presented many non-Wilderness-like attributes to its student managers, such as a parking lot and a garbage heap. The students recorded these existing conditions in detail and even got to practice sound monitoring, thanks to Jacob Hofman from the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords District. Jacob sent over some of his sound monitoring research and airplane landing recordings for the Craig High School students, which they played over one of the student's giant woofer speakers. Witnesses on-site claim that a plane could have been landing right in the schoolyard. These activities helped the students practice Limits of Acceptable Change concepts and develop a plan for their desired condition for this pretend Wilderness area, along with some management actions to achieve their goals. Fortunately, the school administration recognized the need for the changes suggested by the students, and the Panther Wilderness Area was cleaned up. The teacher and students plan to monitor the

area in the future to see if it remains within the thresholds set by the students for the conditions they want to maintain in the area.

One of the goals of the school and the Forest Service was to make the concepts real and pertinent to the students. For this reason, the Forest Service planned activities with the students they could use in reports or research on a larger scale than just the classroom. For example, during the class on air quality monitoring, Forest Service botanist Karen Dillman explained how forest employees use lichens to measure air quality. She helped the students set up a lichen plot in Craig. The information gathered from the plot, and many other similar plots across the Tongass, will be used by researchers studying climate change and air quality throughout Alaska.

Samantha Wilson finds a petroglyph.

Finally, after all of this talk about Wilderness, the Natural History Class took a field trip to the Karta River Wilderness to help the Forest Service perform their annual monitoring trip to the area. Some of the goals of the trip were to monitor the amount of use on the Karta River Trail, cabins and river access points, create a lichen plot for air quality monitoring, and look for signs of cultural use. The class had the unexpected opportunity to witness a migration of newts, and count, photograph, and record their locations.

Tory Houser lead the class on an epoch hike from the Karta River Cabin to the Salmon Lake Cabin, where students had the opportunity to watch and work with the recreation crew as they made cabin repairs using hand tools. After walking 12 miles, working on a cabin and then helping to clear sections of the trail with hand saws, the students and leaders were ready to eat and sleep. While nobody even wanted to go fishing that night, by the next morning they woke up ready for action. During the camp out, lots of questions were asked and answered. Students put aside their IPods and text messaging to join in fireside discussions and the appreciation of newts and solitude.

When the students returned to Craig they produced a monitoring report for the Karta River trip. Their report will be use by the Forest Service as part of the Wilderness monitoring program and recorded as part of the Chief's Ten-Year Challenge for Wilderness. The students, teacher and Forest Service staff who participated in this year-long Wilderness class were greatly enthusiastic about its success and quality. Although the school does not offer the Natural History elective each year, Cheryl Fecko would like to work with the Forest Service in a similar capacity to incorporate Wilderness education, *Leave No Trace* and other Forest Service resource concepts into her classes.

Sharp Officers Help Protect the Tongass

By Tricia Wurtz, Ecologist, State & Private Forestry

Deputy Forest Supervisor Becky Nourse congratulates Customs Officer John Whittaker. Photo by Tricia Wurtz.

During the Alaska Invasive Species Conference in October in Ketchikan, Tongass Deputy Forest Supervisor Rebecca Nourse presented awards to Custom and Border Protection Officers John Whittaker and Adam Hoffman. The plaques were engraved with the Forest Service shield and Forest Health Protection logo, and included the words, "The U.S. Forest Service appreciates your conscientiousness and dedication to protecting Alaska's forests."

Whittaker and Hoffman found an Asian gypsy moth egg mass on a Japanese ship that arrived north of Ketchikan to load logs. They collected it, had it identified by its DNA, and reboarded the ship the next day to spray the area with pest control oil. The Asian gypsy moth has the potential to seriously, and negatively, impact the Tongass National Forest if it becomes established in Alaska.

Windfall Lake Cabin

By Ed Grossman, Recreation Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

Work is underway to address a problematic section of the Windfall Lake trail. Photo by Peter Cross.

It was one of those summer days you wish for when I trekked into Windfall Lake Cabin from Juneau's road system. I wanted to show Hans vonRekowski, Tongass National Forest Developed Recreation and Trails Program Manager, the trail projects along the way, our outhouse experiment at the cabin, and the work completed to date in converting the cabin approach to meet accessibility requirements.

Built in 1998, Windfall Lake Cabin boasts the highest use of any cabin on the Tongass. Annual rentals consistently exceed 200 nights per year, with a maximum stay of two consecutive nights. It also serves as a warming cabin from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., so the rental history only captures a fraction of the cabin's actual use. The trail to the cabin is popular for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and day hikes, primarily because it only raises about 100 feet elevation over its three-mile length.

The stream exiting Windfall Lake hosts a hefty run of sockeye salmon. Trail improvements over the years have provided greater access for fishers, helping evolve this destination into the most popular roadside fishery in Juneau.

Thus, given all the attractions of the area, I was not surprised to find occupants at the cabin when we arrived, but I will admit our conversation with the woman visiting did not go as I expected. It was as if I had sent a cheerleader ahead to ensure Juneau Ranger District Trail and Cabin crew folks would be showered with compliments.

As Hans and I took our lunch break, the visitor told us she travels from Washington State to visit the Windfall Lake Cabin annually, and of all the cabins she has enjoyed on the forest, this was her favorite. She said the trail improvements of the past have been appreciated, but she also hoped we would not take away the rustic character of the remaining sections as we improved them. Then she said our accessibility improvements were going to change her entire approach in the future. Historically, she regrettably had to leave a special needs child behind when their family ventured to this beautiful spot. Now they can bring this

The approach to the popular Windfall Lake Cabin has been converted to make the cabin more accessible. Photo by Rob Morgenthaller.

youngster along for the first time on their next trip via floatplane.

And she didn't stop there. She said she loved the fact we were trying innovative ways to deal with human waste (we have a solar assisted vault toilet on site), she appreciated the high standard of maintenance, and lastly she said she could hardly believe we have not raised fees in the last few years. I never have heard such support for so many of the district's efforts from one person.

It's not only the users of the cabin that are happy. The charter aircraft companies are very pleased to have the new dock to tie to minimizing risk to their clients and aircraft. They also realize the likelihood of increased business.

Rob Morgenthaller, and his assistants Collin Wigfield-Gorka and Dave Leggitt completed the final section of the Windfall Lake Cabin ramp this summer. Peter Cross and his assistants Matt Adams, Nicole Boettcher, Adam Kackstetter, Dale McFarlin, Bill Muir, Sarah Roop, and Aaron Yeaton then repaired one of the most problematic trail sections near the cabin with on-site materials. Although the latter work does not meet accessibility standards, it addresses safety concerns and protects sensitive habitat.

So now it's your turn to see what all the fuss is about. You can't say it is too tough to get there!

Life is "Carefree" for Retiring RF

By Marie Kanan, Procurement Technician, Regional Office

With the house sold and the boat gone, Regional Forester Denny Bschor has retired to sunny Carefree, Arizona! No more shoveling the white stuff. After eight years in the Alaska Region, and 40 in federal service, Bschor and his wife Cheryl are off to new adventures.

Bschor started his Forest Service career in 1969, after earning a Bachelor's degree in Forest Management from Iowa State University. After two years with the U.S. Army in Italy, he worked for the Forest Service in Colorado, Wyoming, and Washington State as a district ranger and forest supervisor.

Bschor was a key leader in the 10th Mountain Huts and trail system, which is comprised of 29 backcountry huts in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, connected by 350 miles of suggested routes. Another of his legacy projects was the Mountain to Sound Greenway that stretches along 100 miles of Interstate 90 in Washington State from the waterfront in Seattle to the edge of desert grasslands in Central Washington.

For three years, he served as the Forest Service national director for Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources in Washington, D.C.

An avid outdoorsman, Bschor said he was always intrigued by the wildness and uniqueness of Alaska, and the excellent reputation of Forest Service employees who managed the national forests here. He traveled north to become Regional Forester in 2001.

Bschor maintained an interest in the economic development of Alaskan communities that live near and depend on the resources of the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. His recognition of the growing importance of recreation and tourism in the Alaska Region, the responsibility of the Forest Service to provide for subsistence use on public lands for rural residents, and the need to continue to develop working relationships with Native leaders, environmental groups, and other land management agencies, directed his work.

In 2008, Bschor acknowledged the Forest Service's removal of traditional smoke houses, cabins and fish camps through the 1930s to '60s in a ceremony that opened the door to Tribes and ranger districts to take actions to further the healing process by engaging in partnership activities.

Bschor and his wife Cheryl enjoy playing old time fiddle and country music. He was one of the founders of the *Fiddlin' Foresters,* a beloved group of Forest Service employees who use music to share a message of conservation in America. Bschor said he plans to "do what I want the first six months after I retire, then… I'll learn to fiddle!"

RF Denny Bschor.
Photo by Jeff DeFreest.

Former Chief Gail Kimball, Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop, and a large gathering of staff, other federal agencies, community and business associates, retirees, and friends attended a farewell barbecue for the Bschors. Holtrop presented Bschor with a Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service, signed by President Obama. This prestigious award, which is quite an honor, was a fitting end to a long career.

The National Register of Historic Places: Evaluation Process

By Nicole Lantz, Archaeologist, Regional Office

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects which have significance in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture. Not all properties on the list are as recognizable as the Washington Monument or Grey Towers, the home of first Forest Service Chief Gifford Pinchot. The following is an explanation of the guidelines used to determine if a historic property is eligible, and therefore afforded the same protections under the law as some more famous structures.

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act requires that federal agencies take into consideration the effects of undertakings on historic properties listed on or eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. In order to be considered for the list, the property is first evaluated through established criteria found in 36 CFR 60, National Register of Historic Places. The regulations are worded in a manner that provide for individual interpretation for a diverse variety of resources. The general guideline says a property is considered eligible at fifty years old, although this is not a steadfast rule. The evaluator of a property less than fifty years old must make a case that the property is of *exceptional* importance. The regulations do not define "exceptional" and emphasize it is a fluid guideline that "may be the function of the relative age of a community and its perceptions of old and new." All properties gain meaning inside a "historic context" and the importance of considering the "interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs" cannot be overlooked.

The program is administered by the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Federal government is assisted by the states, each of which has a State Historic Preservation Officer. The SHPO reviews all nominations to the register and is required to respond to findings within 30 days for purposes of compliance with the Act. Only with an official concurrence from the SHPO can a property be found eligible for the Register and afforded the legal protective considerations.

Eligibility for inclusion in the Register is a two-fold process. First, the historic property must possess integrity of *location, design setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*. Integrity in this instance is defined as in a state of being unimpaired, undivided, or complete. Integrity also means the ability of the property to convey its significance. A historic property may not possess all seven aspects of integrity, nor are all seven of equal importance, depending on the type of property.

Second, if the property retains integrity it also must meet one of four criteria:

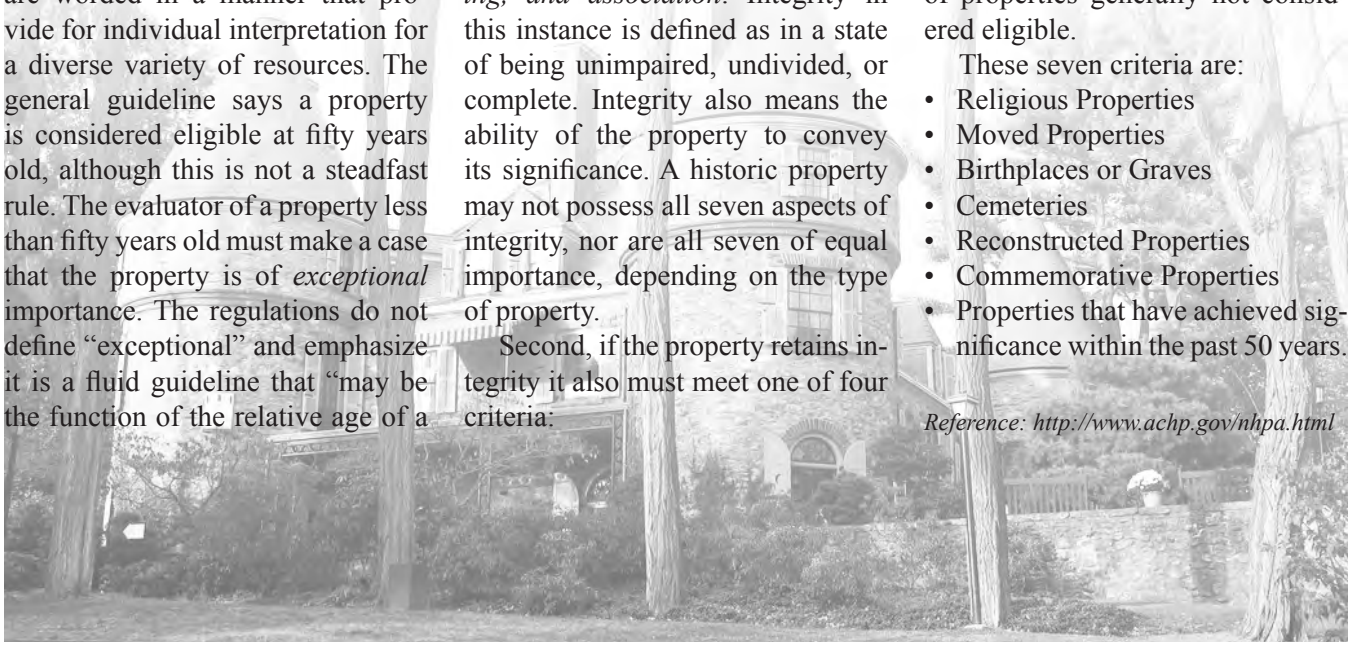
- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

An eligible property may be of local, state, or national importance. In most cases this two-step process is cut and dried. However, the line is not always so easily drawn. Therefore, the National Park Service has outlined other criteria considerations to assist in evaluating a property that falls outside the parameters of properties generally not considered eligible.

These seven criteria are:

- Religious Properties
- Moved Properties
- Birthplaces or Graves
- Cemeteries
- Reconstructed Properties
- Commemorative Properties
- Properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Reference: http://www.achp.gov/nhpa.html



A Short History: Public Recreation Cabins

By Nicole Lantz, Archaeologist, Regional Office

From the start, the style of public recreation cabins in the Alaska Region ranged from log cabin, to primitive temporary plywood structures, to pop culture prefabricated cedar kit A-fram cabins to locally milled yellow cedar structures. Cabins have become iconic features on the Alaskan landscape. As cabins near 50 years old, questions are arising as to how federal laws regarding the preservation of historic resources will apply. Therefore, a historic context document that places these cabins in the framework of the history of recreation in the Forest Service and the Alaska Region has been completed.

Women on horseback visit an historic cabin at Devil's Pass, Seward Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

Recreational infrastructure, nationwide, had its first major growth during the New Deal in the 1930s with programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps. The wide variety of infrastructure projects constructed by the CCC included four recreation cabins on the Tongass National Forest: Dan Moller cabin (1936), Big Shaheen cabin (1935), Distin Lake cabin (1933), and the Salmon Lake cabin (1940). Also, Hasselberg Creek cabin (1937), which was originally a three-sided shelter, was closed into a four-sided cabin in the 1950s by the Territorial Sportsmen, Inc. This era of cabin and three-sided shelter construction was precursor to what was to become the public recreation cabin program in the Alaska Region. All four of these CCC cabins have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1950, Congress passed the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act. This act was commonly called the Dingell-Johnson Act. It provides federal aid to states for management and restoration of fish having "material value in connection with sport or recreation in the marine and/or fresh waters of the United States." Funds from a 10% excise tax on certain items of sport fishing tackle are permanently appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior and apportioned to states on a formula basis for paying up to 75% of the cost of approved projects. Project activities include acquisition and improvement of sport fish habitat, stocking of fish, research into fishery resource problems, surveys and inventories of sport fish populations, and acquisition and development of access facilities for public recreation. At least nine to 10 cabins were constructed from these funds.

During the 1950s, the Tongass National Forest cooperated with the Territorial Sportsmen, Inc., and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to construct 11 public recreation cabins with Dingell-Johnson funds. These cabins are no longer on the reservation system. Only a few are still barely standing, including the Reznof Lake cabin and the Shelter Island Cabin.

The Forest Service built the Upper Russian Lake Cabin using hand hewn logs in 1951 on the Seward Ranger District, Chugach National Forest, as lodging for a Forest Service trail crew. This cabin went on to be part of the cabin system and was renovated in 2007. The Chugach National Forest did not construct another recreation cabin until 1963. That cabin was the Crescent Lake cabin, a Pan Abode structure, on the Seward Ranger District and was also related to Dingell-Johnson stocking of fish in Crescent Lake.

In the 1960s, in stride with a growing national public need for recreational infrastructure, the Alaska Region began a decade-long push to expanded the public recreation cabins program. A system of cabins emerged using the convenience of inexpensive materials like plywood and Plexiglas. The construction of A-frame cabins and prefabricated kit structures like Pan Abode cabins was a conscious departing from the nostalgic rustic style typically used by the Forest Service. The first of these A-frames was the Sportsmen Cabin, built and designed by the Territorial Sportsmen, Inc., in 1962. The first Pan Abode cabin built on the Tongass was the Little Shaheen Cabin built on Admiralty Island ca. 1962.

For more information, contact K. Nicole Lantz at knlantz@fs.fed.us, author of *A-frames and Pan Abodes: Historic Context of the Public Recreation Cabins in the Alaska Region.*

Blazing Paddles: Part 1—

By Jim Case, Forestry Technician,

Over the past 22 years, paddle craft ranger programs have augmented district field monitoring on designated wilderness units. In some cases, kayaks have provided access to cruise vessels, allowing forest interpreters/wilderness rangers to board and provide personal contact with the visiting public. In the course of a summer season, two teams of two have been able to provide up-close monitoring of over a thousand miles of the national forest shoreline and adjacent uplands. In addition to providing remote contact with a variety of visitors, these paddle craft rangers

"Hey Jay, what's that breathing sound?" I asked my field partner, the district archaeologist, who was just waking up at 0500 in our campsite inside a small cove in West Crawfish.

"I think it's a bear," he said.

The windy sound out on the beach, about 30 yards from our encampment sounded a lot like a sea lion surface breathing. "No, it sounds like a sea lion or seal in close."

Jay, under the tarp, on the beach side of our tiny camp, said. "No. It's a bear and it's standing up right there."

So we're rolling out, grabbing rifles, chambering rounds, when we heard the blowing sound again followed by a crashing noise as the bear ran off up the steep side of an embankment to our right. It continued to "blow" for the next few seconds. This happened on the west side of South Baranof Wilderness in a protected remote campsite of marginal quality, with not much room to pitch a small tent and no clean water nearby. Just a make-do site we had targeted due to discovery and removal of an unauthorized structure there a few years earlier. On this particular morning, we didn't need a lot of coffee to get us up and running.

I have heard a lot of bear vocalizations over time in the back country: huffing, growling, whining, keening, roaring, jaw-popping. But I never heard this type of long airy exhalation that sounds just like a sea lion, walrus or small whale coming to the surface. So after this trip I asked a friend, who has hunted brown bear in Alaska for many years, if he had ever heard this particular sound coming from a bear.

A kayak camp is set up by backcountry rangers. Photo by Jim Case.

His answer was interesting, though anecdotal: "We hear that sound occasionally, especially when a bear rears up on hind legs to get a better picture of what we are. If this is a close encounter, we take safeties off the rifles because from a standing position, the bear is going to do one of two things—either come down and charge or "blow" and run away. So to me, that sound is a good sound because it means the bear decided to go the other way."

Over the course of paddling 800 miles this summer, this was the only fairly close encounter any of the field teams had with bears. In 2009, there was a big increase in the numbers and extent of kayak patrols within West Chichagof/Yakobi and South Baranof Wilderness. The Sitka District worked with the Sitka Conservation Society who had applied for special funding to help support the district's effort to advance the Chief's 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Program. Some of the goals of this program include: implementing a wilderness education program; conducting scientific monitoring; developing wilderness fire plans; addressing invasive species; monitoring air quality; measuring solitude opportunities; collecting baseline scientific data; monitoring/rehabilitating campsites; and conducting needs assessments and making inroads toward maintaining a baseline wilderness workforce. (See www.wilderness.net/NWPS/documents/FS/guidebook.doc for more information.)

SCS helped recruit kayak patrol volunteer field partners and mobilized over one hundred local citizens who offered to conduct wilderness solitude monitoring surveys while commercial fishing, boating or spending recreation/subsistence time in local wilderness.

"Hold on Ryan! Keep paddling! Stay together!" My volunteer partner and I were making a three-mile, open-water crossing near the mouth of Whale Bay. At

Backcountry Reconnaissance

Special Uses/Wilderness, Sitka Ranger District

provide eyes and official presence on the land, and help accomplish a wide variety of resource management objectives, including working with archaeologists, cabin/trail programs, wildlife, fisheries, silviculture, law enforcement and wilderness managers.

The following account is the first in a SourDough Notes *series that will highlight paddle craft programs across the Region. The first story comes to you from Sitka Ranger District, whose wilderness kayak patrols began in 2003.*

the outset of this crossing, the wind came in from the WSW at about ten knots with a foot and a half chop on the surface. About the middle of this crossing, we got williwaws that quartered in abaft the beams of our boats and whipped the chop up to about four or five feet in 20 minutes. We made it across fine but took a breather when we got to the other side. I looked at Ryan and said, "Man, you were pumping so fast and hard I could barely see your paddles! I'm going to title today's journal entry, 'Blazing Paddles,' named after you."

We were near the end of another mid-summer trip. We had visited and cleaned over 30 dispersed recreation sites, found some new ones, located some interesting new archaeology, harvested yellow-cedar samples for the Forestry Science Laboratory, documented salmon fry and juvenile herring abundance for ADF&G, documented sea lion mortality for National Marine Fisheries, established a new stream reach for ongoing water-quality monitoring, and we had contacted several visitors in the area of Port Banks, within South Baranof Wilderness.

We can't complain about 2009's summer weather. But this particular trip we got weathered in and had to re-pack gear and move to a more protected pick-up location. We left the kayaks hidden in the woods next to a landmark spruce tree. This old giant has a 276-inch circumference with an 88-inch diameter. And someone, a long time ago, took a plank out of this tree, reminding us that we can get a sense of remoteness and loneliness and solitude out here. But we have yet to find a good campsite, estuary, portage or trail were we don't get a sense of the now-invisible passage of humans through these protected areas.

Volunteer Sandra Gelber and Jim Case take an aquatic insect samples in South Baranof Wilderness. Photo by Marta Martinsen.

Paddle craft (some districts use canoes as well as kayaks) are a tool of choice for many purposes that involve close-up shoreline and upland monitoring and access. It is possible to pack each kayak with as much as 200 pounds of gear in support of back-country trips of up to 10 days' duration. Efficiencies include fuel savings and less reliance on boat or fix-wing supported multi-day trips. And with visitors to the wilderness, as is often the case: "Approach determines response." Paddling in kayaks and keeping minimum-impact camps helps promote the *Leave No Trace* ethic.

Wilderness Skill #23: How to catch an abalone

Abalones are unique creatures. They are univalve mollusks that thrive on algae. If pursued by a giant sunflower sea star, they will run up a rock face then launch themselves from the rock at the last moment before capture, floating to the seafloor. They are exposed for brief periods of time on rock faces in the intertidal zone at very low tides. And they are pretty good to eat. So, how do you catch this unique creature? (Answer: "Unique" up on it.)

Underwater Camera Development

By Pete Schneider, Fisheries Biologist, Juneau Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

In the novel *1984*, George Orwell described a world where the state kept a watchful and informative eye on its citizens using two-way televisions. Well, 25 years later, the Forest Service is doing something similar. However, the subjects aren't people, but fish. This opportunity comes courtesy of the security industry, and as it advances, so do the ways we utilize it to monitor fish populations. Juneau District fisheries personnel have been steadily developing and testing underwater video monitoring equipment since 2001 and we've used our experience to further refine the use of micro digital video recorders (mDVR) for effective remote fisheries population monitoring on the Tongass.

Cameras film fish traveling through net weirs. Photo by Ben VanAlen.

Our main focus has been to develop a reliable and energy-efficient system to remotely monitor fish escapement. Why have people camp out 24 hours a day for five weeks counting fish when you can use cameras instead? Of course, there's still work to do, but the overall result is a savings in time and money. The equipment used has evolved over the last nine years from the original laptop computer configuration to its current state; the heart of which revolves around a small, but very capable piece of equipment: the mDVR. Sound familiar? Full-size DVRs are steadily replacing VCRs and DVD players in homes across the country. This little device is not much bigger than a deck of playing cards, but don't let its diminutive size fool you. Inside this dynamic device is a solid state operating system with motion detection capabilities and a card slot for data transfer. These three main ingredients make the device very useful indeed: solid state allows for durability and low power consumption, motion detection gives the device a "smart" edge, dramatically reducing data post-processing time, and the card slot allows for quick and simple data transfer between the field and office. In addition, the complete system also employs two underwater cameras, an aluminum isosceles-shaped video chute with built-in LED lights, water-proof connectors and cases for the mDVRs, and day/night sensors for the lights. Rounding out the list is the all-important power generation equipment which includes solar panels, propane generators, and a set of large-capacity batteries. All together, the complete package is manageable in both weight and size, making it fairly simple to transport into remote locations. In fact, all the components easily fit into the rear of a DeHavilland Beaver aircraft.

Close up of the mDVR used in fish monitoring. Photo by Thor Eide.

All throughout the design process, our goal has been to create a flexible system to use at fish passes or with a variety of weir types (traditional fixed or floating net-style).

With a little preparation, there's nothing stopping you from installing a set-up in a creek either. Along with a set of instructions, a stand-alone system is just about "plug and play" ready. In addition to a system currently being used at the Bakewell fish pass on the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District, we plan to build three more complete monitoring sets to loan out across the Tongass.

Planned improvements for 2010 include:

- Designing a larger video chute with additional lighting;
- Extending the "roof" over the openings to block sunlight effects (shimmering lights cause the motion-detection to capture false frames); and,
- Experimenting with infrared cameras and lights to improve image resolution and minimize trap-avoidance behavior by fish.

Fish traveling through picket weir are caught on camera Photo by Jake Smith.

Of course, applications for this technology are varied and certainly not limited to fisheries. Remote monitoring is rapidly establishing itself as a fixture in natural resource work and is a valuable tool for education as well. It even has a use here at the district office. Big Brother has been watching to see which employee keeps leaving dirty dishes in the breakroom. I think even George Orwell would approve.

"Old Smokeys" Remember Harold Anderson

Forest Service retirees in the Pacific Northwest Forest Service Association—also known as "Old Smokeys"—fondly remembered their colleague and fellow member Harold "Andy" Andersen who passed away August 26, 2009, at the age of 93.

Former Alaska Regional Forester John Sandor said Andersen had an extraordinary career the Forest Service, serving in Regions 1, 9, 10, and the Pacific Northwest Research Station. Sandor first met his future boss in 1953 when he began working for Andersen as a forest survey crew leader to conduct forest surveys on the Tongass and Chugach national forests. Andersen headed the Alaska Forest Research Center, which was part of the PNW Research Station, and headquartered in Juneau.

Sandor described Andersen as an "outstanding professional forester who personally committed himself and others to getting the job done right, whether it was in research or in management of the national forests."

Sandor said Andersen loved working on Alaska's coastal waters and was an excellent boat skipper. He helped design the Forest Service's research vessel *Maybeso.*

Anderson had the reputation for his ability to motivate others and willingness to serve as a mentor. He helped to organize the Alaska Chapter of the Society of American Foresters in November 1954. The November 1956 issue of *SourDough Notes* reported that "Harold Andersen, Chairman of the Alaska Chapter [of the Society of American Foresters], announced the appointment of an Education Committee which will have as its objective 'selling' qualified Alaska boys on a forestry career."

Andersen was born in Seattle, Wash. August 13, 1916. He was the oldest of five children and grew up on a family farm. He worked in Alaska as a fisherman and trapper to pay for college. He received a B.S. degree in forestry from the University of Washington and served on a PT boat during World War II.

Following his retirement from the Forest Service, Andersen and his wife Sibyl raised raspberries on a farm north of Seattle.

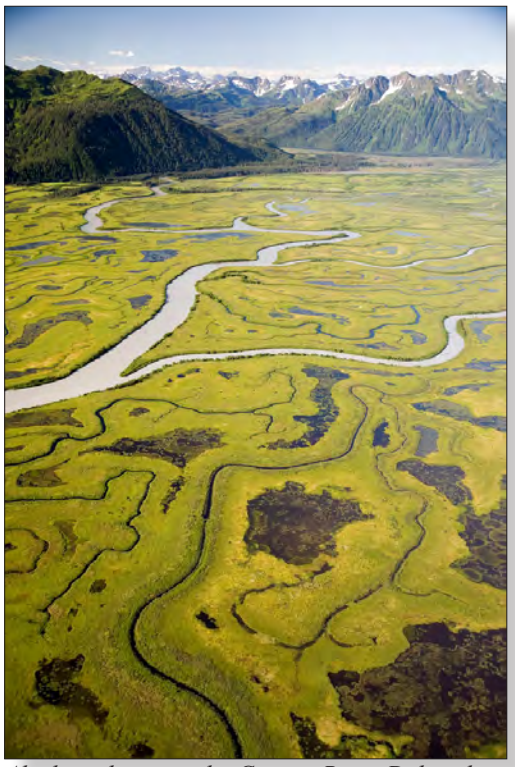
For more information on the Pacific Northwest Forest Service Association, visit http://oldsmokeys.org.

Alaska's Key Coastal Wetlands

By Tim Joyce, Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist, Cordova Ranger District

Alaska is superlative in many ways, as we all know. It is the largest state in size. It is the state that is the farthest North, West and East (check the International Dateline crossing in the Aleutian Islands). Alaska is also home to the largest contiguous wetland along the Pacific Coast of North America. In fact, the U.S. Forest Service manages three large dynamic wetlands in Alaska: the Copper River Delta, the Yakutat Forelands and the Stikine River Delta, otherwise known as the Key Coastal Wetlands.

These ecosystems cover a diversity of habitats including estuaries, freshwater wetlands, riparian, uplands and glaciers. These Key Coastal Wetlands are key to the survival of many species of birds and integral to economies of nearby communities. Key Coastal Wetlands are world-renowned, holding extraordinary international significance for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as providing important habitat for salmon and other wildlife species. Birds come from as far away as South America to nest and raise their young in Alaska where habitat and food are abundant (remember the mosquito that had you for dinner last year). Millions of birds use these wetlands as stopover sites to rest and restore energy supplies as they travel en route to northern summer nesting areas, including nearly the entire world's population of western sandpiper and Pacific dunlin. These migratory birds have used these wetland stopovers for thousands of years and depend on them for their very existence.



Alaska is home to the Copper River Delta, the largest contiguous wetland along the Pacific Coast of North America. Photo by R. Niebrugge.

Key Coastal Wetlands are also important nesting sites which support some unique populations. The Aleutian tern colony on Black Sand Spit in the Yakutat Forelands may be the largest breeding colony of Aleutian terns in the world, hosting up to 1/3 of Alaska's population. Almost one hundred percent of the world's population of dusky Canada geese nest on the Copper River Delta.

But it's not all about birds; these wetlands supply a vast amount of salmon and trout habitat. Yakutat is world renown for the steelhead found in the Situk and Alsek Rivers. Fish connoisseurs all over the world wait with eager anticipation for the first Copper River salmon to come to market. The Stikine River provides fish across international boundaries for multiple uses as well. In addition, almost 1,500 bald eagles, thought to be the second highest concentration in North America, utilize the Stikine River Delta each spring to feed on the large eulachon run that enters the Lower Stikine River.

These wetlands support large commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in their respective areas. The growing tourism industry is starting to have a major economic impact on the nearby communities as visitors come to see the wild beauty of the wetland landscape and the fish and wildlife that it supports.

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. These Key Coastal Wetlands, even though they are large and wild, are still subject to the same pressures as other forests and grasslands around the country. Invasive species are present in these areas such as Reed Canary grass and Atlantic salmon. Climate change may have far reaching impacts including wetland drying, stream temperature increases and sea level rise. As a result, habitat changes will occur and the fish and wildlife resources will need to respond to those changes. Additionally, human pressures on the resources will increase and those impacts will need to be managed.

Much like the National Grasslands of the continental U.S., Alaska's wetlands have special management needs that are not necessarily reflected in national objectives for forested landscapes. While most of the program of work for wetlands falls within the traditional Forest

Service goals, several important components such as research facilitation, and national and international collaboration were not addressed initially. Natural resource managers are recognizing and acknowledging the growing importance of these unique components and working on ways to incorporate them.

The Forest Service is in the process of developing a Key Coastal Wetland 5-Year Plan that will serve as a reference and framework for setting priorities on these Key Coastal Wetlands. The goal is to conserve Alaska Region's Key Coastal Wetlands fish and wildlife and their habitats by continued delivery of wetland ecosystem services of the area; strategically pursuing knowledge of the coastal wetland ecosystem; and by collaborating with indigenous people, subsistence interests, non-government partners, and managers of Key Coastal Wetlands and other stake holders. This is a challenging task, but the rewards and benefits will last for many generations to come.

Key coastal wetlands are vital to the survival of many species of birds and provide locations for optimal viewing by multitudes of bird enthusiasts. Photo by Milo Bircham.

TCRAG: Dedicated to Civil Rights

By Julie Speegle, Asst. Public Affairs Officer, Tongass National Forest

2010 TCRAG members (left to right): Barb Stanley, Kari Vanderheuel, Cindi Lagoudakis, Angie Lammers, Ross Evans, John Autrey, Karen Dillman, Becky Nourse. Julie Speegle was not present.

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, and in the use of protected genetic information, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status and status as a parent in all aspects of employment."

As Forest Service employees, we've all seen the above statement on numerous occasions. How often do we just skim over it—not even stopping to absorb its meaning and impact? Supporting Civil Rights is an integral and important part of everyone's job. All employees deserve and should expect equality, justice and due process.

On the Tongass National Forest, a diverse group of employees from different cultures, grade levels and professional backgrounds works to promote and protect employees' civil rights.

The Tongass Civil Rights Advisory Group seeks to enhance the well-being and productivity of the workforce by supporting a work environment where employees feel valued and respected, and are treated fairly. We bring employees' concerns about rights and other issues to the forest leadership team and the regional office for resolution and action.

Current TCRAG members are Ross Evans, Kari Vanderheuel, Karen Dillman, Cindi Lagoudakis, Barb Stanley, Julie Speegle, John Autrey, Angie Lammers and Becky Nourse.

If you have questions or concerns regarding civil rights, contact a TCRAG member.

Probing the Road Along the Russian River

By Marie Messing, Transportation Engineer, Regional Office

Last year, the Engineering Groups in Region 6 and Region 10 were combined. One benefit of the new organization has been the ability to share personnel across both regions. For example, the Chugach National Forest recently made use of the geotechnical skills of Sandra Wilson Musser, the R6 Geotechnical Services and Dams Group Leader, and Pete Bolander, the R6 Pavement and Geotechnical Engineer. The Chugach asked the R6 geotechnical group to assist in reviewing geotechnical and drainage recommendations for the Russian River Campground Access Road. Over the last 10 to 15 years, the road has experienced maintenance problems due to weak soils and drainage issues.

Bolander made a site visit to assess the road and also provided a demonstration of geotechnical exploration using a tool called a drive probe. The relative density probe is a simple exploratory device used to determine the distribution and estimated strength of the subsurface soil units and decomposed rock units. The drive probe method is relatively inexpensive and quicker than hand augering. The drive probe penetrates the subsurface and measures blows-per-foot of an 11-pound circular hammer freely falling 39 inches. The drive probe is most effective when used in conjunction with conventional geotechnical soil exploration to inexpensively extend the known conditions revealed by conventional drilling.[1]

Bolander was joined at the site by Chugach Civil Engineers Ben Dreier and Amy Klein, who learned a great deal from Bolander's extensive geotechnical experience using the relative density probe and in classifying soils. Bolander has 28 years of experience working on Forest Service roads. He is one of the lead instructors for Forest Service Sampling and Testing classes, which can assist Forest Service employees taking National Construction Certification Program exams. Passing NCCP exams is one of the requirements for certification to administer Forest Service construction projects. The next sampling and testing class will be held in March 2010.

Bolander will make a presentation on Dust Management Practice and Options at the 2010 Northwest Transportation Conference at Oregon State University in Corvallis February 10, 2010.

Engineers Ben Dreier, Pete Bolander, and Amy Klein set up a drive probe to determine the distribution and estimated strength of subsurface soil units.

Amy Klein and Pete Bolander access a slide area.

1 Slope Stability Reference Guide for National Forests in the United States, Forest Service EM-7170-13, Appendix 3.6.

Building Partnerships for Dusky Canada Goose Conservation

By Erin Cooper, Wildlife Biologist, Cordova Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

The dusky Canada goose population is declining. This is not new information for many who have lived in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. What is new is that this species has declined below 10,000 birds (from high levels above 20,000 in the 1970s) and that population level has a lot of biologists and land managers worried about its future. In fact, Alaska Audubon has just named the dusky Canada goose as their number one watch list species. Fortunately, the U.S. Forest Service and other key agencies are searching for management solutions.

Newly hatched dusky Canada Goose goslings on the Copper River Delta. Photo by Sean Meade.

The Forest Service is a member of the interagency dusky subcommittee within the Pacific Flyway Council, a group dedicated to the management and conservation of this species. Other members include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, tje Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Together, these agencies address the dusky conservation concerns across state and international boundaries.

Dusky declines have been attributed to the changes in habitat on the Copper River Delta (the major nesting area for these birds) in the Chugach National Forest. The 1964 earthquake uplifted the Copper River Delta six to nine feet, which indirectly is playing a role in the dusky population decline. The population decline is being attributed to the vegetation change caused by the altered hydrology. This new hydrology promoted rapid growth of shrubs and trees. Land that was sedge meadow for hundreds of years quickly grew into these new vegetation types. That new vegetation allowed undetected access by predators. Nest success dropped from around 80% to 20% in 10 years and the population followed suit. Additionally, duskies were easily decoyed into shooting range by hunters in the Lower 48. The population losses from hunting prompted the creation of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuges in their Oregon wintering grounds as well as strict hunting regulations.

Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.
Helen Keller

In response to the population decreasing below the 10,000 bird threshold, the agencies that manage duskies have ramped up conservation efforts. This includes even tighter hunting restrictions for geese in Alaska and the Lower 48 as well as increased habitat management.

The Forest Service along with interagency partners, Ducks Unlimited, and others, have attempted to provide safer nesting habitat on the Copper River Delta by installing artificial nest islands in some of the hundreds of ponds on this vast wetland. Geese that nest on these artificial nest islands have consistently had twice as many successful nests as geese that located their nests on shore. Recently, the interagency partners, along with Ducks Unlimited and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, funded the building and installation of 50 new nest islands to replace nest islands that have degraded over the years and are no longer available for use. The new nest islands will be installed this summer by Ducks Unlimited volunteers with the Forest Service providing logistical support.

The subcommittee partners continue to investigate research and management to assist in the turnaround of this population. As agencies, our effectiveness to solve the dusky dilemma is not in our individual strengths, but in the skills and resources we bring together as a group.

Rising to the Challenge:

Fifth Annual Inclusive Sea Kayaking Adventure in Prince William Sound

Story & photos by David Sanders, Backcountry Ranger Program Coordinator, Girdwood Ranger District

Prince William Sound is renowned as one of the finest places on earth to explore by sea kayak. Its wilderness labyrinth of densely forested islands and passages are ensconced within steep walled fiords laced with sinuous waterfalls dangling like white shoestrings over the precipitous heights. The myriad of passages, coves and islands hide secret beaches and campsites providing a wilderness experience unique to North America. Perhaps surprising to many, this rugged landscape is accessible to those with disabilities.

Nick, a trip veteran, negotiates technical terrain to reach his kayak.

Challenge Alaska, a well-recognized adaptive recreation organization based in Anchorage, and the Chugach National Forest, have partnered since 2004 to bring a group of intrepid adventurers with physical disabilities into this maritime wilderness each summer for four days of camping, kayaking, skill building and camaraderie.

As the trip began this summer, Brandon Harker and Lauren Williams, both Challenge Alaska interns, took a long look at the line of bergs marching out of the glacial lagoon. Brandon said in his distinctive Minnesota accent, "Boy, it seems like there's a pretty good current coming out of that lagoon and those bergs are really moving fast eh?" Although not familiar with coastal Alaska, years of canoeing has taught Brandon to respect the power of moving water. Challenge Alaska's certified therapeutic recreation specialists Leah Stiebing and Jeff Dick as well as Heather Hall, the Chugach National Forest's zone archaeologist, agreed. After consulting the tide tables and comparing the conditions in the strait to what the numbers on the tide chart showed, we formulated our plan. We would wait until just after slack low tide and enter the lagoon right as the flooding tide started to refill it. This would allow us to enter with the current at flow rate that would be manageable and safe.

Our immediate challenge was to get Skyler, who was recently paralyzed, down to the shore and secured in the customized middle hatch of our big triple kayak which is brought along especially for this purpose. Skyler has limited mobility below the neck but with some adaptive augmentation of the middle cockpit using a combination of Therm-a-rest® loungers, closed cell foam pads, duct tape, zip ties, wire and rope, all of which are essential to any true "Alaskans" gear kit, we managed to create a comfortable, supportive base from which he could paddle. After an inspirational group effort, we were able to transport the entire triple kayak with Skyler aboard over 50 yards of slippery, cantaloupe-sized rocks and into the water. After Skyler was comfortably settled in the kayak, we turned our attention to assisting our other participants which included Stephanie, a single leg amputee, Nick a paraplegic, Ally who has cerebral palsy, and Charlie who is blind. As it turned out, little assistance was needed. During the course of getting Skyler settled, Stephanie, Nick and Charlie, all trip veterans, along with Ally, had managed to make it down to the kayaks over the difficult terrain on their own. Andrew and Dan from the military's Wounded Warrior Program were a great help, as was Sam, Skyler's loyal best friend and personal care attendant and Kate Walker, our district ranger new to Alaska from Montana.

Paddlers pull their kayaks together for a quick break.

Author Dave Sanders

The group cast off heading for the lagoon entrance. Traveling in a tight group, we rounded the point and hung just outside the straits entrance in an eddy. We entered the narrow, river-like channel and immediately felt the surging power of moving water at our sterns. Icebergs joined us but we gave them a wide berth knowing that 80 or so percent of their bulk lurked beneath the surface and that they could roll over unexpectedly. The current faded and the lagoon opened up before us, presenting a maze of icebergs ranging in size from something you could put in a drink to something that would easily crush a motor home. Seals surfaced on all sides of our group, inspecting us with their dark, bulging eyes sometimes slapping the water with their hind flippers in alarm as they dove beneath the surface. A low rumble, so deep that you could feel it in your chest, was occasionally audible and we realized it was emanating from the glacier.

The Challenge team works together to get Skyler and his kayak down to the water.

We paddled steadily, pulling against the gathering force of wind issuing from the glacier's icy lungs. The wind seemed to indicate to us that the glacier did not intend to bestow upon us a view without a price. Finally, we made it to a point where its icy creases, broken ridges, gaping holes and twisted formations indicated a visage distorted by extreme pressure; the result of a timeless battle between the forces of ice, rock and sea. Time tends to distort when viewing something as ancient and massive as a glacier, so who knows how long we actually sat there in our kayaks staring at it. Our ticket to getting out of the lagoon was to catch the outgoing tide. If we missed our window to leave, we would be stuck inside the lagoon for another six hours, so we reluctantly turned and headed back toward camp.

Around the campfire that night there was an aura of accomplishment and contentment among the group. Eyes glinted and wind-kissed faces crinkled in laughter as the adventures of the day were retold in the warm glow of a wilderness campfire. Over the last four days we had become a tribe, of sorts. We had learned to rely on one another to overcome challenges that would have proven insurmountable as an individual but were manageable as a team. Wilderness can provide the inspiration to bring people together to achieve a common goal. It can help to increase confidence and self reliance, it can humble and inspire, and it offers people the opportunity to seek personal growth in its wild expanse. The Challenge Alaska sea kayak adventure accomplishes all of this and more. It is understood by the Challenge participants that the nature of wild places is such that all people can't expect to access all places. This trip however demonstrates that where the opportunity presents itself and where the desire is strong enough these special places can be visited by people with disabilities. We are truly fortunate to have such an accessible Wilderness opportunity here on the Chugach National Forest.

Team work gets the job done.

Girdwood Gold Stitchers' Quilts

Highlight of the Year's Celebration of Culture and Art

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

Do you have memories of sleeping under a cozy, hand-made quilt? Perhaps your grandmother used scraps of fabric to create a one-of-a-kind piece of art that hangs on the wall in your home today. If so, you may have a desire to get into quilting.

On Sunday, July 19, the Girdwood Gold Stitchers, a quilting guild from Girdwood, displayed their handiwork at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center's classroom for the Fourth Annual Celebration of Culture and Art. These quilting mavens hung a fine array of their work for the public to admire and were there to answer questions about their craft. Each quilt was artfully designed and well executed, and sported a wide variety of alluring fabrics, patterns and colors that dazzled the eye.

Susan Opalka and fellow guild members Ally Goens, Judy Onslow, Cleary Donavan and Beth Sirles also orchestrated a special activity for the public, teaching them how to create fabric post cards. The activity was a big hit and kept the guild members busy from 10 a.m. when the exhibition opened to the time it closed at 5 p.m.

Refreshments were provided by the Alaska Geographic Association the visitor center's educational non-profit partner that runs the book store. The Forest Service provided the materials to make the fabric post cards and assisted with the event. Over 225 people visited the special exhibit and at least half of them participated in the activity. A good time was had by all and it's likely to be an event that's repeated again next year. So, if you're a closet quilter who'd like to learn some new skills, mark your calendar for the third Sunday in July 2010. See you there!

New Forest Service Interpretive Site At Icy Strait Point

Hoonah Visitor Contacts Reach Record High Due to New Interpretive Site

By Jennifer Ryan, Visitor Information Assistant , Hoonah Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

This season, the Hoonah Ranger District inaugurated a new interpretive site out at the popular cruise ship port of call, Icy Strait Point. The space is a classic one room cabin, built of local wood, which has been lent to us through the generosity of Icy Strait Point. A full time Forest Service interpreter staffs the site on cruise ship days. Guests can come in the cabin and experience the feel of a real Alaskan brown bear hide in an interactive exhibit, as well as learn about the Tongass National Forest, to name just a few of the experiences to be had there.

Visitors line up outside the new interpretive site at Icy Strait Point in Hoonah. Photo by Jen Ryan.

In total, almost 15,000 visitors got to experience the story of the Tongass National Forest straight from a real Forest Service professional interpreter, rather than second hand.

Interpretive and Educational staff in Hoonah spent much of this season creating exhibits and finding out what types of information are most interesting to visitors to Hoonah. They also borrowed display materials from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and had some items donated by excited community members. A big hit with children was the large round of hemlock displayed outdoors, where people were encouraged to count the (437) rings and see what could be learned about this tree's life.

The Interpretive and Education Program on the Hoonah Ranger District just keeps getting better and bigger each year. With this new space, conveniently located at the cruise ship port of Icy Strait Point, we have been able to reach more visitors than ever before. With hard work, this site will be a wonderful learning tool for years to come.

Second Annual Fungus Fair a Hit

By Kate Mohatt Ecologist, Glacier Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

Mid to late summer rains contributed to an abundance of mushrooms this fall which set the stage for a successful second annual Fungus Fair in Girdwood. Event organizers included the Ecology staff from the Glacier Ranger District, Jonnie Lazarus of Girdwood Parks and Recreation, and Alyeska Resort who put on an educational "fun"-gus-filled week ending on Labor Day. Thanks to numerous volunteers, over 600 people participated in a variety of fungus-themed events centered on expanding knowledge and appreciation for the world of fungi.

The schedule of events seemed to spread like mycelium to span an entire week, beginning with a visit from the illustrious travel writer and ethnomycologist Dr. Lawrence Millman. Dr. Millman presented a talk on Arctic Fungi followed by a campfire side demonstration of native uses of fungi which included a caribou scapula divination to determine the location of the nearest population of the edible and delectable King Bolete. The following day, he and Dominique Collet of the South Central Mycological Society, led a group of 20 down the Athabaskan Trail on a mushroom walk lasting over three hours. Dr. Millman commented that he had never seen so many species of fungi fruiting in one area before.

The Fungus Fair "Formal" was a lavish affair with five courses of mushroom heaven and wine pairings concocted by Alyeska Resort's executive chef Micheal Flynn and accompanied with music by the Hot Club of Nunaka. Despite the rough economy and higher ticket prices, the event sold out again with attendance at 135. Items for both the live and silent auctions came pouring in this year with numerous pieces of local art, trips, ski-tunings and even cupcakes! Thanks in part to a generous donation from the Byrne Family (Alyeska Resort owner), we were able to raise over $8,000 that evening with proceeds to benefit the Girdwood Trails Committee in their efforts to maintain and expand Girdwood's trails system. Alyeska Resort also hosted a free acoustic concert at the Hotel Courtyard the following night, with the lively local musicians Melissa Mitchell and The Photonz.

After the Fun-guy/Fun-gal Fun Run on the Iditarod Trail, the rest of the weekend revolved around the new Girdwood Community Room, where local fungi were identified and on display, and totes, T-shirts, books, and mushroom art were for sale. Art for both the T-shirts and event poster were provided by talented Glacier Ranger District staff Sarah Grebe and Carl Skustad. Five organized mushroom forays brought in numerous interesting species collected from around the Girdwood area and beyond. In all, over 110 species of fungi were identified over the weekend, a whopping 20 species more than last year!

A number of talks were given over a range of fungal topics, including identification of local species, ecology and mycorrhizal fungi. Kids Mushroom Art was again a hit thanks to mother and daughter team Sarah and Katie Cronk. Ken Gill, president of the South Central Mycological Society, put on a Mushroom Cultivation workshop in which participants filled bags with straw inoculated with oyster mushroom mycelium. Word from one participant is that the bags are already fruiting and the mushrooms taste fantastic.

The big finale was a Mushroom Identification Workshop led by University of Washington affiliate professor and co-author of the newly released *Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest* field guide Dr. Steve Trudell. Dr. Trudell was only part way through his four stop Alaska whirlwind tour of Fungus Festivals and put on a terrific workshop for an enthusiastic crowd.

The continued success and local enthusiasm for this event will almost assuredly guarantee future fairs. Not only does this event educate the public on a ubiquitous and critical ecosystem component, it gives families and individuals alike another reason to enjoy their national forests and get outside. Starting with the Cordova Fungus Festival in 2007, there are now four similar events in Region 10 and we are happy to contribute to this trend.

Speaking of Commitment…

By Kristi Kantola, Jon Martin and Lezlie Murray

I think we have all met people who are not committed—not committed in their jobs, their relationships, or even in caring for their pets. Certainly that is true of some people, but no one can make that claim about Faith Duncan and Don Burnett, two Alaska Region employees who received recognition this year for their work in Interpretation and Conservation Education (ICE). For years, Duncan and Burnett have dedicated themselves to helping young and old learn more about the natural world and about cultures, even when they were not being paid to do so.

Nora Rasure, Deputy Director of Recreation, Heritage, & Volunteer Resources, presents the "Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation & Conservation Education Award"to Faith Duncan.

Early in her career, Faith Duncan worked in various ICE positions. Later, she spent ten years working as an archaeologist, ecologist, and monitoring technician, while still volunteering extensively in local and national ICE programs. She is now the Tongass National Forest Interpretive and Conservation Education Specialist. In November, Faith received the prestigious, national *Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education* award which is presented annually to one Forest Service employee.

Faith was recognized for her accomplishments over the past three years that include training over 40 Certified Interpretive Guides, 50 Certified Interpretive Hosts, and 60 Alaska Hosts. In 2008, she coordinated Forest Service participation in a project which involved 200 Girl Scouts studying water conservation and personal watershed use in six Southeast Alaska communities. Faith also developed an MOU between the Tongass National Forest and Big Brothers/Sisters (BBBS) of Southeast Alaska. She then worked with the BBBS partnership coordinator to help adults in the program get kids outdoors more and give them outdoor options for activities. She established another MOU between the Forest and the Tongass Alaska Girl Scouts Council in partnership with ranger districts. Each year, Faith gives the ranger districts a "resource bundle," a packet of material with background information on a critical topic for interpreters and conservation educators. Topics have included minerals and mining, climate change, and paleontology and karst.

Don Burnett, 2009 Alaska Region Seasonal Interpreter/Conservation Educator of the Year.

Don Burnett, who works summers as an Information Assistant on the Glacier Ranger District, was recently named the 2009 Alaska Region Seasonal Interpreter/Conservation Educator of the Year. Don was recognized for doing an exceptional job meeting the needs of the public in all aspects of his job at Begich, Boggs Visitor Center. Trained as a certified interpretive guide, he developed a number of thematic programs to help people develop a connection to the land and resources of the Chugach National Forest. Don presented those programs effectively using storytelling, singing, explanation, and interaction with his audience.

His supervisor, Lezlie Murray, said, "His quintessential program, *Blue Ice Cryin' in the Rain*, is about glaciers and climate change. At the end of his presentation, Don sings the Willie Nelson song, *Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain,* but he has rewritten the words to better reflect the retreat of glaciers on the Chugach National Forest. His beautiful singing voice, coupled with the quality of his presentation, always bring appreciative applause. He is a superb interpreter."

Don Burnett and his wife Peggy have served for 15 winter seasons as volunteer managers of the Cape Perpetua Visitor Center on the Siuslaw National Forest in Oregon. In fact, the Burnetts even earned a presidential award for their extensive volunteer work. We are fortunate to have these two and a number of other committed and skilled interpreters and conservation educators working to help others understand our national forests and their resources.

National Public Lands Day

By Jeffrey Miller, Program Manager, Partnerships, Volunteers and Business, Alaska Region

At the end of September 2009, communities across America discovered the benefits of service and volunteerism. The altruistic spirit within those communities came to local public lands in the form of hands-on volunteer efforts to improve and enhance their environment by building trails and bridges, removing trash and invasive species and planting millions of trees.

National Public Lands Day began in 1994 with three federal agencies and 700 volunteers to continue the spirit of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the "tree army" that worked from 1933 to 1942. Last year, 120,000 volunteers worked in over 1,800 locations and in every state. Now, eight federal agencies and many state and local lands participate in this annual day of caring for shared lands by:

- Educating American citizens about critical environmental and natural resources issues and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands;
- Building partnerships between the public sector and the local community based upon mutual interests in the enhancement and restoration of America's public lands; and
- Improving public lands for outdoor recreation, with volunteers assisting land managers in hands-on work.

This year, Juneau residents were invited to volunteer at the Dredge Lake Trail. The effort was coordinated jointly between the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association and the U.S. Forest Service's Juneau Ranger District. The effort brought together over 40 volunteers to provide needed maintenance on the trail to make it more usable for hiking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing, to mention a few activities. In addition, SAGA Director Joe Parrish highlighted the Dredge Lake area is full of history and is very important to Juneauites. Joe Parrish explained the lakes were built by miners many years in the past and have today become one of the most enjoyable and pet-friendly recreation areas in Juneau.

In 2008, NPLD volunteers removed trash and planted over 1.6 million trees in commemoration of the CCC. This year's general theme was clean waterways. As noted by NPLD Director Rob Hampton, "Beaches, lakes, wetlands, and rivers make up some of America's most beloved spaces."

National Public Lands Day gives Americans of all ages the chance to help improve these areas while spending a day outdoors with their friends and family. To those that showed up—thanks! And to those that thought about it…well, there is always next year.

SAGA Director Joe Parrish follows the directions from young volunteer Gabe Miller to "Put it there!" Photo by Jeffrey Miller.

NPLD volunteer Gabe Miller and Juneau Ranger District Trail Program Leader Peter Cross work on Dredge Lake Trail. Photo by Jeffrey Miller.

Long Range Transportation Plan

By Marie Messing, Transportation Engineer, Regional Office

The Forest Service Alaska Region has been working with other Alaska Federal Land Management Agencies to develop an Alaska Federal Lands Long Range Transportation Plan. The Federal Highway Administration is leading the multi-agency planning effort. Other Alaska Federal agencies involved in the process are U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities is a participating partner in the development of the plan.

Alaska federal land management agency representatives meet with Alaska DOT & PF representatives to review planned projects in December 2009.

The purpose of the planning project is to:

- Align transportation planning processes.
- Develop short- and long-term strategies for addressing transportation needs.
- Collaborate between agencies.
- Facilitate partnerships and joint funding opportunities.
- Share limited resources.
- Fulfill federal statutory requirements.
- Increase awareness of transportation issues.

The multiple agencies share regional administrative boundaries and hope that coordinated planning will reduce duplicative efforts.

The mission of the plan is **"**to implement a regional long-range transportation plan that fulfills Alaska's Federal land management agencies' common strategies for transportation that remain compatible with individual land management agency missions in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities." The group has agreed to these common goals of transportation system preservation, visitor experience, mobility and the environment:

System Preservation: Developing a long-term managed transportation system to satisfy current and future needs.

Visitor Experience: Proactively enhancing the multimodal transportation/system, Alaska experience, and connectivity.

Mobility: Promoting safe, efficient, sustainable, and economical connections to and through Federal lands.

Environment: Ensuring the transportation program helps to preserve and enhance ecosystem integrity.

The group is presently working on an outreach strategy for stakeholders. A draft long-range transportation plan will be developed by September 2010 with a final plan due by July 2011. The group developed a newsletter and Powerpoint presentation about their efforts. If you would like a copy or have any questions, please contact Marie Messing, Alaska Region Transportation Engineer at (907) 586-8834.

Making Eulachon Oil—Reliving a Native Tradition

By Ken Hodges, Fisheries Biologist, Cordova Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

Fisheries biologist Ken Hodges loads eulachon while a volunteer supplies the muscle to grind them.

Imagine a long, cold, slushy winter. You've been eating dried salmon for months. One day a Tlingit trading party paddles their canoe to your village with a load of eulachon oil. This is exactly what you need: a rich, high-energy food that takes the chill from your bones and moistens that old dry salmon. Maybe a sea otter pelt could get you a cedar box of oil.

In the last edition of *Sourdough Notes*, there was a brief mention of rendering fish oil at the Cordova Ranger District's Kids' Fishing Day. Since then, several people have asked me what exactly we were doing. To put it simply, we were trying to re-enact a traditional Native practice of boiling eulachon to get the oil.

Eulachon, a small oily fish in the smelt family, were highly prized as an abundant source of fresh food after a long winter and as a source of nutritious oil. Huge schools can return to spawn in coastal streams in the late winter and spring, where they can be netted in large quantities. Those villages close to a spawning stream could get enough eulachon for their own needs and then have the surplus oil to use as a valuable trade item.

Traditionally, boatloads of eulachon were thrown into a pit and left to "ripen" for a few weeks. Apparently, the breakdown of the tissues and cells helps to release the oil. The fish were then put into wooden boxes of water. Hot stones were used to heat the water, and the oil would rise to the surface where it could be skimmed off. A three-man canoe full of fish was said to produce five or six gallons of oil.

I didn't think the kids or my coworkers would enjoy working with rotting fish. However, I hypothesized that a meat grinder might be able to break down the tissues and cellular walls in an adequate fashion. I recruited several kids to turn the handle while I fed about 15 pounds of fish into the grinder. The ground-up fish didn't look too good, sort of like lumpy bloody oatmeal, but at least it didn't stink.

We started boiling the fish, and after about an hour, the oil was rising to the top where we could suck it up with a turkey baster. Surprisingly, the taste was very mild, almost like vegetable oil. I had a hard time persuading the kids to give it a taste (the bubbling fish did smell like cat food), but everyone agreed that smoked salmon dipped in eulachon oil wasn't too bad.

The quantity of oil we got was somewhat disappointing, only a few half-pints from fish that are supposed to be about 30% fat. On top of that, the fish slurry got scorched at the end of the day and a burnt flavor tainted the last batch of oil. Next time, I'll use a bigger pot and more water so the slurry isn't so thick, and maybe I'll let the fish ripen for a week or two.

Fisheries Biologist Ken Hodges convinces a skeptical participant to help stir the pot of ground eulachon.

2009 Employee Awards

Group Award

Regional Office

Mary Friberg
Richard Stahl
Jacqueline Swanson
James Thomas
Priscilla White

Chugach

Erin Cooper
Jason Fode
James Hodges
Sean Meade

Time Off Award

Regional Office

Marie Kanan

Chugach

Danial Keeler
Peggy Sears

Tongass

Howard Hakkila
Virginia Lutz
Joel Nelson
Valorie Nelson
Deborah Riggs
Sandra Russell
Joseph Serio
Brian Thompson

Special Act or Service

Chugach

Robert Behrends
Timothy Joyce
Deyna Kuntzsch
Nancy O'Brien

Gainsharing Award

Regional Office

Joseph Calderwood
Jeffrey Miller
James Thomas

Tongass

John Baldwin
Rebecca Nourse
Nancy Soriano

Chugach

Sara Boario
Timothy Charnon
Paul Clark
Robert DeVelice
Stephanie Israel
Mona Spargo
Christopher Stinson
Kathleen Walker Smith

Cash Award

Regional Office

Connie Johnson
Deborah Anderson
Joanne Behrends
Anne Bergstrom
Dennis Bschor
Joseph Calderwood
Eli Carlson
Calvin Casipit
David Chandler
Patricia Clabaugh
Randy Coleman
Rod Dell'Andrea
Pamela Finney
Mary Friberg
Michael Goldstein
Dean Graham
Neil Hagadorn
Kelly Hall
Debra Hallek
Teresa Haugh
Dawn Heutte
Teresa J. Holley
Erik Johnson
Maria Kanan
Kristi Kantola
John Kato
Della Koelling
Daniel Logan
Macky McClung
Carol McKenzie
Charlette Malacas
Donald Martin
Ripley Marvin
Susan Marvin
Raymond Massey
Jeffrey Miller
Kerri Mills
Domenick Monaco
Ruth Monahan
Denise Murphy
Nick Paguio
Lillian Petershoare
Kenneth Post
Frances Preston
Jeffery Pullen
Patrick Reed
Avadna Rickards
Mary Samato
Barbara Schrader
Julie Simpson
Mary Stensvold
Deborah Strickland
Julianne Thompson
Walter Ullmayer
Kenneth Vaughan
Martin Wild

State & Private

Tiphanie Henningsen
Paul Hennon
Ronald Knowles
James Kruse
Nicholas Lisuzzo
Gwendolyn Marcus
Steve Patterson
Dustin Wittwer

Tongass

Eric Abele
Barbara Adams
Ellen Anderson
Jason Anderson
Kenneth Anderson
Erin Andresen
Hannah Atadero
James Baichtal
John Baldwin
Gwen Baluss
Christina Barajas
Kent Barkhau
Dillon Barousse
Brian Barr
James Bauers
Martin Becker
Tiffany Benna
Jennifer Berger
Dalton Bergman
Caroline Bergren
Robert Berney
Rosemarie Berry
George Bisset
Jeannie Blackmore
Brad Bolton
Michelle Brainard
Garry Brand
Karen Brand
Sarah Brandy
Allan Braun
Warren Brigham, Jr.
Jessica Bringhurst
Fred Bryan
Chris Budke
Craig Buehler
Richard Burke
Melissa Cady
Jim Case
Eric Castro
Lester Catron
Matthew Catterson
Nathaniel Catterson
Jennifer Chamberlain
Dennis Chester
Timothy Chittenden
Carin Christensen
Eugene Cisneros
Michael Clark
Angela Coleman
Laurie Craig
Glen Decker
Arthur Dee
Winona Dick
Larry Dickerson
Michael Dilger
Eric Dow
Michael Driscoll
Faith Duncan
Lawrence Dunham
Matthew Durfey
James Edwards
Thor Eide
Jennifer Elliott
Mary Emerick
Corrine Ferguson
Timothy Fisher
Terry Fisk
Daniel Flickinger
Ethan Flores
Jacqueline Foss
Christy Gardner
Karisa Garner
Jessica Garrido
Justin Gilbert
Michelle Gossett
Jill Grady
Peter Griffin
Robert Gubernick
Barth Hamberg
Brett Hand
Robin Hasselquist
Lorelei Haukness
Vaughn Hazel
Eileen Henniger
Patrick Heuer
Doyle Hickman
Lisa Hirsch
Jacob Hofman
Chad Hood
Kevin Hood
Victoria Houser
Ryan Howell
Patricia Huddlestun
Mark Hummel
Glenn Israelson
Karen Iwamoto
Richard Jacobson
Sheila Jacobson
Daryl James
Richard Jennings
Lawrence Jenson
Virginia Jimenez
Jesse Jones
Susan Jones
Nanette Judson
Aimee Kaye
Daniel Kelliher
Gregory Killinger
Peter Klein
Bradley Krieckhaus
Patricia Krosse
Katherine Kruse
Melinda Kuharich
John Lang
Annemarie LaPalme
Paul Larkin
Eric Larson
Sean Larson
Casey Lavoie
Kristen Lease
David Leggitt
Robert Lippert
Shane Lohr
Stephen Lombard
Virginia Lutz
Timothy Lydon
Larine MacDonald
Carol Mahara
Peggy Marcus
Darin Martens
Francis Martin
Jon Martin
Marcus Martinez
Scott McDonald
John McDonell
Daniel McMahon
Mary McMullin
Mark Medeiros
Ronald Medel
Robert Moniz
Matthew Moran
Margaret Murphy
Steven Murphy
Rachel Myron

Tongass (cont'd)

Derrick Nahill
John Neary
Mary Nelson
Valorie Nelson
Kent Nicholson
Sheri Nicholson
William Nielson
Kelly O'Soup
Austin O'Brien
Susan Oehlers
Jack Oien
Paul Olson
Reid Parker
Charles Parsley
Timothy Paul
Shirley Paulsen
Steven Paustian
Camie Pederson
John Pickens
Shona Pierce
Brian Pike
Seth Piper
Nathaniel Plato
Danny Polityka
Jason Powell
Eugene Primaky
Aaron Prussian
Katherine Prussian
Michelle Putz
Paula Rak
Kim Redmond
Jill Reeck
Andrew Reed
Galen Reed
Michael Regan
Charles Ressler
Lois Ressler
Nancy Richardson
Penny Richardson
Sean Rielly
Deborah Riggs
Jeffery Robinson
Peter Roginski
Katie Rooks
Sarah Rose
Seth Ross
Sandra Russell
Jennifer Ryan
Michael Ryan
Roger Sadler
Philip Sammon
Barbara Sams
Sarah Samuelson
Maura Santora
Christopher Savage
Cynthia Schelin
Ronald Schlader
Patricia Schmidt
Ronald Schmohl
Peter Schneider
Marc Scholten
Britta Schroeder
Joseph Serio
Cynthia Sever
Michael Shaffer
Robert Sheets
Amy Sherwin
Frank Simmons
Clark Simpson
Melanie Slayton
Jacob Smith
Scott Snelson
Nancy Soriano
Julie Speegle
Stephanie Spinka
Sheila Spores
Michael Stacy
Janine Stangl
Barbara Stanley
Alicia Stearns
William Steele
Arlene Steffey
Kyle Stevens
Melissa Steward
John Stoeckl
Mishelle Stovall
Reid Stovall
Seth Stransky
Anthony Taiber
Fiona Taylor
Brian Thompson
Julianne Thompson
Matthew Thompson
Kristen Thweatt
Patrick Tierney
Catherine Tighe
Jeffrey Tilley
Ron Tschakert
Emil Tucker
Rick Turner
Erin Uloth
Warner Vanderheuel
Hans Von Rekowski
Benjamin Walker
Elizabeth Walker
Carol Warmuth
Randall Webb
Suzanne Webb
Gregory Whaley
Brian Whetsler
Russel Wicka
Collin Wigfield-Gorka
Paul Wild
Gregg Wilson
Susan Wise Eagle
Timothy Wold
Denise Wolvin

Chugach

Joshua T. Anderson
Dudley M. Babb
Rosemary Barnes
Sara Boario
Robert Behrends
Brandon Bornemann
Elizabeth Brann
Benjamin Brewster
Courtney Brown
Julie Buehler
Bruce Campbell
Timothy Charnon
Clayton Choromanski
Dylan Crabtree
Adam Cross
Ruth D'Amico
Robert Dean
Edward DeCastro
Benjamin Dreier
Christene Dunlap
Eileen Eavis
John Eavis
Nicole Edeluchel
Susan Farzan
Melvin Flynn
Louis Garding
Marion Glaser
Sarah Grebe
Samantha Greenwood
Sally Gregory
Annette Heckart
Carol Hernley
Stephanie Israel
Michael Johnson
Timothy Joyce
Danial Keeler
Linda Kelly
Shawn Kennedy
Kim Kiml
Kent Kohlhase
Karen Kromrey
Mark Kromrey
Jesse Labenski
Stephanie Latimer
Charles Lindemuth
Helen Little
Daniel Logan
William MacFarlane
Carol Madson
John McBride
Kay McCoy
Moira McKelvey
Sean Meade
Kathleen Michael
Joshua Milligan
Naomi Morris
Andrew Morse
Sherry Nelson
Brian Noonan
Michael Novy
Brandon O'Bryan
Karen O'Leary
Patrick O'Leary
Eric Ouderkirk
Teresa Paquet
David Pearson
Chandra Poe
Karin Preston
Louis Prill
William Proffitt
Nicholas Racine
Sharon Randall
Jennifer Rasche
Hope Roenfanz
Jaime Schmidt
Randall Schrank
Carolyn Seramur
C.D. Sherman
Bobbie J. Skibo
Carl J. Skustad
Paula Smith
Dana Smyke
Robert Spangler
Mona Spargo
Debra Srb
Frances Stapp
Sean Stash
James Sumner
Rose Wallace
Bette Welch
Catherine Wood
David Zastrow
Tanya Zastrow
Steven Zemke

Regional Office Employees Show Community Spirit

The Regional Office Woocheen Committee collected funds and gifts for Juneau families in need this past holiday season. Left: Ray Massey purchases items from a local grocery store for Christmas food baskets. Photo by Jeff Miller. Right: The committee collects employee-donated Christmas gifts for a Salvation Army-sponsored family and a family from the local AWARE Shelter. Back: Eric Niewoehner, Joleen Wheeland, Ray Massey, Gene Miller, and Mark Riley. Front: Paul Brewster, Jeff Miller, and Joanne Behrends. Photo by Teresa Haugh.

ARRA Puts Americans Back to Work

By Jeff DeFreest, ARRA Program Manager, Alaska Region

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act, or ARRA) was signed into law by President Obama February 17, 2009. The U.S. Forest Service is working to implement provisions of the Recovery Act to put Americans back to work.

ARRA projects within the Alaska Region vary in scope, size, and type, but all will contribute to the goal of providing jobs and economic stability. Recovery Act funding through the Forest Service has been staggered based first on projects that could be implemented almost immediately and then on those requiring some design or environmental analysis in order to render them "shovel ready." All projects will be underway by the end of Fiscal Year 2010. Projects in Alaska include road maintenance, construction and decommissioning (restoring road areas back to forests); hazardous fuels reduction; weed management; fish passage improvements; watershed restoration; abandoned mines clean-up; trails & recreation, and building safety and maintenance.

The Alaska Region received Recovery Act funding to support 30 projects, totaling $46,599,000.

Construction on a Forest Service facility in Petersburg.

The new 8-Fathom Bight Cabin under construction in Hoonah. Photo by Jeff DeFreest.

New pole barn and warehouse in Cordova.

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