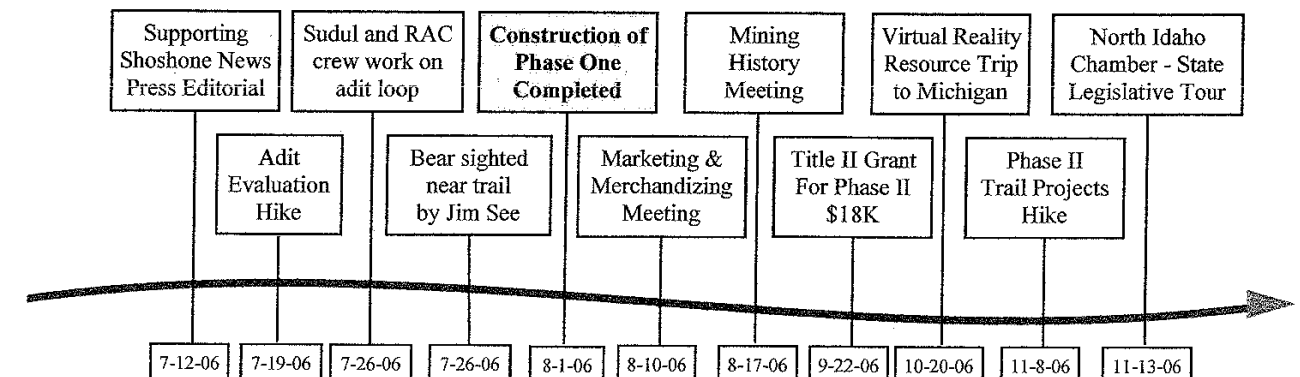
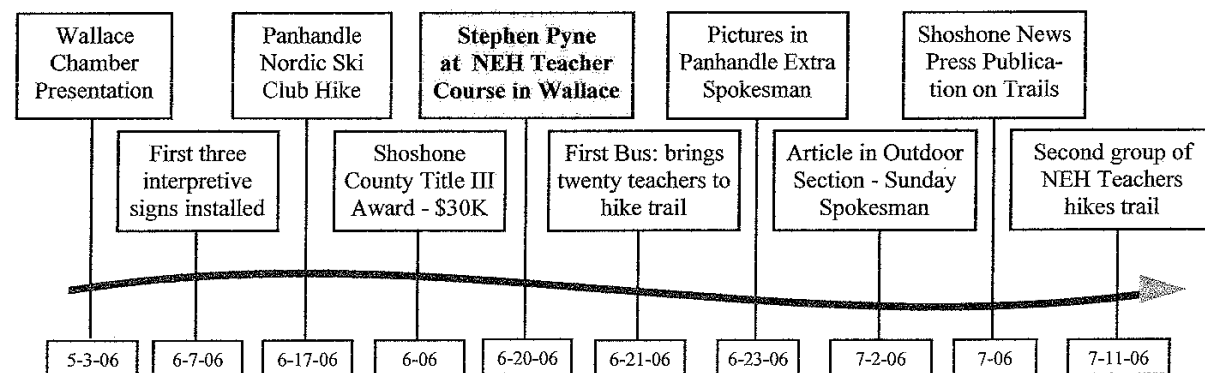


Pulaski Project Accomplishments & Activities Timeline

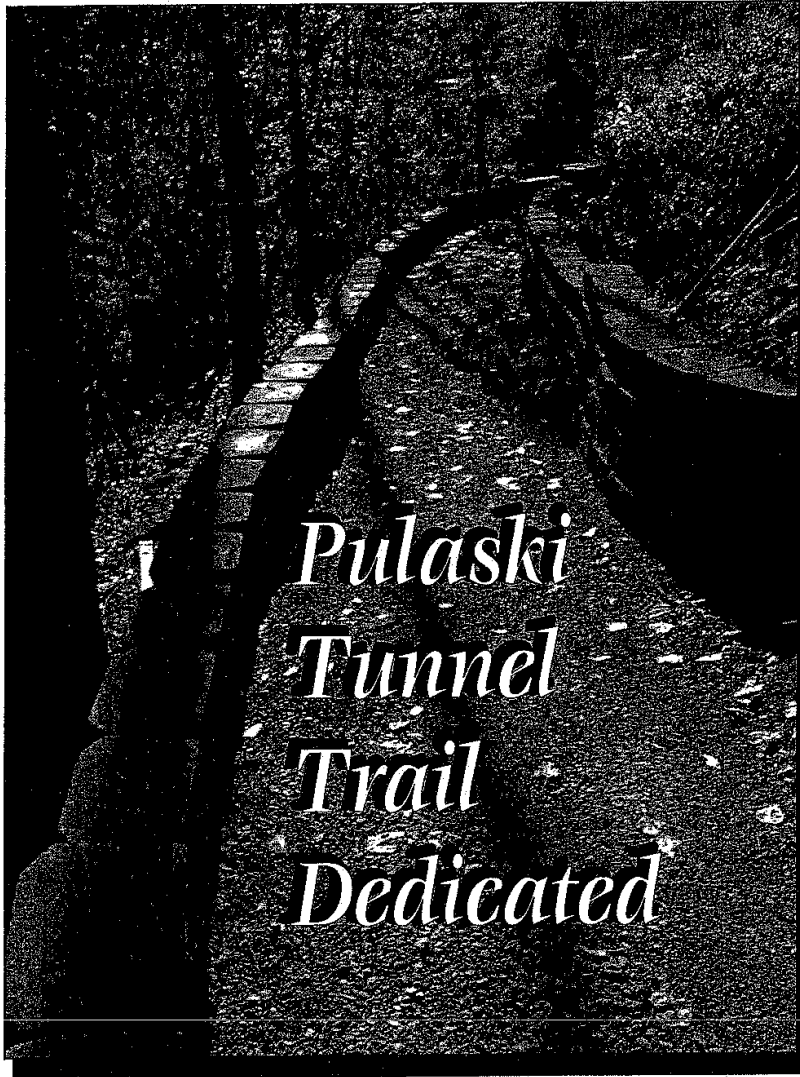
and News & Media Coverage of the Great Fire of 1910

2006





A Newsletter for Employees and Retirees • Issue 1, 2006



Completed section of modular block retaining wall on Pulaski Tunnel Trail.

—Adapted from stories by Erika Kirsch, Shoshone News Press, and James Hagengruber, The Spokesman Review, August 21, 2005

It was 95 years ago this past August when one of the worst forest fires in American history occurred in the Inland Northwest. On August 20, near Wallace, ID, a ceremony was held to officially dedicate a trail in honor of early Forest Service ranger Edward Pulaski, a veteran of the 1910 fires.

Pulaski is perhaps best known for the combination ax-hoe he developed as a firefighting tool, still in use today. However, it was the heroism he displayed on

August 20, 1910, for which he was being honored. It was on August 20 and 21, 1910, that the "Big Blowup" swept through 3 million acres along the Idaho-Montana border, destroying several towns and killing at least 85 people. Many firefighters found themselves trapped by the inferno, including Pulaski, who gathered up 45 men and led them into a mine adit south of Wallace.

Moments after Pulaski and the others reached the abandoned Nicholson Mine,

gas and smoke engulfed them. Some men panicked and cried, and others prayed, according to Pulaski's 1923 account of the fire. One of the firefighters tried to flee, prompting Pulaski to pull his Government-issued revolver and threaten anyone who tried to leave. By remaining in the mine, 39 of the 45 firefighters lived.

The Idaho Panhandle NFs are working with a broad group of partners to reconstruct the trail and interpret the story of ranger Pulaski and the 1910 fires. These fires had profound impacts on the lives of the people involved, as well as influencing how fires were fought and national forests administered for the rest of the 20th century.

The trail dedication took place 2 miles from where Pulaski and the others took refuge. The reconstructed trail leads to the remnants of the mine shaft, now closed because of safety concerns. Several dignitaries participated in the ceremony, including Idaho Senator Larry Craig, Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey, Shoshone County Commissioner Jon Cantamessa, Idaho Panhandle NFs Forest Supervisor Ranotta McNair, and the Forest Service Honor Guard.

"We honor (Pulaski) with this trail, we honor the six men who died, and we honor all the wildland firefighters with this trail—past, present, and future."

Jim See of Wallace, and president of the private, nonprofit Pulaski Project, proposed the idea to rehabilitate the Pulaski Trail about 10 years ago. The project came to fruition with the cooperation of many officials and groups. Rey and McNair presented the Pulaski Project with a chrome Pulaski tool and Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of their efforts. Stated See, "We honor (Pulaski) with this trail, we honor the six men who died, and we honor all the wildland firefighters with this trail—past, present, and future." The Pulaski Tunnel Trail, complete with interpretive exhibits, will be opened for public use during the spring of 2006.

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Visit us online at www.shoshonenewspress.com

Wallace to host summer learning

History/mining workshop attracts nation-wide educators

By LEILA SUMMERS
Staff writer

WALLACE — The Silver Valley will be a hot spot for learning this summer as teachers from across the country flock here for lessons about the region's rich history.

Scheduled to run twice this summer, the five-day history workshop will run once in June and again in July. The series of lessons will take teachers on field trips ranging from the Pulaski Tunnel to the Cataldo Mission and Bunker Hill Superfund site.

The idea behind these travels is to "get more history content into the hands of teachers," said Katherine Aiken, associate dean of the University of Idaho College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences, who is directing the project.

The series of workshops, to be called "Silver Mining in the West: Conflict and Community on the Frontier," will examine the Silver Valley's impact on national issues.

For example, one discussion will surround the role of mining in American industrial development, Aiken said.

Other issues will span from the 1880s to present time and will include: labor issues, the environment, women's suffrage, the Coeur d'Alene mining wars of the 1890s and Bunker Hill Superfund Project.

"I would say all of those things are general U.S. history topics," Aiken said, adding that the region's 1910 fire went on to set the U.S. Forest Service fire policy for almost a century.

School teachers from kindergarten through 12th grade are eligible to participate in the workshop, which is funded by a \$168,944 grant awarded to UI by National Endowment for the Humanities.

This is the first year this grant has been awarded to the Silver Valley, Aiken said.

Other workshops sponsored by the grant focus on exposing teachers to the historic sites of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Capitol, Independence Hall and Mark Twain's house during separate workshop sessions this summer.

WORKSHOP

Continued from Page 1

Teachers who participate one such summer lesson receive a \$500 stipend to cover travel expenses and room and board. Aiken said all the applications she's received as of yet for the Silver Valley workshops have been from outside the region.

"So it would be nice to have more local folks come,"

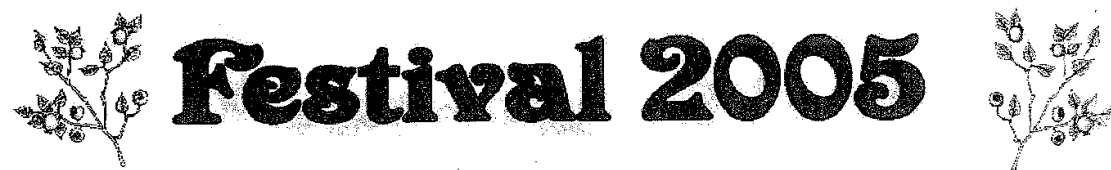
she said.

But the event also provides an opportunity to bring outside dollars into the Silver Valley, Aiken said.

The Silver Valley workshops run June 19-23 and July 10-14 and will be based in Wallace. Only 50 spots are available per session, Aiken said.

Educators from all sectors — including public, private and home-school teachers — are eligible to attend the events. For more information visit: www.neh.gov/projects/landmarks-school.html.

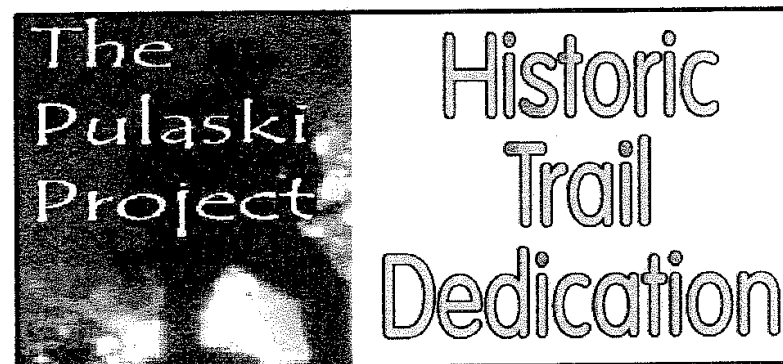
Huckleberry Heritage



Festival 2005

The Pulaski Legacy

August 19th-21st



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Live Music at the Gazebo HWY 54 - Country/Classic Rock St. Maries Community Band

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Additional Info: (208) 733-7151 or (800) 434-4204

5K Walk/Run Saturday - 20th Registration 7:30 am

Rotary Huckleberry Pancake Breakfast Saturday 7:00 am - 11:00am

Mine Heritage Dedication

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Pulaski project continues

Trail work is ongoing, group preparing for opening

By ERIKA KIRSCH
Staff writer

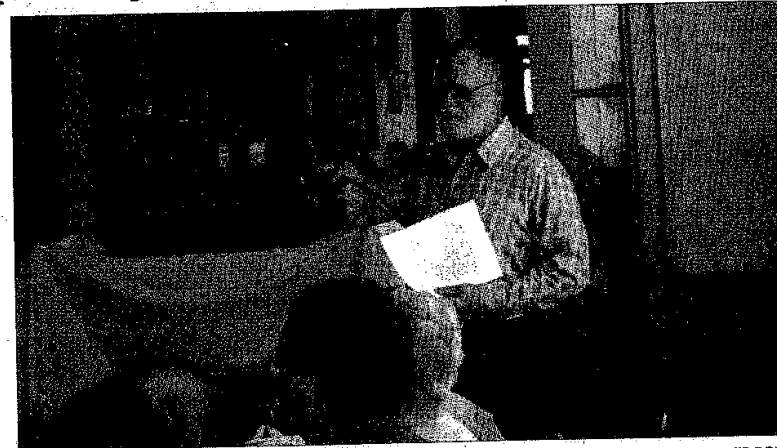
WALLACE — The nights are getting longer and days are getting warmer and that can only mean one thing. It's time to break out the hiking boots.

A local group is gearing up to open one of the most historical trails in the Silver Valley, the Pulaski Tunnel Trail. Jim See, president of the Pulaski Project, spoke to members of the Historic Wallace Chamber of Commerce Wednesday afternoon about the upcoming plans for the project.

See first became interested in the trail when he started hiking in the area in the mid-1980s, he said.

"The trail was getting bad," See said. "It was abandoned and it crosses private land. I was afraid the adit would eventually cave in."

The Pulaski Project was named after Edward Pulaski, a United States Forest Service ranger during the 1910 fire storm between Wallace and Avery. He led a 45-men team of firefighters to the abandoned Nicholson mine south of Wallace to reach safety. Thirty-nine of Pulaski's men survived the fire storm that



— Photo by ERIKA KIRSCH

Jim See, president of the Pulaski Project, spoke to members of the Historic Wallace Chamber of Commerce Wednesday afternoon about the upcoming plans for the Pulaski Tunnel Trail.

trapped 1,800 men between Wallace and Avery.

The 1910 fire burned for three months and burned 9 billion board feet of timber across 3 million acres of land. It was the largest wildfire in United States history.

See and the Pulaski Project board members began working toward getting easements for the private land and securing funds to further the project. The group received just under \$300,000 for the project from the federal government spearheaded by Sen. Larry Craig. A bridge, paid for with the funds received, was placed at the site in Wallace last

year during a special ceremony in August.

Several dignitaries were present at the dedication of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail bridge last summer including: Craig and his wife, Suzanne; Craig's Regional Director John Martin; his Communications Manager Dan Whiting; Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey; U.S. Forest Service and Region I representative Ranotta McNair; U.S. Bureau of Land Management representative Eric Thomson; the Idaho Department

PULASKI

Continued from Page 1

of Parks and Recreation; Wallace Mayor Ron Garitone; Dwight Opp of Stimson Lumber Company; Carl Scheel representing East Shoshone County Water District; John Cantamessa of the Idaho Panhandle Resource Advisory Committee and Shoshone County commissioners; Shoshone County Commissioner Sherry Krulitz; Pulaski Project board members Harry Magnuson and Dale Lavigne; and Mary Lou Shepherd of the Idaho State Legislature.

Another bridge was added this spring. There are currently three small footbridges and three major bridges in place and two more bridges will follow in the future, See said. Also in the works, are 12 interpretive signs and the U.S. Forest Service will be printing a map of the trail and brochures, See said.

A group worked to build the trailhead and restore the trail to the mine adit. Trail work started last summer

and all but the last 1/4-mile of the trail is complete. Phase II of the project will focus on the adit site. There will also be six signs constructed near that site, See said.

"The work on the trail will never end," See said. "We want to make it a world-class interpretive trail."

Pulaski Trail users will likely be able to hike the trail sometime between June 15 and July 1, See said. There will also be a few groups coming through the area to utilize the trail and its historical distinction. The Panhandle Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Club will be visiting the area on June 17 to use the trail as part of their summer hike program, and two groups of 50 teachers will be coming to the Pulaski Tunnel Trail on June 20 and July 11. University of Idaho Associate Dean Katherine Aiken will be leading the groups to the national historic sites and areas of mining history.

"[The trail] will be a hiking trail that people will come to see and use," See said. "It's a sacred kind of place. It did save a number of people, but people did die there too."

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Pulaski Tunnel Trail welcomes new visitors

WALLACE — The Pulaski Tunnel Trail, south of Wallace, will see its first onslaught of visitors today.

The Panhandle Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Club will be utilizing the trail for training starting at 9 a.m. today, said Jim See, president of the Pulaski Project.

The first three of a dozen large-format interpretive signs have been installed on the Pulaski Tunnel Trail near the trailhead. They are the product of no little amount of work and discussions between the Forest Service team of Cort Sims, Grady Myers, Linda McFadden and Jack Dorrel. The signs are also largely due to the Pulaski Project's team of Jim See, Ron Roizen, Robin Stanley, John Amonson and Dick Caron.

These first three signs offer a picture of the general design of the other nine signs. The trail's historical signage was funded by a generous grant from the U.S. Forest Service's Region I headquarters in Missoula, Mont. The grant falls under a special historical provision offering funding for commemorative projects in the Forest Service's centennial year in 2005.

See TRAIL, Page 3

TRAIL

Continued from Page 1

The trail has been completed all the way to the Pulaski Tunnel. All bridges have been installed, the pathway across difficult rock-slide areas has been established and buttressed. The surfacing and definition of the entire hike has been completed.

Though the trail is not yet fully completed, more signs will be installed and work will be done at the terminus of the trail. The trail is ready to accept hikers over its entire course and is paved to the first three signs for wheelchair accessibility.

Additionally, the trailhead complex, comprised of a paved and marked parking area; a Forest Service restroom; a paved walkway; a crosswalk; and appropriate historical site signage are all now in place.

Katherine Aiken, a historian and department chair at the University of Idaho in Moscow, recently won a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to teach teachers about American history by bringing groups to key historical venues and exploring the history to be learned and viewed there. Aiken's grant concerned the Silver Valley and an important part of her curriculum will involve the Pulaski story and the Big Blowup's impact on Forest Service policy and U.S. views on wildfire. Aiken's first corps of 50 teacher-students

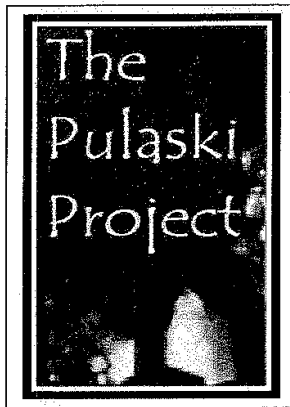
will be hiking the trail starting at 9 a.m. on Tuesday. She has secured the services of Professor Stephen J. Pyne, author of "Year of the Fires," the authoritative history of

the Big Blowup. Pyne will be a lecturer and a docent for the June 20 hike.

— Submitted by Ron Roizen of the Pulaski Project

Project Status Report

**Pulaski Tunnel Trail
Idaho Panhandle National Forests
(June 21, 2006)**



Trailhead Area:

The subcontractor has substantially completed all work on the trailhead area. Recently completed tasks include: paving the parking area and trail, dressing the site with topsoil, installing curb sections, and painting permanent traffic stripping.

A Final review of the Trailhead portion of the project conducted by the Forest Service identified three minor deficiencies that need to be addressed by the subcontractor (Wesslen Construction) to close out this portion of the project. The subcontractor intends to correct the noted deficiencies by the end of the week of June 23rd.

**Trailhead
Construction**

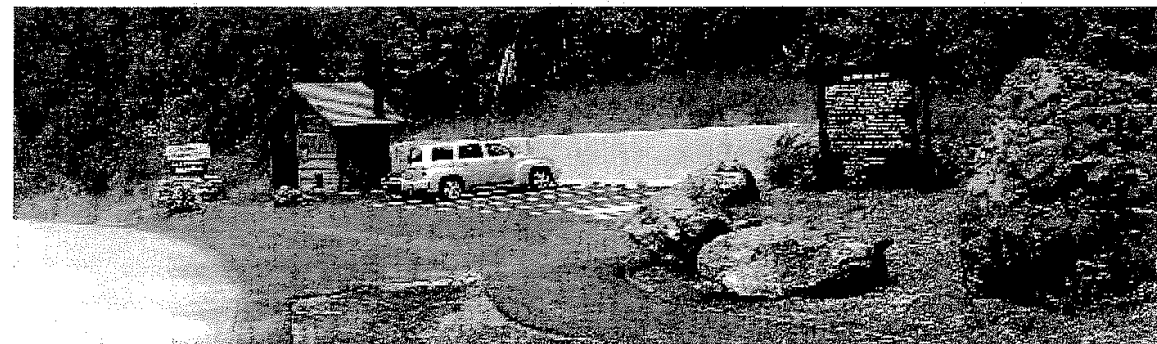
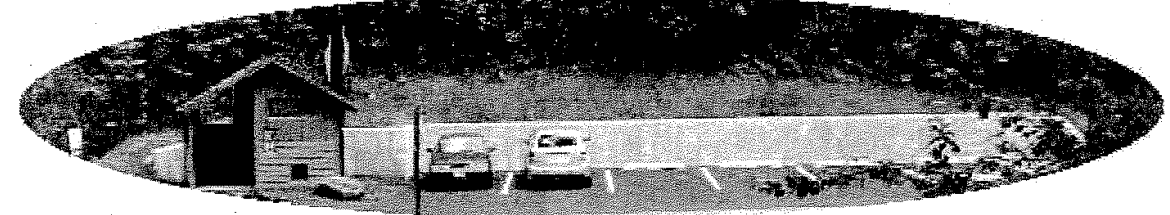
Workers placing asphalt in trailhead parking area.

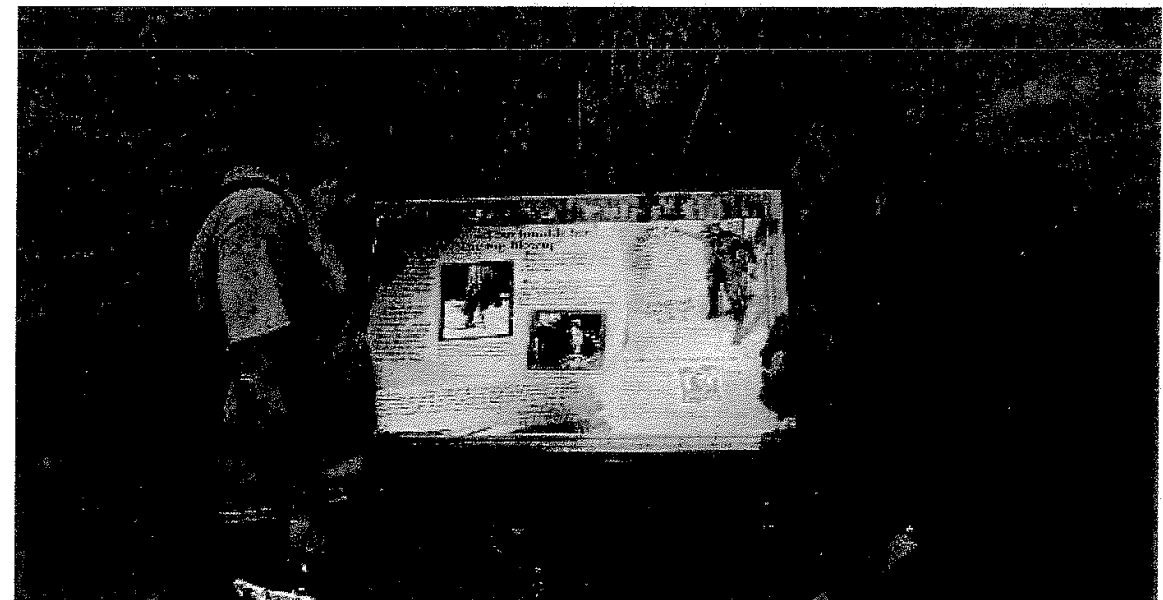
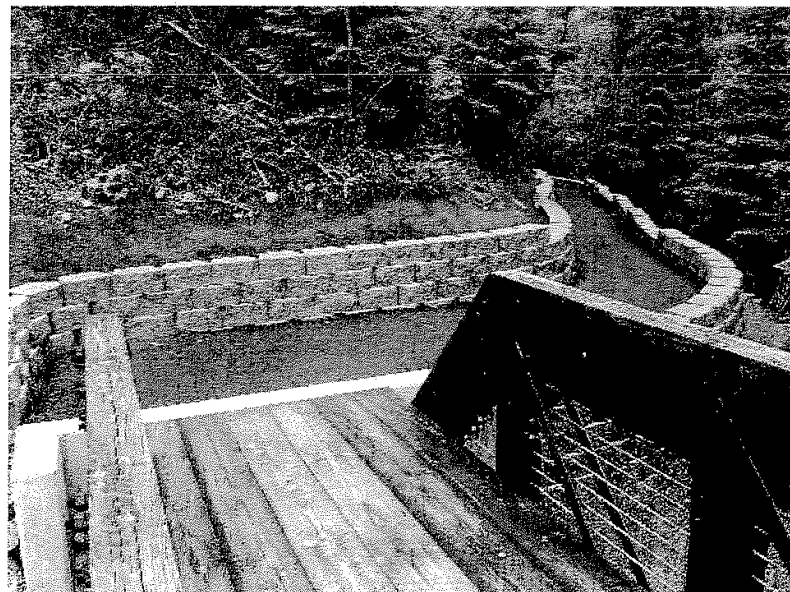
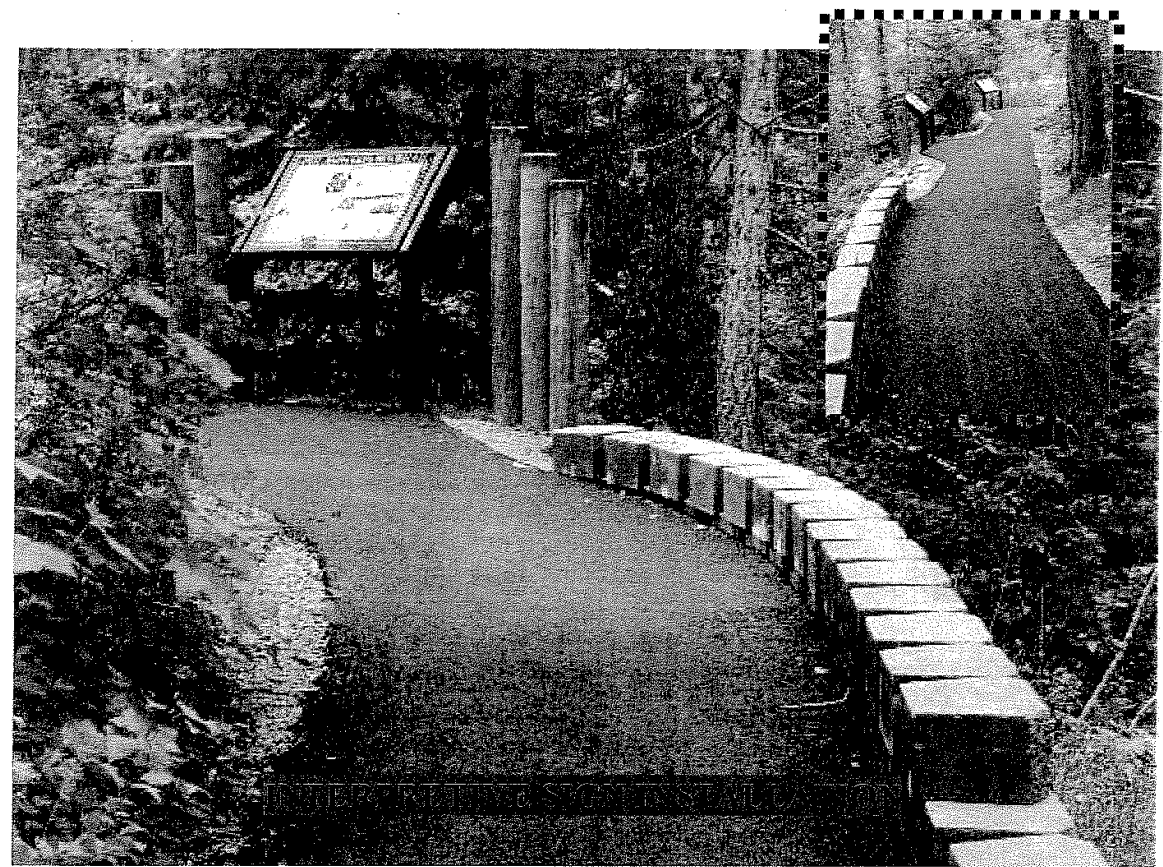


Contractor placing hot bituminous asphalt surfacing on trail.



IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL COME





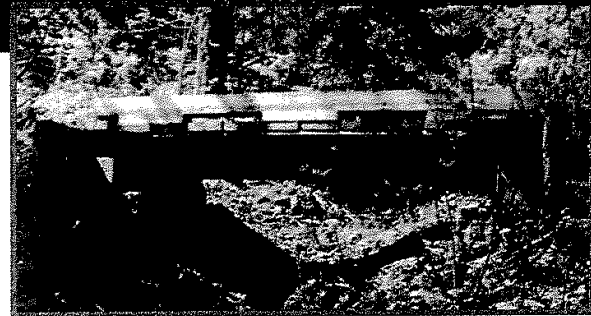


Final 24 Foot Span Foot Bridge Installation Over Tributary to West Fork Placer Creek

**TRAIL WORK
CONTINUES**



Contractor Hauling in Material for Interpretive Sign Installations



Additional work items in the trailhead area have been subcontracted to KD Construction and this work should be completed by mid-July. Items include: installation of Pulaskis on the permanent trail signs, and erection of a cable pedestrian guardrail from the parking area to the bridge.

Independent of the construction contract, the Forest Service has recently completed the installation of the three porcelain interpretive signs in the trailhead area of the project. The remaining nine porcelain interpretive signs will be installed upon completion of the trail.

Trail Construction:

Since resuming construction following the winter shut down the subcontractor has completed installation of four timber bridges and has finished pioneering the trail to the overlook area. Currently the subcontractor is working on the interpretive sign installations at the overlook area. After completing the work at the overlook, the subcontractor will move back down the trail to dress cut slopes, install remaining interpretive sign posts, place gabion basket section in mine tailings area, place crushed aggregate on lower trail, install doveled rail fence in two locations and construct the cable pedestrian guardrail system in the trailhead area.

Based on current progress, KD construction should complete all of the trail work by mid-July.

**Pulaski
Trail**



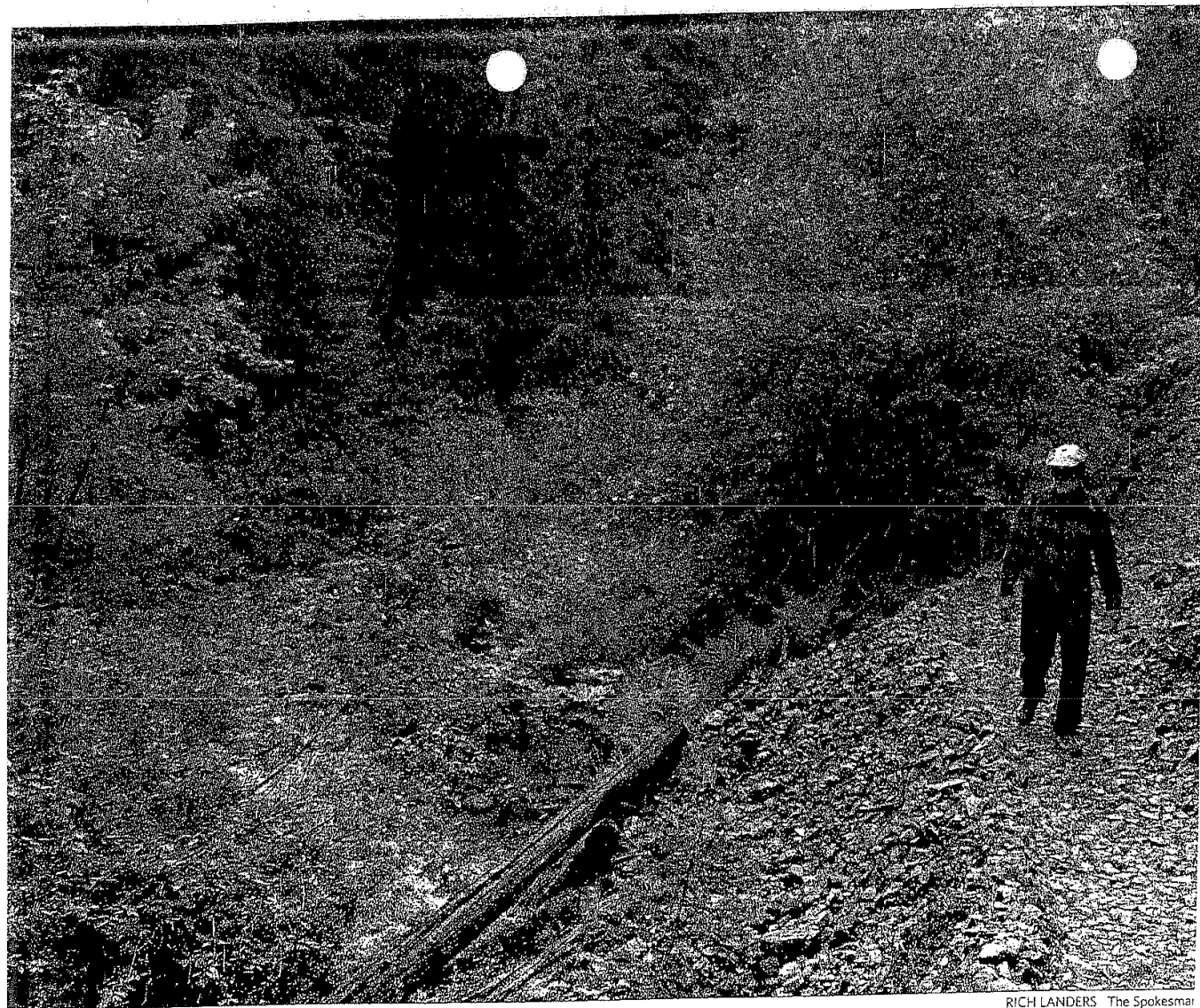
Early Spring Installation of Treated Timber Bridge Near Pulaski Trailhead

OUTDOORS & TRAVEL

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SUNDAY
JULY 2, 2006
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Hiking into the fire



RICH LANDERS The Spokesman

A hiker recently on a freshly constructed portion of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail along the West Fork of Placer Creek just outside of Wallace.

New trail celebrates Pulaski's great escape

BY RICH LANDERS
Outdoors editor

The smoke from the fires cleared more than 95 years ago, but it was just last week that the dust settled from building a handsome hiking trail commemorating an epic event in national forest history.

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail begins less than a mile south of downtown Wallace and leads two miles into the legacy of the 1910 forest fires and Ed Pulaski, one of the earliest rangers in the U.S. Forest Service. Inland Northwest hikers should put the

See PULASKI TRAIL, T2

Reaching the trailhead

Eastbound on Interstate 90, take Exit 61 at Wallace. Turn right at the stop and pass the Visitor Information Center. Turn left at the T. Drive just past the Wallace Inn and turn right on one-way 2nd Street, which follows Placer Creek. Go past Cedar Street and turn right on Bank Street. Continue left as the road bends into King Street. From here it's 0.9 mile to the Pulaski Tunnel. Trailhead on the road that heads over Moon Pass to the St. Joe River.

Parking is on the left. The trail starts on the right side of the road.

1910 forest fires sparked Pulaski's fame

BY RICH LANDERS
Outdoors editor

The epic 1910 forest fire "blow-up" was the proverbial worst-case scenario.

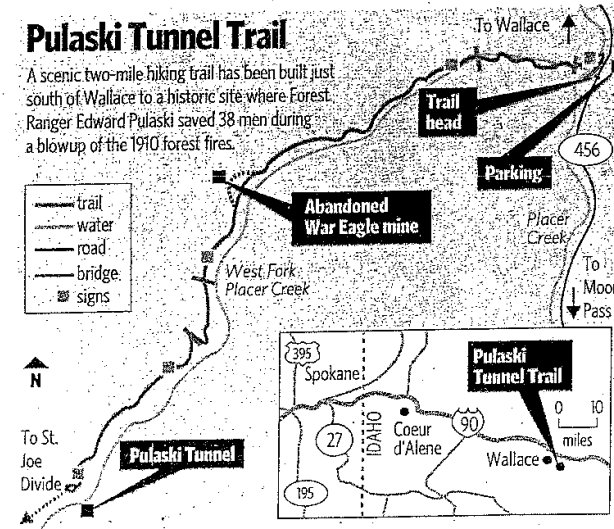
Hundreds, perhaps thousands of lightning- and human-caused blazes were burning with relatively modest impacts in a tinder-dry year before they came together on Aug. 20 and exploded into an inferno whipped by hurricane-force winds.

When it was over two days later, 78 firefighters and at least seven civilians

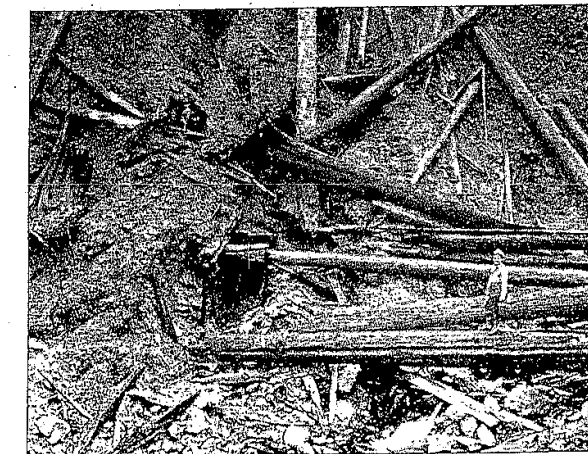
See HISTORY, T2

Pulaski Tunnel Trail

A scenic two-mile hiking trail has been built just south of Wallace to a historic site where Forest Ranger Edward Pulaski saved 38 men during a blowup of the 1910 forest fires.



Staff map: Carrie Howell



USFS

The new Pulaski Tunnel Trail leads to the mine that spared 39 lives during the 1910 fire. Photo above shows the mine entrance after the fire swept West Fork of Placer Creek.

PULASKI TRAIL

Continued from T1

four-mile round trip on their must-do list. The route would be a worthy destination even if it were just another trail.

Fit hikers can handle the trip — with 1,000 feet of elevation gain and loss — in less than two hours. But plan on devoting more time to read the 12 lavish trailside signs and appreciate why Jim See, Ron Roizen and other Silver Valley residents have been putting a hold on their present activities to secure this piece of the past.

See, a guidance counselor for the Mullan School District, sparked the trail project three years ago to draw attention to the site where Pulaski saved most of his firefighting crew as they were caught in the path of horrific fires. District Superintendent Robin Stanley readily adopted See's enthusiasm and rallied the support of the valley's movers and shakers. The Shoshone County Commissioners pitched in the startup money.

Idaho Sen. Larry Craig "instantly grasped the historic significance and helped come through with a \$300,000 grant," said Roizen, a retired sociologist who's helped work out the tangle of logistics.

The story of the 1910 fires and Ed Pulaski has been passed down through the generations, but 2003 seemed to be the perfect timing to launch the campaign to commemorate it appropriately, Roizen said.

"A book was out and Public TV had just released a two-hour documentary, creating a national audience we could use as evidence to the project's historic stature in our appeals for grants," See said.

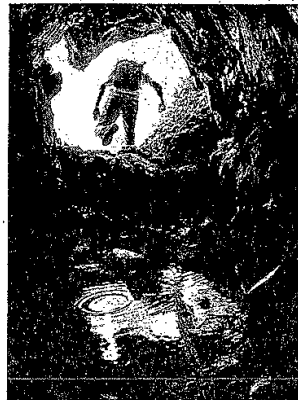
"The trail was an instant best-seller. People were saying, 'Why didn't we do this sooner?'"

"The U.S. Forest Service has done the heavy lifting on this



RICH LANDERS The Spokesman-Review

Ron Roizen, left, and Jim See of Mullan helped spearhead development of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail. This bridge over Placer Creek ushers hikers on a two-mile trek into national forest history.



FILE The Spokesman-Review

The decaying Nicholson adit, where Ranger Pulaski and his firefighters waited out the 1910 wildfire near Wallace, is now gated to prevent entry for public safety.

Extend the hike

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail makes a good hike at four miles round-trip with nearly 1,000 feet of elevation gain and loss. However, serious hikers can extend the trip into a six-mile loop, connected by a short road shuttle, as follows.

After hiking two miles to the Pulaski Tunnel, look for the old unmaintained trail that continues steeply up to the St. Joe Divide Trail No. 16 near Striped Peak. Turn left and hike a short way on this trail, gouged and rounded by years of motorcycle use, then leave the divide to drop down Cranky Gulch Trail No. 39 to Moon Pass Road.

Here you could have another vehicle waiting or possibly a bicycle or just walk the easy mile down the road to the Pulaski Tunnel Trailhead.

Book details inferno

"Year of the Fires: The Story of the Great Fires of 1910," by Stephen J. Pyne (Viking Press), is a meticulously researched and detailed account of the event that cooked the region and shaped national forest history.

HISTORY

Continued from T1

were documented as dead. The Idaho towns of Wallace, Kellogg, Osburn, Burke and Murray were ravaged. The Montana towns of Taft, DeBorgia, Saltese, Haugan and Tuscor were consumed.

Much of a 3-million-acre path 260 miles long and 200 miles wide from the Salmon River north to Canada was charred.

And most of that destruction had occurred in just six hours.

At its peak, the firestorm was unleashing as much energy every two minutes as the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

project," Roizen said, pointing out that the agency "developed the easements, the interpretive signs and it crafted and let the contracts for the trail's construction."

Forest Service trail expert Jack Dorrell designed the route and trailbuilders Dwight and Kay Clift of Pinehurst did the work.

"Total costs for the project are in the neighborhood of \$600,000," See said, "but the local Forest Service employees have put in much more than the official dollar figure."

The trailhead is just a mile south of downtown Wallace on the road to Moon Pass and the St. Joe River. Walking recently from the new parking area and vault toilet to the stunning first bridge over West Fork Placer Creek, See was clearly proud of how it all came together.

"The first few hundred yards are paved and suitable for wheelchairs to come along the creek and see the introductory signs," he said. "Beyond that, it's a dirt and rock hiking trail. The terrain leaves no other option."

The new route generally follows the old West Fork Placer Creek Trail 38. "The Forest Service had designated the trail as a national Historic Escape Route," Roizen said. "I never knew there was such a thing. I don't know how many there are, but there can't be many. In this case, the route wasn't being maintained."

Indeed, the latest Coeur d'Alene National Forest map, published four years ago, doesn't even show Trail 38 or the famous mine adit (mine entry passage) where Pulaski sheltered his men from the flames.

"A few locals hiked in here, and I suppose they're not happy that we've opened their hideaway to the public," said See, who's walked the route dozens of times to document the construction and show various groups the still-evolving product.

"There are still lots of things we want to do along the trail, including benches and tables, but the trail itself is done."

And it's a beauty.

West Fork Placer Creek is the trail's constant companion. Although some of the creek crossings would be an easy skip and a jump during summer, the five bridges make the trail available to hikers early in the spring when the water rages down the streams in a thunder that can make your heart soar and conversation difficult.

"Every time I come up here it's different," See said. "More or less water, greener, browner, flowers and then berries, new animal tracks in the trail."

After passing a series of flood control gabion dams near the confluence with Placer Creek, the West Fork is a wild stream with numerous small waterfalls and pools.

The trail eventually crosses a steep unvegetated mine dump and passes an exposed piece of ore-car rail and one of the Buffalo blowers that helped ventilate the War Eagle Mine. Here, at the halfway point up the two-mile Pulaski Trail, there's a side trail heading off a hundred yards or so to the old caved-in mine site.

The trail has steeper sections

and passes two more interpretive signs in the last mile to the Pulaski Tunnel site.

The adit is across the creek from the viewpoint that allows hikers to observe where 42 men and two horses went into the adit during the fires, and 38 came out alive.

The hillside has sloughed over the years and the entrance has been gated to prevent entry. But a series of six more signs brings the story to conclusion.

"In the next year we want to clean this area up a little to make it a better place for people to linger and enjoy this," said See, looking at the blowdowns that in the center of loop the trail makes at the end.

He pointed to an old burned-out stump, a relic of the 1910 fires. "You see a few stumps and snags from the fire on the hike in, but you'll see a lot more if you continue up the unimproved trail that climbs steeply toward the St. Joe Divide," he said.

Like silvery silent sentinels, the snags have stood for more than 95 years after the smoke cleared.

Edward Pulaski, among the first Forest Service rangers in an agency that was only four years old, was leading his firefighters toward safety in Wallace when the blow-up surrounded them with flames. Some accounts suggest he was headed toward the War Eagle Mine when he realized even that goal was unattainable.

He herded his 45 firefighters and two horses into the Nicholson adit, which has been known almost since that day as the Pulaski Tunnel.

In his 1923 account of the incident, Pulaski said the men were frantic as the heat intensified and seared their lungs. One panicked firefighter tried to flee the tunnel, prompting Pulaski to pull his government-issued revolver and say,

"The next man who tries to leave this tunnel I will shoot."

Apparently all of the men passed out during the ordeal. Those who woke found a devastated landscape, rocks too hot to touch, the West Fork of Placer Creek undrinkable because it was so full of ash and dead fish.

The two horses were lifeless, and, as the men came to consciousness, one firefighter said, "Come on outside boys, the boss is dead."

Pulaski famously replied, "Like hell he is."

Pulaski was considered a hero after making the decisions that saved 39 of the 45 men. Years later, he invented a firefighting tool featuring an ax-blade head that swept back into a hoe that

could be used to build fire line.

Even today, the Pulaski goes into the hands of every new forest firefighter, along with the story of the 1910 fires.

The event became the 9/11 of forest firefighting, prompting the young U.S. Forest Service to declare total war on wildfires for the better part of the next century.

Ironically, that preoccupation with total fire suppression has led to an unnatural buildup of forest fuels that left the nation's forests once again susceptible to catastrophic fires. Only in recent decades has the Forest Service revamped fire management policies, allowing fire to once again play a role.

(Staff writer James Hagengruber contributed to this story.)

The great fire of 1910

There was nothing unusual about the late winter and spring of 1910, except for the fact that little rain fell during the spring months after a relatively normal winter.

However, as the summer progressed, the temperature soared and a hot, dry wind blasted North Idaho out of Washington and the Palouse areas.

As the vegetation began to wilt and trees became like match sticks under the intense heat, the danger of wildfires began to grow until July 15, when a tremendous thunderstorm blasted the region, bringing intense lightning and almost no rain.

That storm reportedly sparked over 3,000 fires in the forests throughout the region. That immense number of fires, combined with what was later recorded as one of the driest summers ever in the region, was what led to the great fire of 1910.

Mother Nature cannot be blamed for many of the fires as Forest Service

records indicate that over 200 of the blazes in the Coeur d'Alene Forest were man-caused.

Some reportedly were arson-caused, many were blamed on careless loggers, homesteaders and other people out simply enjoying the forests.

However, the railroad was later to take the greatest blame for sparking many of the deadly fires.

Several of the fires along the St. Joe River, Loop Creek and North Fork drainages, as well as many in Montana, were allegedly started by the Chicago, Milwaukee and Puget Sound railroads.

Crews from those railroads were completing bridges and other types of work along the line and the big, coal-fired, steam locomotives threw off sparks which ignited the dry brush along the lines' right-of-ways.

When the fires broke, the newly-established U.S. Forest Service, in addi

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tion to being sorely undermanned, was also lacking in any practical fire fighting experience in the rugged mountains of the northern Rockies.

The high-mountain lookouts had not year been built and only sporadic reports from patrol crews provided information about the fires which were dotting the region.

Because of the lack of information on locations and sizes of fires, many of the blazes went for weeks without being attacked.

The supplies for the fire crews were sparse as best and no backup supplies were available in the area.

Firefighters were recruited from across the region, but even these efforts were largely in vain as the manpower broke down to only about 1 man per fire.

The fires continued to burn unchecked until August 20 when, following several days of high winds, many of the fires were blown together into a huge inferno which turned night into day all along the front.

Along the rail line through the Taft Tunnel area, many heroic (some say miraculous) scenes were played out as trains scrambled back and forth through the tunnels rescuing settlers and firefighters alike.

Railroad work crews were stationed along the line and, fortunately, the work meant that there were several trains, engines and backup engines located along the tracks.

When the big blowup of Aug. 20 came, many of the little railroad towns along the route, most of which were occupied with workers, prostitutes and store and bar keepers, were in peril and, since the railroad had brought many of them to the area and was responsible for getting them out.

All during the night of Aug. 20, the trains raced back and forth as the fire raged around.

On train backed all the way to the tiny station of Falcon to bring out the residents of that area and bring them to safety in Avery.

Racing through the flames the trains made their way to the safety of the long tunnels along the line, as crews doused

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burning trestles before the trains could pass.

Nearly 400 people waited out the night of Aug. 20 inside the safety of the 2-mile long Taft Tunnel as the fire raged at both portals.

The final of three rescue missions from the town of Taft came late in the day and the engineer of the train decided to make a run for the Taft Tunnel, the longest in the area, which would provide the best protection.

However, it was learned that a group of approximately 47 workers and their families were trapped back along the

route and one engineer and a conductor volunteered to go back and rescue them.

The train made its way back to pick up the panicked group and then made a dash through a wall of flame and over burning bridges toward safety.

It was quickly determined that there would be no way to reach the Taft Tunnel so the crew raced on through the flaming hell and finally held up in a shorter structure known as Tunnel 22. Approximately 50 people were saved by the heroics of the train crew that day.

All-in-all, there were around 600 people along the Taft Tunnel route who owed their lives to the bravery of the railroad crews on the day when all hell broke loose from the great fire.

95 years in the making

It was a fitting tribute. On the centennial anniversary of the United States Forest Service and 95 years to the day after the worst forest fire in American history, the Pulaski Tunnel Trail was officially dedicated.

Several community and family members and dignitaries came out for the ceremony honoring the man, USFS Ranger Edward Pulaski, who saved the lives of 39 men during "The Big Blowup" of 1910 in the forested lands blanketing the area between Wallace and Avery. The firestorm trapped 1,800 men. The devastating fire forever changed the lives of the people in the Inland Northwest. The firestorm that swept through the land

chased Pulaski and the 45 men he could corral into an old, abandoned mine, the Nicholson mine south of Wallace.

The men stayed in the mine with the threat of being shot by Pulaski if any man attempted to leave. Pulaski stayed at the entrance of the mine attempting to keep the approaching fire at bay. Six of the 45 men perished in the mine, the remainder were burned.

Pulaski and his men were honored last August two miles from the mine where they spent the night of Aug. 20, 1905. Several dignitaries came out for the event to honor the men who fell and the men

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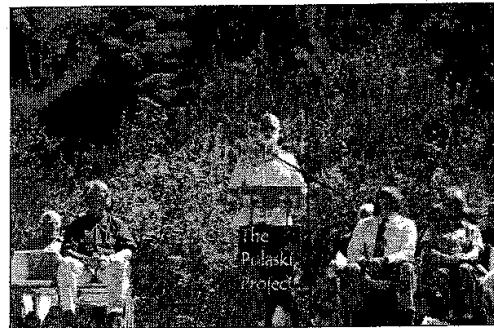
who made it home. Senator Larry Craig was instrumental in securing funding for the Pulaski Tunnel Trail. Craig spoke at the event and was flanked by the Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey, Eric Thomson of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Ranotta McNair of the USFS Region I, Wallace Mayor Ron Garitone and the USFS Color Guard was also on hand to give a bagpipe tribute to the dedication.

"The national significance of this event is extremely important to the community and the state," Sen. Craig said. "We need to grab a hold of these historical sites and I'm extremely happy to be a part of this. It's a lot of fun."

Jim See, the president of the Pulaski Project, first came up with the idea to rehabilitate the Pulaski Trail about

10 years ago. But it wasn't until 2002 when See and Mullan School District Superintendent Robin Stanley organized the Pulaski Project committee. The group has been working steadily toward the

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— Photo by ERIKA KIRSCH

Jim See, president of the Pulaski Project, addressed the crowd at the Pulaski Tunnel Trail Dedication ceremony last August in Wallace. On the left is Senator Larry Craig and on the right are Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey and Ranotta McNair of the United States Forest Service Region I.

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— Photos by ERIKA KIRSCH

John Amonson chops a ribbon with a Pulaski tool for the dedication ceremony at the Pulaski Tunnel trailhead in Wallace. Shoshone County Commissioner Sherry Krulitz holds the ribbon. Amonson is on the Pulaski Project board.

PULASKI

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goal of honoring the firefighters of the 1910 fire ever since. See gave an emotional speech while the audio of a consuming fire played in the background at the dedication ceremony. See was then presented with a certificate of appreciation and a chrome Pulaski tool. The Pulaski tool was invented and presented to USFS

supervisors by Pulaski in 1911. The tool is a hybrid of an ax and a mattock and is widely used today in fire suppression efforts.

"Many of the reports said the fire sounded like 1,000 trains going over 1,000 trestles, everybody talked about the sound of the fire. The men went stark raving mad. Some ran straight into the fire, some shot themselves," See said. "Men were crying and praying and some were unconscious. [Pulaski] had burns, he lost his eyesight. We honor him with this

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trail, we honor the six men who died, we honor all the wildland firefighters with this trail past, present and future.

"The fallen firefighters have paid the ultimate price, we honor them with this trail," See said.

The Pulaski Project came to fruition with the cooperation of many officials and groups including: the USFS, the Bureau of Land Management, HECLA, Stimson Lumber and East Shoshone County Water Company and the project is also a part of the Greater Wallace Community Development Corporation. Sen. Craig helped to secure much of the money utilized for the project.

The first three of a dozen large-format interpretive signs have been installed on the Pulaski Tunnel Trail near the trailhead. They are the product of no little amount of work and discussions between the Forest Service team of Cort Sims, Grady Myers, Linda McFaddan and Jack Dorrel. The signs are also largely due to the Pulaski Project's team of Jim See, Ron

Roizen, Robin Stanley, John Amonson and Dick Caron.

These first three signs offer a picture of the general design of the other nine signs. The trail's historical signage was funded by a generous grant from the U.S. Forest Service's Region I headquarters in Missoula, Mont. The grant falls under a special historical provision offering funding for commemorative projects in the Forest Service's centennial year in 2005.

The trail has been completed all the way to the Pulaski Tunnel. All bridges have been installed, the pathway across difficult rock-slide areas has been established and buttressed. The surfacing and definition of the entire hike has been completed. Though the trail is not yet fully completed, more signs will be installed and work will be done at the terminus of the trail. The trail is ready to accept hikers over its entire course and is paved to the first three signs for wheelchair accessibility.

Additionally, the trailhead complex, comprised of a paved and marked parking area; a Forest Service restroom; a paved walkway; a crosswalk; and appropriate historical site signage are all now in place.

EDITORIAL

Summer activities rich with local history

Chris and I enjoyed two different flavors of Silver Valley history this week, and we wanted to thank those whose hard work made it possible.

On Monday, July 3, I skipped out of work a little early and we hiked the new Pulaski Tunnel trail. It's a remarkable addition to the list of Valley tourist attractions and highly important, as well, for those lucky enough to be called "locals."

A lot of work went into the project, both the mental effort involved in the grant-writing process and the physical effort involved with punching a trail up the West Fork of Placer Creek. The workmanship is outstanding. The trail is wide and smooth, the bridges well-designed to survive years of springtime high water.

I was surprised, at reaching the Pulaski tunnel site, at the small relatively obscure portal. If you didn't know where you were going or what you were supposed to see it would be easy to miss the focal point of one of the most heroic stories of the early-day Forest Service.

If you hike the Pulaski trail, don't miss the side path to the War Eagle mine. You'll see heavy iron equipment — I believe it's an old air compressor — nearly buried by years of sliding rock. You might wonder at the strength and determination of the men who hauled that iron up the creek around the turn of the century. You might think that sort of American strength and determination is what made our country great.

Speaking of strength and determination, the power of the Lewis & Clark expedition came to Kellogg last Thursday night courtesy of Carol Young and the Silver Mountain management team. A re-enactor played Meriweather Lewis and quoted from the legendary explorer's letters to his mother as he described crossing the continent in the very early 1800s.

It's the first in a series of Living History shows being held at the mountain this summer. The program was educational, entertaining, and free, perfect for families. There's a different subject nearly every Thursday for the rest of the summer. Tomorrow night, July 13, Sacagawea will bring her vision of the Lewis & Clark story to Silver Mountain. Don't miss it.

Free, professional live theatre with an educational focus is not an everyday occurrence in our community. Carol's program is a credit to Silver Mountain and its management.

Two aspects of history in one week. We're lucky to live in the Silver Valley. But you knew that.

D.C.D.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2006

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pulaski Tunnel Trail in phases

Regarding your editorial of July 12th about the Pulaski Tunnel Trail:

First, thank you for your kind words. We're very grateful for the News-Press's coverage of the trail's progress.

Second, we certainly agree that the War Eagle spur is an interesting element of the trail. The War Eagle mine has long been confused with the Nicholson mine (also known as Pulaski Tunnel) as the place where Pulaski secured his crew through the night of the fire. Our research has indicated that Pulaski was trying to lead his men to the War Eagle, but fire cut them off and they were forced to return to the Nicholson mine.

Third, we thoroughly agree that the Nicholson mine currently appears as "a small, relatively obscure portal."

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail is a phased project. Moreover, the process of developing an historic trail takes time and the careful deliberation of all the parties involved.

The first phase focused on building the trail. That comprised completing the parking area, the toilet, the seven bridges, the interpretive signs, the construction of the elevated trail segment, and the main body of the trail.

The Forest Service, which has done the hard work of designing and contracting for the trail, had to get phase one completed

before taking on whatever was to be done at the destination of the trail.

The second phase will address the mine portal, a deck for the overlook at the mine portal site, creation and placement of additional signs celebrating our area's mining history, and placement of benches and tables. New funding from the Idaho Community Foundation and Title III of the Craig-Wyden Act (from Shoshone County) are in hand for the development of the overlook and portal area.

We are currently considering possible treatments of the mine portal. Because the mine portal and the trail are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, potential treatment designs must pass muster with a

number of agencies.

As the Pulaski story evolves, we continually appreciate the "strength and determination" that our historic forefathers demonstrated. Grit and determination built the Silver Valley and continue to be legacy we all share. The Pulaski story and the Pulaski Tunnel Trail also remind all of us to appreciate the heroism of all wildland firefighters, past and present.

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail still has a way to go, but there are resources and, more importantly, there is the will to add the elements that will make it a world-class interpretive trail.

Jim See
President
Pulaski Project

GUEST OPINION

Wallace, wildfire and Google Earth's high-flying view

By RON ROIZEN
Special to the News-Press

Getting a different visual perspective on Wallace and the Silver Valley's environs is one of the benefits of Google Earth – a new source of satellite-based "eye in the sky" images, which is available free at <http://earth.google.com/>.

The risk of catastrophic wildfire is apparent by looking at Google Earth's high altitude images of the Silver Valley's forest-surrounded area.

One need only turn on the evening national TV news to confirm that the threat of catastrophic wildfire in the American West is a hard reality.

Tanker aircraft, GPS location systems, satellite reconnaissance and all the rest that modern technology may offer to our firefighters pale before a catastrophic wildfire.

In southern California, for example, a recent estimate puts the cost of the conjoined Sawtooth and Millard fires, so far, at 85,000 acres scorched, one death, 50 homes, eight ranchers, 171 other structures, and 200 vehicles destroyed.

We know it can happen here in the Silver Valley because it did, in 1910 – taking 87 lives, burning three million acres, and destroying the eastern third of Wallace.

Moreover, our damp climate doesn't protect us.

While it is true that Shoshone County's forests experience the frequent rains that refresh the Pacific and Inland Northwest, it is also true that this moisture is a double-edged blessing.

Annual rainfall heightens growth but also exposes our

area to greater risk of catastrophic fire when droughts, hot temperatures, and substantial winds now and then co-occur.

Vulnerable fire years may occur more frequently than we are accustomed to thinking.

For example, U.S. Forest Ranger Elers Koch counted "at least nine years which could be classified as really bad forest fire years" (namely 1910, 1914, 1917, 1919, 1925, 1926, 1929, 1931, and 1934) over his 40-year career in our area (1903-1943).

This year's spate of wildfires in California, the Southwest, Oklahoma, and Texas should not lull us into a sense of security about our own region's risk of great fires.

In 2000 – a huge fire year when almost 8.5 million acres burned in U.S. forests – five of the nation's 10 largest wildfires were located in the northern Rocky Mountains. The largest of these, the Valley Complex fire in the Bitterroot National Forest, was also the nearest to us.

Our vulnerability to catastrophic wildfire is in all probability greater today than it was in 1910.

An analysis of old and recent photos carried out by the Pulaski Project suggests that there is more forest fuel surrounding Wallace today than there was in the period immediately prior to the great 1910 fire.

A technical report (Harkins et al., "The Idaho Panhandle National Forests Wildfire Hazard-Risk Assessment," 1999) further explains:

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FIRE

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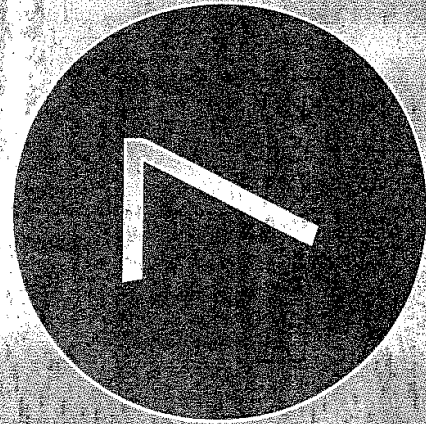
"Historical logging, the exotic disease white pine blister rust (*Cronartium ribicola*), and fire exclusion have converted the majority of historic western white pine (*Pinus monticola*) and western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) forests to dense, stratified Douglas fir and true fir forests. This forest conversion has increased fuel loads, ladder fuels, and insect epidemics. These forest changes have decreased the probability of mixed severity fire occurrence and increased the probability of severe stand replacing fire occurrence on the IPNF... Fire exclusion may also have influenced present conditions within the long fire-interval forests of northern Idaho...."

Google Earth's images provide new evidence of how exposed we are.

Google Earth's photos do not tell us what we, as a community, should or should not do to defend Wallace and other Shoshone County communities from the threat of catastrophic wildfire – though they may help us to that end.

The images at this point serve to provide a different and illuminating perspective on our potential wildfire threat.

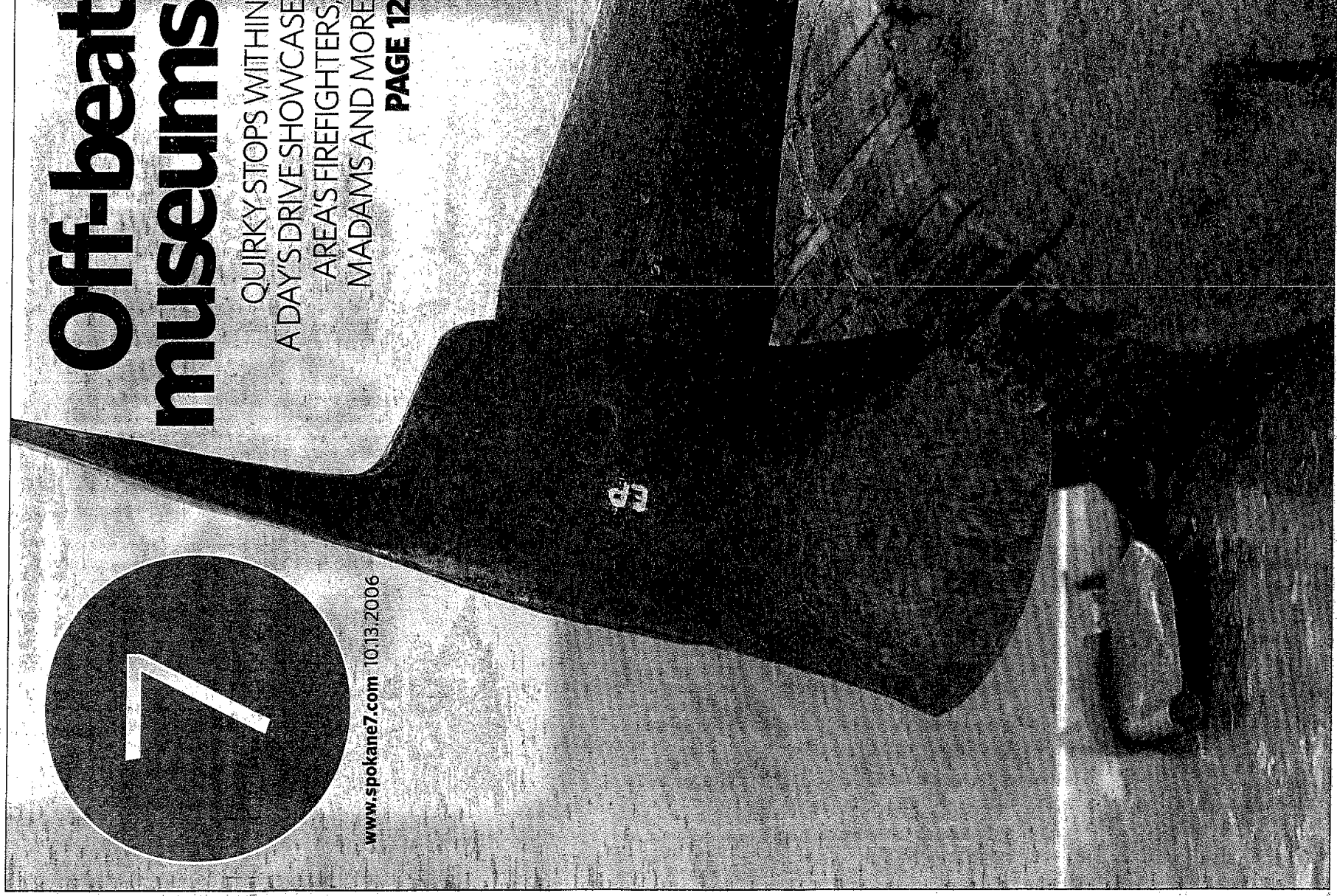
What we do about that threat is, I believe, an issue that deserves serious and deliberate attention of all of us.



www.spokane7.com 10.13.2006

Off-beat museums

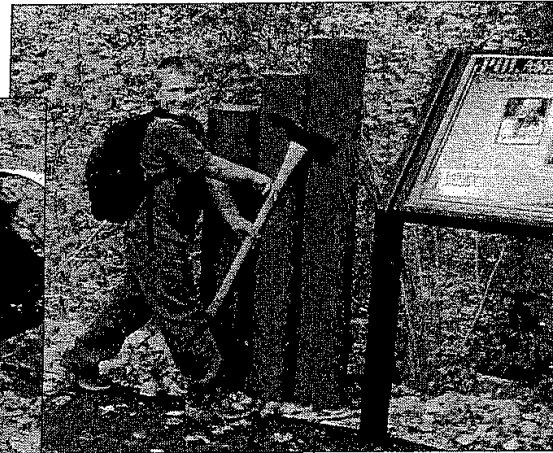
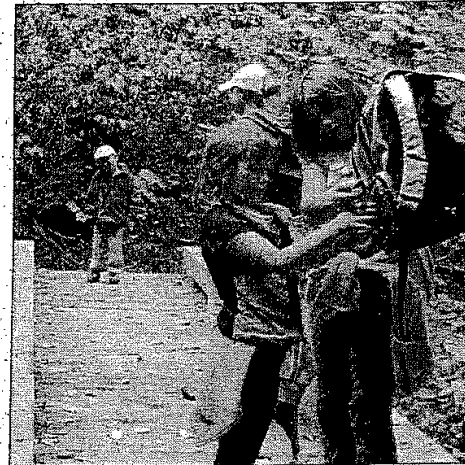
QUIRKY STOPS WITHIN A DAY'S DRIVE SHOWCASE AREA'S FIREFIGHTERS, MADAMS AND MORE **PAGE 12**



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EDUCATION

Silver Hills students visit Pulaski Trail

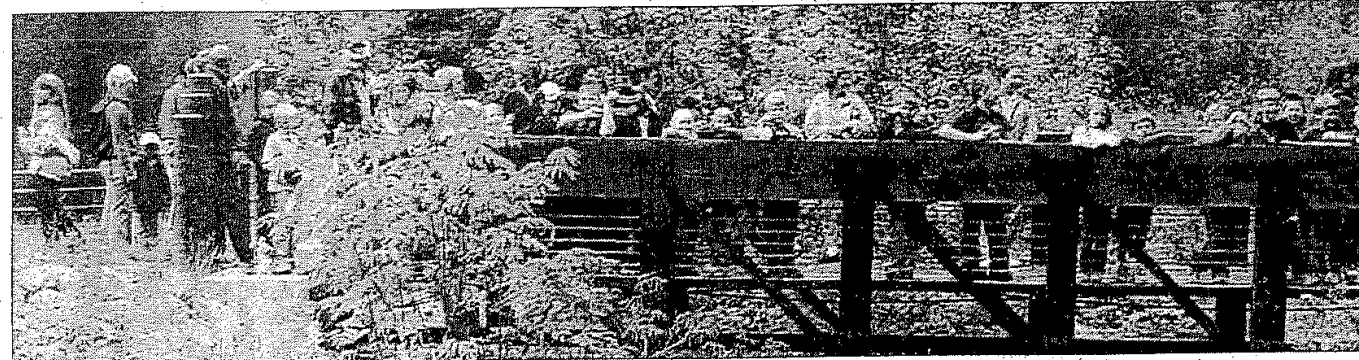


— Courtesy photos

(From clockwise) Silver Hills Elementary School students Randy Berryhill and Samara Owens take a break during their recent fieldtrip to the Pulaski Trail. Also pictured is Hayden Hogamier and his mother Sara Hogamier.

(top right) Silver Hills Elementary School student Josh Howard stands beside the pulaski displayed on the Pulaski Trail.

(Left) Silver Hills Elementary School students from Sue Achord and Charlene Krone's fourth-grade classes stand, along with their chaperones, on a bridge during their recent field trip to the Pulaski Trail.



Two Reports: Fire Room Experience Feasibility Study and What Makes Museums & Interpretive Centers Succeed or Fail

January 4, 2007

Fire Room Experience Study

- Our proximate aim was to collect enough "nuts and bolts" information about design alternatives to (a) select a preferred alternative and (b) use the information provided about that alternative to help build a proposal for the design and construction of an actual simulated fire experience.
- Consultant considered eight options:

Backdraft Experience	Underwriters' Laboratory Burn Room
Planetarium approach	Fire Zone Facility, New York City
Live Theatrical Performance	Virtual Reality Experience
Mine Experience	360-Degree Projection Show
- But consultant's report concentrated too much on the creative aspect and left us without a lot of "nuts and bolts" information for the preparation of a proposal.
- "Still another indicator of the preliminary character of what the report offers us is that fact that the impaneling of a "charette" for brainstorming more well-defined design directions within these design categories is still in the future in the consultant's report." (Turned out, as I investigated further, that a typical charette cost \$30K to \$50K by the creative and engineering firms that do this sort of thing for theme parks, another important and sobering discovery.)
- So I terminated the grant at \$2.5K (of \$5K) and took the finishing of the project in-house.
- Draft was submitted on Oct. 31, 2006, and was satisfactory to the Forest Service.
- So I followed up on the main options to be investigated: fire simulation (Backdraft-like), wide-screen cinema, and virtual reality.
- I'm giving you a very brief bottom-line on each of these three approaches:
 - Fire simulation: "...though perhaps the closest approximation to what we imagined our fire experience simulation, can probably be safely eliminated owing to the substantial cost of individual performances of the exhibit (chiefly fuel costs) against the uncertain flow of visitors to our facility. According to one of my experienced contacts,
 - Ballpark core, shell and show capital expenditures: \$600 to \$1200 per sq. ft.
 - Expendables: Really depends on how many times per day the show operates, and, of course, how big the show effects are.
 - Ballpark natural gas \$250,000 to \$500,000 per year, estimated.
 - Ballpark electrical: \$100,000 to \$130,000 per year, per data from Backdraft.
 - Staffing: Assume 2 sets of ops staff at 3 people each staff, salaried. Use local salaries for costs. Assume 2 sets of 3 hourly ops staff for audience interaction, etc. Use local service labor wages. Burden as per local costs for overhead, etc.
 - Widescreen cinema: Mt. St. Helens uses regular cinema, as does Cataldo Mission. Facility and space costs are credible, but the cost of the creative production of the film is high. We may think of several categories of costs:
 - creative cost -- i.e., coming up with the concept and outline of the design
 - land and exterior structure costs
 - interior design and construction costs and requirements & technology costs
 - cost of creating the creative content of the experience -- i.e., the cinematic or experiential content
 - costs of operation and maintenance
 - Virtual reality: made a visit to Ann Arbor, to University of Michigan VR Lab
 - What I saw was impressive, though still trapped in the somewhat cardboardy visual representations of computer simulation
 - View options beyond headset: "the cave," flat screen, video screen 3-D, and wide/curved-screen
 - Was particularly interested in representation of trees, forest, fire, wind, etc.
 - The 3-D Xerox!
 - Zooming around to different locations -- borrowing landscape data directly from Google Earth
 - This affords the prospect of providing the creative aspect of a widescreen film -- real time control not so important, but staged "travel" might be interesting.
 - "Show" and be changed and different purposes might be served.
 - Sliding-scale costs, but could get something for under \$150K.

Success or Failure of Museum-Interpretive Center Report:

- Hired consultant Matt Carroll, recommended by Jay O'Laughlin, who is sociology professor at WSU.
- It took a while but he produced a credible and interesting report.
- Carroll adopted a "boundary object" conceptual framework: "Any study needs some kind of conceptual basis upon which to frame its analysis. In the present case, that basis is provided by Star and Griesemer (1989). Using their study of the history of the U of Cal's Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology as a primary case study, these authors built a conceptual model of museum viability and successful survival on the basis of the ability of its leadership to navigate the tensions between the multiple social worlds that go into the creation and maintenance."
- Matt did a semi-structured phone interview study, doing "purpose sampling" that began with inventorying institutions that were more or less similar to what we had in mind: "Examples include a larger museum of western art in the Southwest and a forty-year-old museum devoted to local culture in southern California, whose "creation story" closely resembles that of the Pulaski Center.
- In the end, 28 centers were included in the sample, appropriate informants were interviewed from each.
- Matt had a series of interview topics:
 - The "creation story" of the organization;
 - the focus of the displays and programs and the rationale behind the focus;
 - the extent to which the original focus changed over time and why;
 - how the start up capital was generated. (money, labor, physical plant, materials, services, buildings);
 - how operational and maintenance funds are generated;
 - the marketing strategy (formal or informal) employed and, finally;
 - the lessons that the interviewee felt it would be helpful to impart to individuals or groups considering opening a museum or visitor/interpretive center.
- Data collected were analyzed and organized and a report written.
- Main findings:
 - Creation Story: A single individual or a small group had something they wanted to save for history -- with different variations on this theme. Singlemindedness of founding agents was key. Leaders must also be able to navigate multiple social worlds -- in our case: Forest Service, Chamber of Commerce, legislators and congressionals, foundations, etc.
 - Focus: Started with quite narrow focus and broadened later
 - Start-up Capital: Large number began because they could garner some large, unused space that became their facility. Often proceeded with donations of construction help and materials. Body of display materials already in hand was another form of start-up capital -- though this factor can become a "kiss of death" when collection loses focus. Finally, need people with good connections.
 - Generation Operating Funds: Much harder to generate than start-up capital. Few survive on admission or gift shop, need subscription membership and legislative or agency appropriations. Various modes of local funding efforts described. Burn-out of funds providers and volunteers a common problem.
 - Marketing: Something informants said they were "getting around to one of these days" -- i.e., a low de facto priority. Yet informants had many contacts and publicity efforts that they actually made. Importance of special events and "rotating collection."
 - Lessons Learned:
 - Getting started and keeping the center going are two very different enterprises
 - Be small and realistic in initial ambitions and plans -- dispassionate outside consultant can sometimes help bring ambitions down to earth
 - Need to build a war chest of funds as early as possible
 - Need good volunteer legal help initially and on-going.
 - Need partnerships with entities: "These include such things as educational partnerships with schools and colleges, relationships with art councils and historical societies, arrangements with other similar entities to rotate displays, and of course, relationships with governmental and non-governmental groups, foundations and other entities that can provide financial and political support at crucial times in the life of ones museum or interpretative center."
 - Don't forget children.
 - Varied abilities in staff, and staff changes to avoid power build-ups.
 - Conclusion: Need good story to tell, never-say-die commitment, and helpful professional volunteer consulting.
 - Pulaski Center may have what it takes (at some point).