

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2011

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

50 CENTS

Visit us online at www.shoshonenewspress.com

Outstanding Tourism Award arrives



Photo by EMIL WHITIS

Members of the 1910 Fire Commemoration Committee Linn Reese, from left, Forest VanDorn, Kim Johnson and Kjell Truesdell present Wallace Mayor Dick Vester (second from right) with the state's 2010 Outstanding Tourism Community Award for the 1910 Fire Commemoration Thursday at the 1910 Firefighters Memorial in Wallace. "That was the most impressive event I've ever seen," said Vester on receipt of the award. "It was something I'm so proud to have been a part of," said Reese. "It's one of the things I'll always look back on." The plaque will be hung in Wallace City Hall.

Pulaski's vision for 1910 Fire memorial comes to life

By EMIL WHITIS
Staff writer

Recently, chairman of the 1910 Fire Commemoration Committee Forest VanDorn made a trek down to Boise with the purpose of receiving the state's 2010 Outstanding Tourism Community Award on behalf of the city of Wallace and the Silver Valley for the 1910 Fire Commemoration.

On the way back he felt an incredible urge to spread the thanks throughout the community — to give credit where credit was due.

"The main thing I want to do is just thank everyone," said VanDorn. "Took everyone to do it — I was just the chairman."

In the aftermath of the 1910 fire when Ed Pulaski stood staring out at the barren, still-smoldering mountains of the Silver Valley he could see the faces of the men who were consumed fighting the hellish blaze. Pulaski was so affected by the memory that he drew up blueprints for a memorial to honor their heroic actions and immortalize their spirit.

After being rejected by Washington, D.C., the plans were discarded and condemned to a dusty, obscure nook in the archives of National Forest Service history. For a century they slept there

and were forgotten.

Aside from the occasional mention over a cup of coffee during wildfire season the Big Blowup passed out of the valley's collective, day-to-day consciousness.

and merging — becoming possibilities. Of course most possibilities need cash to break through to reality and the group began to create ways to raise money in addition to spending it.

"Pulaski spent most of his money on helping the members of his crew that were injured — it ruined him financially ... We built (the memorial) exactly to the specs he had drawn."

FOREST VAN DORN, chairman, 1910 Fire Commemoration Committee

In October of 2010 the Forest Service approached the Historic Silver Valley Chamber of Commerce about possibly doing something to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the fire, VanDorn, immediately volunteered his services. He had no idea where it would go.

The idea creaked forward and began to gain momentum when Kim Johnson of the U.S. Forest Service and Silver Valley socialite Linn Reese jumped on board.

"One of the things we wanted to do was some kind of memorial," said VanDorn. "We came up with a plan and got estimates."

New recruits streamed in daily and ideas swirled around the meeting spaces colliding

"As we got into it a lot of things got added," said VanDorn. "We had a lot of things we wanted to do but some we had to scrap for lack of time and money; others, like the reenactment, we put a lot of work into and made them happen."

Sometime along the way a Forest Service member stumbled across Pulaski's blueprints. When the committee became aware of the discovery there were no questions asked — the realization of the plans became an instant priority.

"Pulaski spent most of his money on helping the members of his crew that were injured — it ruined him financially," said VanDorn.

It also solidified his image as the hero of the catastrophe and sealed his

legacy as a prototype for humanity — a mold from which future generations could spring to make the world better.

One century after the fire members of the U.S. Forest Service along with Silver Valley residents pitched in to cover the \$5,000 cost to construct his memorial.

"We built it exactly to the specs he had drawn," said VanDorn.

When the dust cleared after 11 months of planning, fundraising, meeting and otherwise exerting a constant effort, the mammoth six-event commemoration had passed leaving valley residents and guests in awe of what could be done through the coordination of effort.

It is likely that over 100 years ago Pulaski and the residents of Wallace felt something akin when they looked down from the hills at the smoldering little town that remained.

VanDorn would like to thank Linn Reese, Kimberly Johnson, Shawn Pearson, Jim See, Sam Gibbons, Karrie Jerauld, Carol Young, Shauna Hillman, Suzanne Endsley, Anita Price, Henry Nipp, John Specht, Rany Swick, Theresa Kirkpatrick, Rich Caldwell, Bob Dunsmoor, Jim McReynolds, Neil Sheldon and many others not listed for their constant sacrifices and efforts to make the commemoration an overwhelming success.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2011

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Help us preserve history

By FOREST VAN DORN
Special to the News-Press

WALLACE — What would you say to a future historian in 100 years? How would you communicate the life and times of today for someone of the next century?

On Saturday, Aug. 20, at 11:30 the 1910 Fire Committee will be sealing a time capsule at the Firefighter's Memorial at the Wallace Visitors Center. In an effort to communicate with future generations, the committee has selected various articles and objects concerning the 2010 Commemoration of the Great Fire of 1910 to be sealed in a time capsule. Objects include posters, programs, tickets, books, pictures, coins and other memorabilia collected during the commemoration. Video recording on DVDs of the commemoration activities will provide future generations with a look at the events in 2010.

FH Mine, Forest Steel, Mackay manufacturing, and Silver Peak Granite and Marble Co. all generously donated materials to make the time capsule a reality.

The committee is also sponsoring a film festival of the video recordings of the 2010 events and other fire themed films starting at 1 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 15, and noon on Tuesday, Aug. 16, at the Sixth Street Theater. The recorded events include: the commemoration procession through Wallace and ceremony at the Visitor's Center, the Nine Mile Cemetery ceremony by the U.S. Forest Service, the re-enactment hike of the Pulaski escape way, Voices of the Big Burn stage production and featured speakers: Pyne, Egan, Barker and Sibley.

Admission is free, but donations are encouraged. Proceeds will benefit the maintenance fund for the memorial, the mass grave sites at Nine-mile Cemetery and the Pulaski Tunnel Trail.

The public is encouraged to attend these events and become part of history.

Shoshone News-Press Saturday, August 13, 2011

National forest artist Myers remembered

By KELSEY SAINTZ
Staff writer

Grady Myers wasn't like other artists.

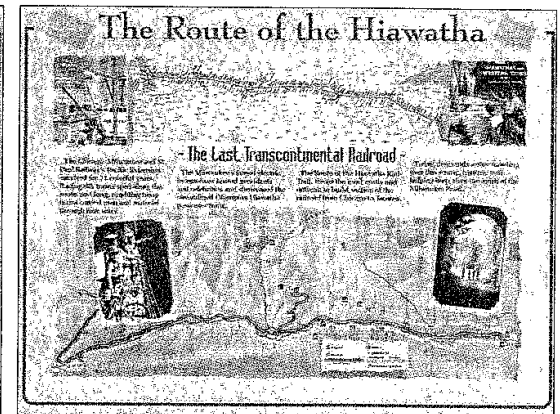
"You hear about artists that have complexes and can be extremely difficult," said Dave O'Brien. "Well, Grady was the complete opposite."

O'Brien, the operations team leader for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, worked with Myers while he created nearly 50 interpretive historical signs along the Hiawatha Trail.

The two worked together for about 10 years to enrich the experience for those on the trail. He also made artwork for the Pulaski Tunnel Trail, as well as a sign that's about to be installed in the Priest Lake area.

Myers, who had battled various medical issues for years, died July 30 at age 61.

He was born in New Mexico to an Air Force family that eventually settled in Boise. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries he sustained. He studied art at Boise State College and became a newspaper artist in the Spokane area. While working with O'Brien, his title was graphic infor-



Images contributed by LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA

Graphic artist Grady Myers created interpretive historical signs along the Hiawatha and Pulaski Tunnel Trails. He died July 30.

mation specialist for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

"Grady was a big man and he was just as gentle a giant as you'd ever know," O'Brien said. Although he often felt ill, he wouldn't admit to it.

One day, O'Brien recalled, Myers didn't come to work. He and another co-worker went to his home, stood outside and called him on the phone. To their surprise, he picked up and let them in.

He was nearly bedridden, O'Brien said.

After this incident, they arranged for him to have a disability retirement but still work on a contract basis.

O'Brien visited him twice a week while he was in a local nursing home.

"I just couldn't let go of him," he said. "He was such a deserving guy."

The historical panels Myers created using computer software described the history of the railroad, the 1910 fire and other interesting tidbits along the way. His work on the Hiawatha was done in the late 1990s, and art on the Pulaski Tunnel Trail was complete in 2005.

Kent Wellner, the forest recreation program manager, for the U.S. Forest Service, said Myers was quick-witted, sharp and talented.

see ARTIST, A2



Images contributed by LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA

ARTIST from A1

"He made really, really neat artwork," he said. "It's one of the primary features of the trail."

Wellner said the trails are fun because of the scenery, but even if they only read a portion of those signs, you get a real sense of the history.

To me, it doubles the whole Hiawatha Trail and

communicates some of the things going on out there," he said.

Some speed right past the signs, O'Brien said.

"Some get to the bottom and say, 'What signs?'" Others, however, are impressed and inspired to research the area further. Some are history-oriented people who view history as the primary reason for their time on the Hiawatha, and biking is just an added bonus.

230

1910 Fire Commemoration Film Festival

Sixth Street Theater - Wallace, Idaho

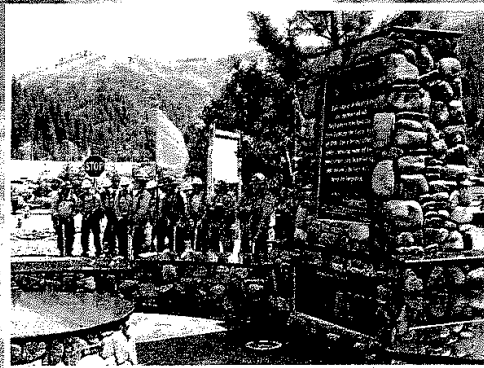


Monday ~ August 15

- 1:00 Ordeal by Fire - 60 min.**
Great Fire of 1910 documentary
- 2:20 Red Sky of Montana - 100 min.**
1952 adventure drama in which a smoke jumper attempts to save his crew in a forest fire
- 4:20 Timothy Egan - 70 min.**
Author of *The Big Burn*
- 5:50 Memorial Dedication - 83 min.**
Parade through town and ceremony at the Wallace Visitors Center

Tuesday ~ August 16

- 12:00 Cemetery Ceremony - 46 min.**
Moving ceremony at the gravesite of the 1910 fire victims conducted by the U. S. Forest Service
- 1:30 Fire Wars - 120 min.**
Arrowhead Hotshots: how they fight fires, equipment used, what role fire plays in the ecosystem
- 3:20 Stephen Payne - 90 min.**
Author of *Year of the Fires*
- 5:10 Voices of the Big Burn - 70 min.**
Theatrical production based on personal and newspaper accounts of the Great Fire
- 6:30 Re-enactment Hike - 51 min.**
Forty-four hardy souls hiked the escape route taken by a crew of firefighters led by Pulaski



Donations accepted.

Proceeds will benefit the maintenance fund for the memorial, cemetery and trail.

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Time capsule to recall heroism of 1910 fire

By ZAK FAILLA
Staff writer

To remember the 101st anniversary of the 1910 fire that ripped apart the Silver Valley, and burned nearly 700,000 acres of county land, the Wallace Chamber of Commerce and the 1910 Fire Committee will be honoring the Forest Service and brave firefighters who fought the blaze a century ago by burying a time capsule that will be unearthed 100 years from now.

Pictures of the event, books, records of the Forest Service

and other items commemorating the fire and the era will be stored in a thick plastic capsule, stored inside the Firefighter's Memorial at the Wallace Visitors Center, preserved in concrete, and won't be seen again for another several generations.

Forest Van Dorn, a member of the Wallace Chamber who helped organize the event, is expecting a strong turnout, and said that donations are encouraged and will benefit the maintenance fund for the memorial, the mass grave sites at Nine-mile Cemetery and the Pulaski

Tunnel Trail.

"We've got the county commissioners coming, as well as the Wallace and Kellogg mayors, and we will have Sam Gibbons from the Forest Service and representatives from the fire department to help seal it up," he said. "The funds will be controlled by the Fire Chief's Association which will help serve the maintenance costs for several different areas. They'll be taken care of all the major maintenance projects."

see CAPSULE, A1

CAPSULE from A1

The ceremony is expected to begin at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, and shouldn't last more than an hour. The county commissioners are slated to speak briefly and both mayors have indicated that they would have a few words prepared, prior to the capsule being dropped into its home for the next 100 years. Van Dorn emphasized that keepsakes did not have to be from 1910, and anything that celebrated that time was important to the event.

"We're only about one-fifth full in the capsule, so there is still a lot of room in there for more stuff. It doesn't have to be from 1910, whether it was out of St. Maries, Avery or Thompson Falls from the celebrations they put on last year, so anything of that nature would be great," he said. "We're not just doing things in paper form, but we've got material on computer sticks, CDs and movies."

Preceding the event, the Chamber will host a film festival of video recordings of the 2010 events and other films along the same theme on Monday and

Tuesday afternoon at the Sixth Street Theater. All of those materials will also be added to the capsule, to be enjoyed by our great great grandchildren in 2110. Van Dorn knows that it is important that the future generations be reminded of the sacrifices and importance of the 1910 Fire.

"We as a group — the Forest Service and Idaho Department of Land — wanted to build this memorial to dedicate toward what he had accomplished plus the people that lost their lives and were badly injured and never compensated," he said. "I hope that in

100 years they will honor that again and remember that this is a big part of history and burning half of Wallace down was a major thing for our area and for the entire state. I feel like people who do care about such things will get this information and use it to extend their knowledge in 100 years."

The 1910 Fire was pivotal juncture for the Forest Service in Idaho. In that era, the depart-

ment was brand new, and the government was unsure about their viability in the nation, and was considering dropping the agency altogether, believing there was no use for it. The great fire helped convince them of the importance of fire safety and forest protection.

"The 1910 Fire was a major part of history. It burned over three million acres in three states, and the government wasn't sure they wanted to pay for the Forest Service any longer," Van Dorn said. "After the fire they realized that they needed an agency to control things like this from happening

and hopefully keep the timber and forests clean enough to keep that kind of devastation from happening again. The Forest Service would not be in existence if not for the fire. It was a big part of history and should be recognized as that."

The Chamber of Commerce and the Fire Committee are still accepting contributions and donations to the time capsule. If you have anything that you feel should go into the chamber, call Forest Van Dorn at 752-1294, or drop off donations to F & H Mine Supply or at the Chamber in Wallace.

The Press Thursday, September 1, 2011

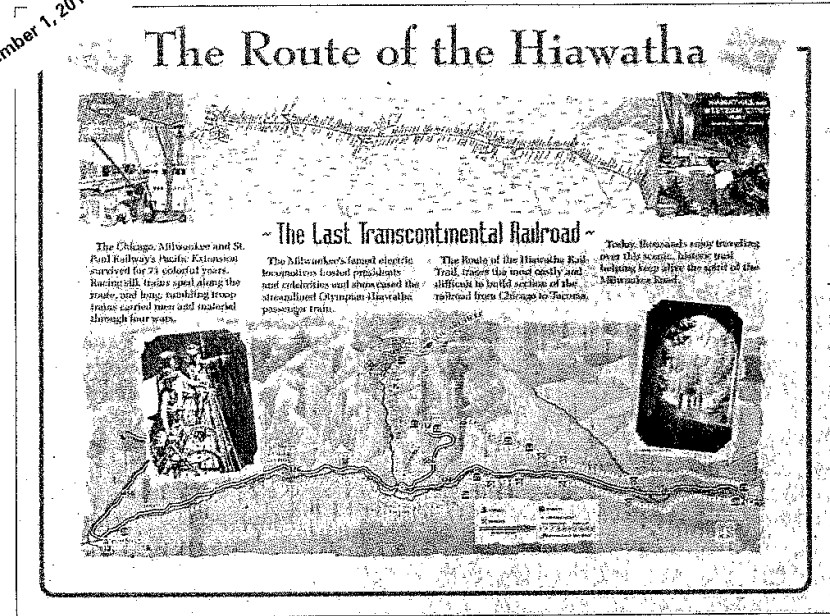


Image contributed by LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA

Graphic artist Grady Myers created interpretive historical signs along the Hiawatha and Pulaski Tunnel Trails. He died July 30.

National forest artist Myers remembered

By KELSEY SAINTZ
Hagadone News Network

Grady Myers wasn't like other artists.

"You hear about artists that have complexes and can be extremely difficult," said Dave O'Brien. "Well, Grady was the complete opposite."

O'Brien, operations team leader for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, worked with Myers while he created nearly 50 interpretive historical signs along the Hiawatha Trail. He also made artwork for the Pulaski Tunnel Trail, as well as a sign that's about to be installed in the Priest Lake area.

Myers, who had battled various medical issues for years, died July 30 at age 61.

He was born in New Mexico to an Air Force family that eventually settled in Boise. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and was awarded the

Purple Heart for injuries he sustained. He studied art at Boise State College and became a newspaper artist in the Spokane area. While working with O'Brien, his title was graphic information specialist for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. "Grady was a big man and he was just as gentle a giant as you'd ever know," O'Brien said. Although he often felt ill, he wouldn't admit to it. One day, O'Brien recalled, Myers didn't come to work. He and another co-worker went to his home, stood outside and called him on the phone. To their surprise, he picked up and let them in.

He was nearly bedridden, O'Brien said. After this incident, they arranged for him to have a disability retirement but still work on a contract basis. O'Brien visited him twice a week while he was in a local nursing home.

"I just couldn't let go of him," he said. "He was such a deserving guy."

The historical panels Myers created using computer software described the history of the railroad, the 1910 fire and other interesting tidbits along the way. His work on the Hiawatha was done in the late 1990s, and art on the Pulaski Tunnel Trail was complete in 2005.

Kent Wellner, Forest Service program manager, said Myers was sharp and talented.

"He made really, really neat artwork," he said. "It's one of the primary features of the trail."

Wellner said the trails are fun because of the scenery, but even if they only read a portion of those signs, you get a real sense of the history.

"To me, it doubles the whole Hiawatha Trail and communicates some of the things going on out there," he said.

Stories of Adventure

Trail of the Big Burn by Sasha Goldstein

Standing at the mouth of a dense forest, Placer Creek rambling by on a cloudless day, it's hard to imagine the scene 100 years prior here in Wallace, Idaho.

On Aug. 21, I headed to the historic town to hike the Pulaski Trail, a four mile roundtrip jaunt along the West Fork of Placer Creek to an end point at the Nicholson adit, the small mine shaft where Edward Pulaski, the famous Forest Service Ranger, saved 39 of his 45 men crew during The Big Blowup of 1910.

The Pulaski Trail, as it is known, wasn't well maintained until 2003, when the Pulaski Project began a plan to resurrect his crew's historic escape from the United States biggest forest fire. More than 3 million acres of forest burned that summer, approximately the size of Connecticut.

The forest has regrown in the intervening century but plenty of information filled plaques line the trail, making the hike not only good exercise but also an unbelievably fascinating history lesson.

I went in as somewhat of a novice in all things "Big Burn" and

Pulaski, but after my few hours on the trail I came out a self-proclaimed expert on said subjects. Did you know that the energy created by the two days of fire, during which 80 mile per hour winds gusted, was equivalent to a World War II-era atomic bomb going off every one to two minutes? Bam! A quick lesson from Professor Goldstein, courtesy of just one of the plaques.

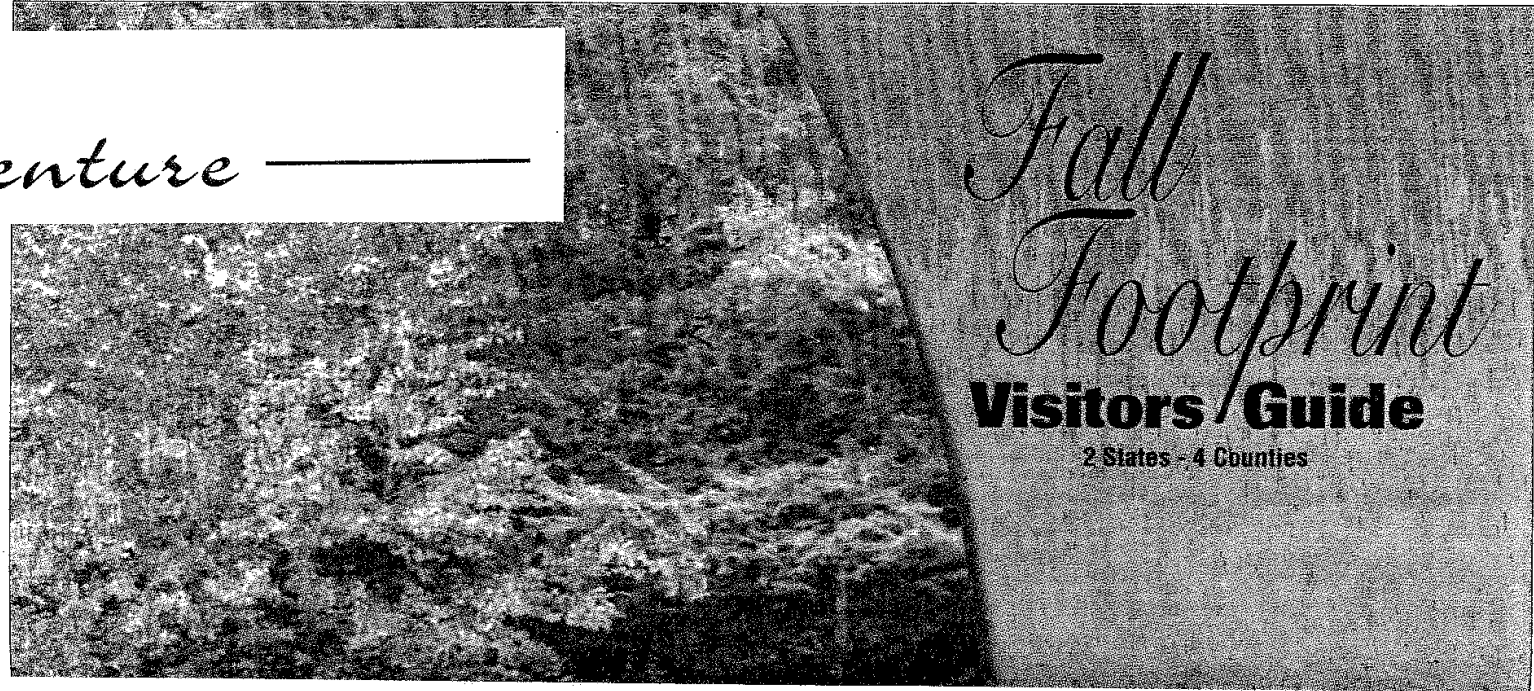
While the physical characteristics of the forest have changed, aside from the occasional burned tree trunk lining the trail, the enormity of the historical impact the fire had on Montana, Idaho and Washington weighed on my mind as I took in the sights, sounds and smells of the trail. I wasn't the only one who decided the 100-year anniversary would be a good time for the hike; the trailhead was jam-packed with cars, as was the trail, complete with people of all ages, wearing all manner of footwear.

The day also happened to be Wallace's annual huckleberry festival, so the town was teeming with tourists and locals taking to the streets on a beautiful day. That evening, the local Elks Club hosted a lecture by Timothy Egan, noted expert on the fires and author of "The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America." A large turnout came for the free speech and question and answer session, and according to my friend Denis Moran, who attended, Egan was lively, funny and extremely informative.

Part of what is so astounding about the hike is how adverse the conditions were these men survived in. Not only did Pulaski have these 45 men huddled in a 200 foot abandoned mine shaft, known as the Nicholson mine, he had to hold them in at gun point as several men threatened mutiny.

"I drew my revolver and said, 'The next man who tries to leave the tunnel I will shoot,'" Pulaski said in his journal, tidbits of which are quoted on plaques along the trail. "I

See BIG BURN on Page 3



BIG BURN/From 2

did not have to use my gun."

Knowing the firestorm outside would kill anyone instantly, Pulaski kept the men in the crowded shelter as trees fell and exploded above. A few puddles allowed Pulaski to soak blankets to put at the mouth of the mine, but the intensity of the fire burned the cloth and sucked much of the remaining oxygen out of the shaft. Unable to breath well, most men passed out from lack of oxygen, including Pulaski, whom his men believed to have died when most woke up in the morning. "The hell I am!" Pulaski bellowed as he heard the crew considered leaving. Five of the crew did not emerge, dead from some combination of smoke inhalation and pure exhaustion. A sixth man apparently died on the way to the adit, struck by a falling tree.

As they emerged from the tunnel, half-dead and parched, the men found Placer Creek so filled with ash and warm as to be undrinkable. The survivors, unable to walk, crawled themselves back several miles to Wallace, the town itself having been heavily damaged by the magnificent inferno.

Pulaski went on to serve with the Forest Service until 1930 and he died in 1931. The legendary ranger suffered serious injuries from the fire, including damage to his lungs and eyes; he reportedly was blinded for approximately two months and never had the same vision afterwards.

Most notably, Pulaski is known for creating

the tool that bears his name. A combination axe and hoe, the "Pulaski" is used world-wide by fire fighting crews, bearing the head of both tools and creating an invaluable piece of equipment to many. The tools align signposts along the trail, a fitting tribute to one of the legends of the Great Fire of 1910.

If you're looking for history and a beautiful hike, head to Wallace, located just off Interstate 90. Head south of town on Placer Creek Road, also known as Forest Development Road 456, until you run into the trailhead approximately a mile down the road. The trail gains 800 feet of elevation in two miles, and can take longer than a normal hike if you stop to read the many plaques and really enjoy the trail.

History prof gives talk on 1910 fire

DePaul University
scholar focuses
on refugees

By KELSEY SAINTZ
and KYLE SPURR
Hagadone News
Network

The summer of 1910 was dry and unusually hot, with temperatures often surpassing 90 degrees. Forest Service firefighters battled blazes throughout much of August, most of which were kept well under control.

On Aug. 20, 2010, ferocious winds that could reach 70 miles per hour in a single gust ventured north to the Silver Valley from the rolling Palouse hills of Idaho and Washington. The gusts blew straight through the wildfire-infested northern Rockies. Thousands of smaller fires under control by firefighters exploded.

Stories have been told for years about Forest Service ranger "Big Ed" Pulaski saving his crew in an abandoned mine tunnel. The 1910 Fire also spurred legislation and policies regarding wildfire management.

However, according to DePaul University scholar Thomas Krainz, the history of the 1910 Fire is missing an important element.

During a recent speech called, "Caring for Big Burn Refugees," the assistant history professor said he believes historians have focused on exciting escape stories and the impact on new national policies, but nothing about the thousands of

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2011

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

FIRE from A1

"The treatment of refugees, those who fled the fire constitute an important missing element from the story of the 1910 Fire," Krainz said. "I would argue this is a key element to the fire, because the fire was not just a fire on trees, it impacted the community."

While writing his book, "Delivering Aid: Implementing Progressive Era Welfare in the American West," Krainz came across several examples of refugees who were displaced due to fires or floods.

At that time, he discovered that people know little about how society cared for refugees. With a motivation to learn more, Krainz is working on four case studies to understand how different communities cared for refugees. The case studies will be combined to make his second book.

The 1910 Fire is one of Krainz' case studies and he said it was a difficult project to research. Krainz came to the region in 2007 for a week to research the Big Burn.

"I expected to have more official sources from city and county and state governments," Krainz said. "There was almost



Photo by KYLE SPURR

Scholar and history professor Thomas Krainz has been speaking about the 1910 Fire across the region this week, with his last presentation tonight in Sandpoint.

nothing. So everything had to be pieced together through newspaper articles and oral histories."

This week, Krainz has come back to the region to share his findings with the local communities.

Krainz is in the middle

of a speech circuit that has already taken him to Missoula, Superior and Coeur d'Alene. Krainz will wrap up his tour in Sandpoint and Segal tonight.

During his speech in Superior Tuesday night,

Krainz outlined his Big Burn case study.

Krainz began his talk with an overview of the 1910 Fire. More than 4,000 people became refugees when the fire hit the area, Krainz said.

Most of the refugees fled by train, and railroads sent relief trains to help evacuate the locals. However, Krainz said they didn't know which direction to run — which way was safe or dangerous.

Krainz used Wallace as an example. "People were fleeing Wallace while other people on the outskirts poured into Wallace."

The misinformation at the time caused problems, but Krainz said eventually the majority of refugees made it to two locations, Missoula and Spokane. Each town had about 1,200 refugees.

Missoula only had a few-hour warning before the first batch of 300 refugees from Wallace would pull into town by train. Nearly 900 more refugees followed, and yet Krainz said Missoula stayed extremely organized.

Without a strong local government at the time, Missoula businessmen were the ones to help the displaced people.

"What was ideal about the businessmen is that

they had exactly what the refugees needed," Krainz said. "The businessmen had access to money, housing and goods."

Through various fundraising, Missoula was able to help the refugees. The pattern of grassroots help was seen in other areas, but not in Spokane.

"Spokane decided not to provide any assistance at all," Krainz said. "They decided to wait and see."

Five days after the first refugees attempted help in Spokane, the town opened an eating house to feed 200 people. By the time Spokane reacted, all the other refugees left and it was too late to help.

"It's a mixed record for the 1910 Fire," Krainz said. "On one hand, it can be efficient and organized, but it can also be a disaster."

Despite the mixed record, Krainz said knowing exactly what happened to the refugees helps better understand the 1910 Fire. To bring the information back to the region is another goal altogether.

"I have this desire to bring what I do to the local communities," Krainz said. "Most scholars don't do that. They'll write an article and that's it."

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2012

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Hikers make use of Pulaski trail

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail, located just south of Wallace, Idaho on Moon Pass Road, has attracted hikers from across the nation and foreign countries. These visitors contribute to our local economy by purchasing goods and services while here.

Trail hikers may be visiting the area for any number of reasons. The trail, however, certainly has added to the valley's attractions for tourists and other visitors.

A register for hikers was installed on the trail in June, 2010. Since then, 19 months of registration data have been collected. The past year, 2011, was the first for which a full 12 months of data were available.

Not every hiker or group of hikers will 'sign in' at the register of course. Moreover, local hikers, who may sign-in once, are particularly likely to be underrepresented in the register data. Past trail use studies at other trail sites in the nation suggest as few as one in five trail users or parties may make use of the register. Yet, the data recorded can still give us a profile of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail's usage.



Photo courtesy of JIM SEE

A register for hikers, installed in June 2010, shows that only about one quarter of visitors to the Pulaski Tunnel Trail come from states in the west.

In 2011, 2,169 hikers, providing 723 registrations (sometimes representing a single hiker, other times groups of hikers), visited the trail. July recorded the highest trail use, at 533 hikers in 189 registrations. June followed with 412 hikers, followed in turn by August with 368. The lowest frequency of visits occurred in January, with seven hikers in three registrations followed by March with eight hikers.

The summer of 2010 was the celebrated centennial year of the Great Fire

of 1910. August of '10 saw the largest number of hikers ever recorded, at 1033 in 351 groups - or approximately 34 registered hikers per day. July of '10 saw 717 hikers in 266 registrations.

Hikers came from all parts of the United States and beyond. In 2011, Western states contributed most of them: Idaho (264), Washington (199), Montana (40), Oregon (32), and California (29). Yet visitors from these states represented only about a quarter of total trail use. The remaining

three-quarters of trail users came from a great variety of other states and foreign countries. Visitors, for example, came from as far as Florida, Maine, Alaska, and Hawaii. On busy days, a colorful array of license plate was often present in the trail parking lot. Fifteen countries of origin were noted in the registry: Canada, Denmark, Australia, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom, Colombia, France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Tahiti, and even Bhutan.

Winter users sometimes snowshoe the trail. In 2011, total hikers numbered 18 in February, 34 in November, and 30 in December.

see TRAIL, A6

TRAIL from A1

Winter snowshoe-using hikers compact the trail's snow cover making it possible for foot hikers to use it as well. Winter trail use treats hikers with the that season's special beauty and memorable ice formations along West Fork Placer Creek. In winter, leafless deciduous trees also improve some of the trail's vistas.

The hiker register also provides space for brief comments from visitors. About half of registrants leave comments. Virtually all comments were positive, many glowingly so. Words like "great," "awesome," "wonderful," and "amazing" recurred over and over again in the registry - totaling 141 appearances in 2011. Fifty-eight people wrote that they "had fun," "enjoyed it," or "loved it." "Beautiful" was offered about the trail by 52 register users. Exclamation points were not in short supply.

It is interesting to note that 50 hikers make reference to reading Tim Egan's The Big Burn or

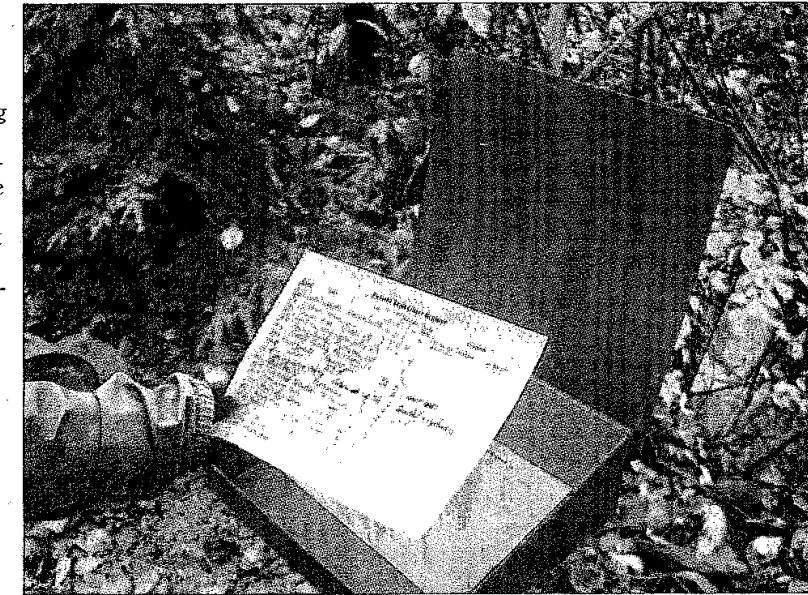


Photo courtesy of JIM SEE

The register has given a greater insight into the demographic of visitors traveling to the Pulaski Tunnel Trail.

otherwise indicated their historical or educational interest in the Pulaski Tunnel Trail. Forty-six hikers were kind enough to offer their thanks for the trail's creation, some directing their gratitude specifically to the U.S. Forest Service. Fourteen comments came from firefighters and/or forest service employees.

The two geo-caches (a GPS-oriented treasure hunt game) are located on the trail and at least five visitors indicated they searched these out.

The hikers of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail who 'sign-in' at the register have given an indication of the trail's use. This data will be used to guide future maintenance

and development of this important historic trail. Forest Service Deputy District Ranger Kimberly Johnson said: "The Pulaski Trail is one of the best recreational attractions we have on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, and we're especially proud that it attracts visitors from far and wide to enjoy the Silver Valley."

2012

Firemen's Blowout

Saturday, April 14

7:00 - 12:00

Wallace Elks Club

Ticket are \$20 per person

Music by AFTERMATH

Music & Dancing



- hors d'oeuvres
- no-host bar
- silent auction

Tickets can be purchased at your local fire station, Silver Valley and Wallace Chambers of Commerce and at the door (208) 556-1037 for info.

Proceeds to benefit the Shoshone County Fire Chiefs Maintenance Fund and Wildland Firefighters Foundation

Please join us for a fun-filled night of music, dancing and fun!

2012 Jim See

Hiker registrations provide Pulaski Tunnel Trail data

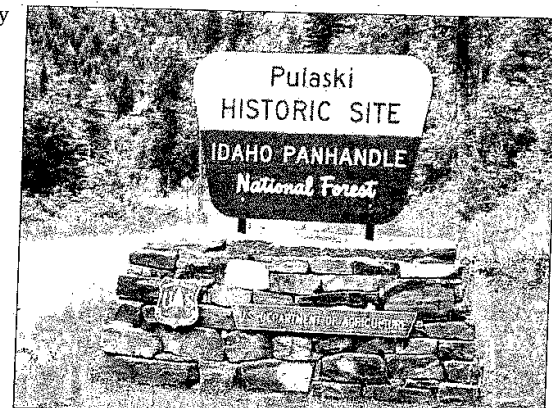
The Pulaski Tunnel Trail attracted hikers from across the nation and foreign countries last year.

A register for hikers was installed on the trail in June 2010. Since then, 19 months of registration data have been collected. 2011 was the first for which a full 12 months of data were available.

"The Pulaski Trail is one of the best recreational attractions we have on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, and we're especially proud that it attracts visitors

from far and wide to enjoy the Silver Valley," said Forest Service Deputy District Ranger Kimberly Johnson.

In 2011, 2,169 hikers, providing 723 registrations (sometimes representing a single hiker, other times groups of hikers), visited the trail. July recorded the highest trail use, at 533 hikers in 189 registrations. June followed with 412 hikers, followed in turn by August with 368. The lowest frequency of visits occurred in January, with seven hikers in three registrations fol-



Courtesy photo.

lowed by March with eight hikers. The summer of 2010 was the celebrated cen-

tennial year of the Great Fire of 1910. August 2010 saw the largest number of hikers ever recorded,

at 1,033 in 351 groups — about 34 registered hikers per day. July 2010 saw 717 hikers in 266 registrations.

Hikers came from all parts of the United States and beyond. In 2011, Western states contributed most of them: Idaho (264), Washington (199), Montana (40), Oregon (32) and California (29). Yet visitors from these states represented only about a quarter of total trail use. The remaining three-quarters of trail users came from a great variety of other states and foreign countries.

Winter users some-

times snowshoe the trail.

In 2011, total hikers numbered 18 in February, 34 in November and 30 in December. Winter snowshoe-using hikers compact the trail's snow cover making it possible for foot hikers to use it as well. Winter trail use treats hikers with the season's special beauty and memorable ice formations along West Fork Placer Creek.

Fifty hikers make reference to reading Tim Egan's *The Big Burn* or otherwise indicated their historical or educational interest in the Pulaski Tunnel Trail.

Shoshone News-Press Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Fireman's Blowout to rock Silver Valley

Shoshone County Fire Chiefs Association and the Pulaski Project are sponsoring a fundraising event benefitting the Chiefs Maintenance Fund and the Wildland Firefighters Foundation. Shawn Pearson, representing the Fire Chiefs said, "The proceeds from 'The Blowout' will help us maintain the memorials that were dedicated during the 2010 Commemoration of the 1910 Big Burn." In addition, 20 percent of the proceeds will go to the Wildland Firefighters Foundation, which honors and supports the families of those who have been killed in the course of protecting our lands,

our homes and our property.

The event is set for April 14, at the Elks in Wallace. There will be live music provided by the band AFTERMATH. There will be a no host bar, and finger food will be available. The music starts at 7:30. Tickets will be available at Shoshone County Fire Stations, Silver Valley Chamber Of Commerce offices and at the door. Tickets are \$20 each. It's a great excuse to blow the dust off your dancing shoes, and just have a good time. Pearson encourages the community to "banish cabin fever by meeting your friends for fun and dance the night away for a good cause."

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2012

Firemen's Blowout Dance is Saturday

The "Big Burn" of 1910 devastated 3 million acres of forest land in Idaho, Montana and Washington. At least 85 individuals perished, many of whom were firefighters trying to contain the epic fire. For 100 years, many policies were formed, generations of change were made and stories were told with relation to the events of the 1910 fire. On Aug. 21, 2010, a memorial was dedicated at the Wallace Visitor's Center along with the addition of interpretive signs. The signs tell the story and remember the sacrifices made by the fire fighters that perished.

The Shoshone County Fireman's Coop Association and Pulaski Project are sponsoring the second "Firemen's Blowout Dance" Saturday with proceeds going to maintain the memorial and the Wildland Fire Fighters Foundation in their mission of assisting families of fallen or injured firefighters. The event will be at the Wallace Elks, and doors open at 6:30 p.m. There will be dancing, drinks, food and fun, and the band "Aftermath" will keep the place rocking.

A silent auction including a signed Monte Dolack 1910-2010 Fire Commemoration Poster is just one of many items. Proceeds from this event will go to the maintenance of the firefighter memorial in Wallace and the Wildland Firefighters Foundation.

Please contact any fire station, Historic Silver Valley Chamber of Commerce, Historic Wallace Chamber of Commerce or call Klock Tower Antiques at 556-1037 if you want to use a credit card for tickets. The tickets for the dance and hors d'oeuvres are \$20 each and will also be sold at the door. You may also purchase a bottomless cup of beer for \$10 for until the kegs are gone. There is also a 50/50 raffle.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2012

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

See earns Orchid Award

By KELSEY SAINTZ
Staff writer

Jim See of Wallace has been awarded an "Orchid Award as a Friend of Preservation" from Preservation Idaho, an organization dedicated to preserving the state's historic and cultural resources through education and advocacy.

"It's always humbling to get an award," he said.

See spearheaded a local project to preserve and develop the Pulaski Tunnel Trail, spending almost a decade with both local volunteers and the U.S. Forest Service. The result has been the creation of a local, regional, and national landmark, an associated exhibit, and new asset for historical tourism and recreation in the Silver Valley.

"I'm glad we finally got it done," he said. "I think it's really neat and it's an asset to the Silver Valley."

He also worked with state and federal agencies to create both a 1910 fire memorial exhibit at the Wallace Visitors Center and an additional memorial at the Nine Mile Cemetery, where many who perished fighting the fire lay in rest. See was instrumental as well in bringing New York Times columnist and nationally acclaimed author Timothy Egan to speak at the dedication of the memorials and lecture on his historical volume about the fire, "The Big Burn."

"I think Jim See just about walks on water," said Shauna Hillman of the Historic Wallace Preservation Society. "He is a man of integrity and knowledge and patience."

The two have worked on various small projects.

"He cares and works hard to make things happen," she said. "... The Pulaski trail is drop-dead gorgeous."

see SEE, A2

SEE from A1

Wallace engineer Randy Knight works with See on the Wallace Stairs Project and said he didn't know too much about the Pulaski project, so he asked others how it went.

"I found out that Pulaski probably wouldn't have happened if not for his perseverance and presence," he said.

People informed him that See just kept writing letters regarding the project and really worked hard.

"He just had this vision of what would be great to do there ... and it eventually became a reality," he said.

Now retired from teaching, Jim and Linda See have restored and operate the historic "Beale House" as a local bed and breakfast. He has also worked to create a city park and informational signage at the former Wallace hospital site. He is currently at work on the Wallace Stairs Project and has now personally raised almost \$10,000 for the project.

"I think Wallace has such a history that there's all kinds of things we can do to preserve it," See said.

Additional information on the award can be found online at www.preservationidaho.org. The awards ceremony will be May 19 in Boise.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2012

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Fireman's Blowout Dance raises \$3,000 to help maintain 1910 Fire Memorial

After showing off their finest moves at the 2012 Fireman's Blowout Dance two weeks ago, the 1910 Fire Committee raised nearly \$3,000 to help maintain their memorial.

Committee members who organized the event would like to thank everyone that turned out for the dance, the businesses and individuals that donated, and to the firefighters in the community. The benefit dance raised \$2,800 for the committee.

Eighty percent of the proceeds will go into a perpetual maintenance fund for the 1910 Firefighters Memorial, which was constructed on the 100-year anniversary of the 1910 fire. The Shoshone County Chiefs Association is the governing board over this fund. They will allocate funding if damage is caused, or cleaning is needed to any of the structures. Over \$60,000 was originally raised to complete these memorials, and the Chiefs Association wants to keep them in great condition.



Photo by ZAK FAILLA

Kjell Truespell, Jim See, Shawn Pearson and Forest van Dorn present Scott Stovern (center) with \$346 at the 1910 Firefighters Memorial after he won the 50/50 raffle at the 2012 Fireman's Blowout Dance.

This fund allows them to do it.

The additional 20 percent of the proceeds will be donated to the Wildland Firefighters Foundation.

After the overwhelming success this year, the

committee has decided to make this fundraiser an annual event, with parts of the proceeds next year going to the Shoshone County Fire Prevention Co-op, to help with their school skit program and other educational

items. The cooperative is a dedicated group of a diverse membership that educates the public and targets the children of the Silver Valley. Their mission statement is "Fire prevention through education."

2012

PROGRESS

A special section of the Shoshone News Press

Hikers make use of Pulaski Trail

Centennial celebration of the Great Fire of 1910 saw the largest number of hikers ever recorded, at 1,033 in 351 groups

By ZAK FAILLA
Staff writer

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail, located just south of Wallace, Idaho on Moon Pass Road, has attracted hikers from across the nation and foreign countries. These visitors contribute to our local economy by purchasing goods and services while here.

Trail hikers may be visiting the area for any number of reasons. The trail, however, certainly has added to the valley's attractions for tourists and other visitors.

A register for hikers was installed on the trail in June, 2010. Since then, 19 months of registration data have been collected. The past year, 2011, was the first for which a full 12 months of data were available.

Not every hiker or group of hikers will 'sign in' at the register of course. Moreover, local hikers, who may sign-in once, are particularly likely to be under-represented in the register data. Past trail use studies at other trail sites in the nation suggest as few as one in five trail users or parties may make use of the register. Yet, the data recorded can still give us a profile of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail's usage.

In 2011, 2,169 hikers, providing 723 registrations (sometimes representing a single hiker, other times groups of hikers), visited the trail. July recorded the highest trail use, at 533 hikers in 189 registrations. June followed with 412 hikers, followed in turn by August with 368. The lowest frequency of visits occurred in January, with seven hikers in three registrations followed by March with eight hikers.

The summer of 2010 was the celebrated centennial year of the Great Fire of 1910. August of '10 saw the largest number of hikers ever recorded, at 1,033 in 351 groups - or approximately 34 registered hikers per day. July of '10 saw 717 hikers in 266 registrations.

Hikers came from all parts of the United States and beyond. In 2011, Western states contributed most of them: Idaho (264), Washington (199), Montana (199), California (29). Yet visitors from these states represented only about a quarter of total trail use. The remaining three-quarters of trail users came from a great variety of other states and foreign countries.

Visitors, for example, came from as far as Florida, Maine, Alaska, and Hawaii. On busy days, a colorful array of license plate was often present in the trail parking lot. Fifteen countries of origin were noted in the registry: Canada, Denmark, Australia, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom, Colombia, France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Tahiti, and even Bhutan.

Winter users sometimes snowshoe the trail. In 2011, total hikers numbered 18 in February, 34 in November, and 30 in December. Winter snowshoe-using hikers compact the trail's snow

cover making it possible for foot hikers to use it as well. Winter trail use treats hikers with the that season's special beauty and memorable ice formations along West Fork Placer Creek. In winter, leafless deciduous trees also improve some of the trail's vistas.

The hiker register also provides space for brief comments from visitors. About half of registrants leave comments. Virtually all comments were positive, many glowingly so. Words like "great," "awesome," "wonderful," and "amazing" recurred over and over again in the registry - totaling 141 appearances in 2011. Fifty-eight people wrote that they "had fun," "enjoyed it," or "loved it." "Beautiful" was offered about the trail by 52 register users. Exclamation points were not in short supply.

It is interesting to note that 50 hikers make reference to reading Tim Egan's *The Big Burn* or otherwise indicated their historical or educational interest in the Pulaski Tunnel Trail. Forty-six hikers were kind enough to offer their thanks for the trail's creation, some directing their gratitude specifically to the U.S. Forest Service. Fourteen comments came from firefighters and/or forest service employees.

The two geo-caches (a GPS-oriented treasure hunt game) are located on the trail and at least five visitors indicated they searched these out.

The hikers of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail who 'sign-in' at the register have given an indication of the trail's at the register have given an indication of the trail's at the register have given an indication of the trail's

at the register have given an indication of the trail's at the register have given an indication of the trail's at the register have given an indication of the trail's

"The Pulaski Trail is one of the best recreational attractions we have on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, and we're especially proud that it attracts visitors from far and wide to enjoy the Silver Valley."

Kimberly Johnson,
Forest Service Deputy District Ranger

use. This data will be used to guide future maintenance and development of this important historic trail.

Forest Service Deputy District Ranger Kimberly Johnson said: "The Pulaski Trail is one of the best recreational attractions we have on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, and we're especially proud that it attracts visitors from far and wide to enjoy the Silver Valley."

Pulaski a huge part of history

By SYD ALBRIGHT
Special to the News-Press

The most devastating fire in Idaho history swept across the northern "Panhandle" part of the state in August 1910.

Edward C. Pulaski was an amazing part of that story.

He is remembered as a hero of the U.S. Forestry Service, inventor of a firefighting tool, and is honored by having a trail and a mountain named after him.

He might never have been known beyond his lifetime had it not been for the Great Fire of 1910. In the face of fiery death, he became a hero.

Elers Koch, Lolo Forest Supervisor at the time, tells the story of the big fire succinctly when he wrote about it 30 years later:

"Then came that fateful 20th of August. For two days the wind blew a gale from the southwest. All along the line, from north of the Canadian boundary south to the Salmon, the gale blew.

"Little fires picked up into big ones. Fire lines which had been held for days melted away under the fierce blast...

"The sky turned a ghastly yellow, and at four o'clock it was black dark ahead of the advancing flames.

"The heat of the fire and the great masses of flaming gas created great whirlwinds which mowed

down swaths of trees in advance of the flames."

"Big Ed" Pulaski was in the middle of it.

Snowfall in the winter of 1909-10 was normal, but the summer drought started early. Spring didn't bring out the green, and small fires began popping up in June throughout the area. By July, the heat was stifeling, with southeast winds from the Columbia plains burning up the crops. Lightning strikes made things worse. The Northern Pacific Railway laid off more than 3,000 workers because of crop failures in the area.

By July 15, 3,000 men were brought in from Spokane, Butte and Missoula to back up the local firefighters. There wasn't enough equipment to go around, so axes, shovels, saws and other items were acquired from local stores.

The town of Wallace in the heart of the Silver Valley lay right in the path of the sweeping fires. A third of the town was reduced to ashes.

About three miles south, Ed Pulaski and his crew of 45 men were trapped by the fire, with flames racing ever closer.

Pulaski's years of patrolling the forest paid off. He knew of two old prospector tunnels near the Nicholson Mine. The safest would be the larger one. With a wet gunny sack over his head, he raced through the heat to find the tunnel. Then he

returned to lead his men to the tunnel and safety.

One man fell behind on the way and was consumed by the fire. The rest of the men and two horses made it into the tunnel. Many of the men panicked and wanted to run. Pulaski pulled out his revolver and threatened to shoot anyone who tried to leave. He then ordered everyone to lie flat on the ground.

When the flames reached the tunnel, smoke filled the area. All the men were overcome by the smoke and lost consciousness. Five of his crew in the tunnel died, but the rest survived, including the two horses. When it was all over, the Big Fire destroyed three million acres and five towns, killing nearly a hundred people.

Pulaski was a hero, and continued to live in the area until his death in 1931, at age 63.

His quick thinking and forceful leadership in saving the lives of 39 of his men is not his only legacy, however.

Developing sophisticated firefighting equipment and techniques in those days were still a work in progress. But Pulaski made his contribution. He created a new firefighting tool by combining an axe head with a mattock blade and attaching it to a handle.

His invention is still in use today, and in his honor is called the "Pulaski Tool."

laski Tool."

Thousands of visitors hike the Pulaski Trail each year to see the tunnel where that heroic drama took place more than a century ago.

Mount Pulaski, a 5,480-foot peak 1.5 miles southwest of Wallace, was named to honor his memory.

An official report of the Great Fire described Pulaski thus:

"Mr. Pulaski, who is about forty years of age, is a man of most excellent judgment, conservative, thoroughly acquainted with the region, having prospected throughout the burned area during the last twenty-five years and is considered by the old-timers in the region as one of the best and safest men that could have been placed in charge of a crew of men in the hills."

The hero of the Great Fire of 1910 and his wife, Emma, lay buried side by side in Coeur d'Alene, Forest Cemetery, Section E, Block 40, Lot 6.

There's a saying that if someone is still being talked about a hundred years after their death, that person has earned a place in history. They will still be talking about Big Ed Pulaski long after 2031.

Syd Albright is a producer/writer/journalist who lives in Post Falls. He is chairman of the Kootenai County Historic Preservation Commission.