



The Dixie Ranger

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FOREST SERVICE ORAL HISTORIES

By James L. McConnell

In September we were fortunate enough to have Carol Severance, FS Historian in Durham, NC, and Gerald Williams, Historical Analyst in the WO, come to Atlanta to give a small, but select group training in taking oral histories. There is a vast store of knowledge walking around in the heads of Forest Service retirees. Many of us feel it should be captured on tape for future generations. The Forest Service is rapidly changing, many feel, to accommodate the needs of current feelings about forests, wildlife needs, ecosystems, diversity and whatever. We were fortunate to work for the Forest Service when we were meeting the real needs of a growing nation and that we left things better than they were. Unless this story is told, put on tape and left for future historians, no one will know the real story.

Since the training, and when this was written, we have gathered three hours in an interview with Paul H. Russell. Also, in talking about the project to others, I have been promised tapes of the naval stores project in south Georgia and north Florida and a short existing interview of Harry Rossoll, with whom we were too late to record a full-blown interview. Wouldn't that have been great? Sometimes you have to take whatever you are given.

Getting a good oral history interview takes work. The person being interviewed has to have time to collect his or her thoughts. We all tend to forget names and names are important. Given a little time most of us can remember names and places. The Forest History Society wants stories that tell what, and when we did things. They want to know what the land looked like before we put trees back on it. How did we work out the problems of planting different kinds of trees. Since R-8 planted more trees than the other regions put together, this is an important story. People we worked with and how they got the job done. How was wildlife re-introduced? How did we fight the big and small fires? These are only a few of the many items of interest.

The Southern Forest Service Retirees Association's oral history project is off to a good start. The Board of Directors has put a generous contribution in the budget for next year so we know there is support for the project. We need your help. If you want to partake in the project by either being an interviewer or interviewee, let me know. In the best Forest Service tradition, we'll work out a way to get the job done. Your stories and experiences are welcome. James L. McConnell, 3699 Wentworth Ln, Lilburn, GA 30047 phone: 770.923.1681 or elanjim@bellsouth.net

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
January 1 through December 31, 1999

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>1999 Actual</u>
Printing	\$1,600.00	\$1,437.06
Postage	700.00	492.78
Door Prizes	200.00	198.00
Misc. *	<u>700.00</u>	<u>**786.31</u>
TOTAL	\$3,200.00	\$2,914.15

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2000

Printing	\$1,600.00
Postage	600.00
Door Prizes	200.00
Misc.***	300.00
Interviews	<u>175.00</u>
TOTAL	\$2,875.00

- Misc: * \$500 National FS Museum Lifetime Membership
\$200 for FSX WO - Web Page
- Misc: ** Actual expenses: NFS Museum, file cabinet, new checks, service charge by bank, FSX WO Web Page, ink cartridge
- Misc:***\$100 FSX Club
\$100 National FS Museum contribution
\$ 30 ink jet cartridge
other-unanticipated expenses

Projected income for 2000

366 members - only 180 owe dues for 2000 @ \$8.00	\$1,440.00
Carryover from 1999	<u>\$5,812.65</u>
TOTAL	\$7,252.65



Luncheon Dates for 2000

March 9

June 8

September 14

December 14

You may wish to record these dates on your calendar now.

Our March 9 luncheon will be at the Petite Auberge restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center on North Druid Hills Road. We meet at 11:30 a.m. for a time of fellowship before lunch. Lunch is served at 12 noon. The cost of the luncheon is \$10 per person. Reservations are required, so please call either the Bray's at 770.253.0392 or Peaches Sherman at 770.253.7480. Reservations should be made no later than Tuesday, March 7th. Hope to see you there.

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National Forests in Florida Old Smokey Reunion

The 10th anniversary will be celebrated at this reunion on April 15, 2000. Those interested in attending may contact Joann Webb, 1715 Hall dr., Tallahassee, FL 32303, phone: 850.385.4510 or Bud Dugger, 638 Arran Rd, Crawfordville, FL 32327. Your name will be added to the mailing list when the notices are sent out about the middle of March.



Letters from our Members

Jim Morphew - Glenwood, AR - I seldom write to you folks, but I do want you to know how much I enjoy reading about the "lives of friends - after the Forest Service." Bob Neeland's "yarns" are always entertaining, as well as many of the others that you publish.

John Chaffin - Green Valley, AZ - Here are my '00 dues and a big thanks for your continued good editor work.

We've had a good year thanks mainly to Sue's outstanding recovery from a brain tumor operation 13 months ago.

I recently completed 4 ½ years as a volunteer guide at the Titan II Missile Museum here in Green Valley, the only known missile museum in the world. It's an ICBM and the big question is always, "What was the target?" Stop by and you'll get a special tour.

I see Neil Opsal at FS retirees meetings here in Tucson. Neil worked in RO-Personnel in early '60's. Some of you may remember him.

Jim Page – Smyrna, NC – Enclosed are my dues for 2000. Has the Association considered a lifetime membership? The Eastern Region's Association has one, and a number of us have gone for it thinking we will be around long enough to make it worthwhile. If we aren't, it won't make much difference anyway. Just something to think about.

Sarah and I survived another season on hurricane alley. It was tough both mentally and physically with 3 hurricanes and a major tropical storm. I think I am getting too old for that kind of mess. It was extremely gratifying though, to hear from so many of our Forest Service friends across the country who called to express concern about our well being.

Thanks again for the fantastic job you folks do on *The Dixie Ranger*. Every issue is a jewel.

(Editors note: At one time we did have a lifetime fee because I still have two people on the mailing list under that category. I'll go back and check the By-Laws to see when we adopted the lifetime fee and will let you know in the next issue).

John Boren – Alexandria, LA – Hi fellow Forest Service folks. If you are reading this Y2K didn't get the Ranger. Have been rereading the November issue and realized that I haven't written in a while. Also, with the holiday season here, we have been reminded of our many friends from the past from the Christmas cards that have been coming to the house. Cards from the Beasleys, the Prices, Finison, Blomstrums and others. Had a phone call from Melvin Hopkins, hardly anyone knew who Melvin was, but everyone knew "Hoppy". Sure brings back some most pleasant memories. Let me share one with you now.

Don Blackburn's "Preacher was My Teacher" finally told me where Don got, at least in part, his even temperament, patience, and his ability to get along with the most unpleasant folks on his District, the Evangeline. Don was the DR on the Evangeline when I came to work in November '63 as the first and only special agent. The Evangeline and the Vernon were the two "hottest" Districts in the entire Forest Service for intentionally set fires. During Spring time, usually around Easter, there would be hundreds of sets during a single day. However, the Forest Service would just plow many sets together and class them as one "fire", I guess to keep it from looking so bad. Under the law each set was a felony crime. Arson was the primary reason Region 8 was hiring professional, trained investigators. We spent a lot of time working on those.

The local residents were very closed mouthed and clannish. They didn't understand that everyone just "loved" the Forest Service. This made the investigations very

difficult. It also rankled the locals to be questioned about who set the fires. One local, a rather tough old lady who ran a local kinda honky tonk, threatened to shoot Don if he didn't stop harassing her clients. (Some of them were the major suspects—a couple of her sons included). I'm sure Don will know who I'm talking about. Anyway, I went to the local district attorney about her threats. He asked if she had shot Don. Told no, he said well if she shoots him to come back and we could talk about it. We really weren't the beloved we thought we were.

The other major effort of the times was getting the livestock, mainly cattle, under permit. The Evangeline was selected as the District to put forth the primary effort. This was to be done in stages. First year tell 'em about the program. Second year issue and get permits signed and the third year, enforce. Remember the local residents had been grazing cattle on the Forest Service for ever for free. There were several local residents who were the main suspects for the fires, who also ran large herds of cattle.

There were also the baddies who were the most influential in the District community. One of my assignments was to go with Ranger Don when he visited some of the baddest of the bad. When we first visited the senior elder, the leader of the clan, he really lit into Don. Don being the gentle, gentleman he was explained the program to Mr. M. The entire time this guy cussed, berated and was most obnoxious. He called Don cuss words I've never heard. That is something seeing how I spent a career in the military and law enforcement.

Now to the point of this story. Not once during this entire episode did Don do or say anything but, yes, I understand your feelings. Yes, I know that you and your friends do not like the Forest Service's programs and apparently me. But we are going to get the cattle under permit. We hope for your assistance. As we visited others, we ran into the same opposition with usually the same language. Don just never rose to the bait they placed before him. Ultimately, the cattle were placed under permit. It was done with a minimal of real problems. I firmly believe that Don's quiet demeanor, his firm stand, and the fact that they couldn't rile him made them realize we were serious and it was going to be done. Don's learning from the Preacher paid off big.

Ed Ellenberg - Fairfield Glade, TN - Your call for delving into our memories is bringing excellent results. This little story is going to lay the ground work for a future episode about the great Under-Secretary of Agriculture caper.

Those of you who knew Gil Stradt, the Supervisor of the Cherokee NF in the early 60's, knew he was a no-nonsense type of guy. One time, Lew Whipple came up from the RO to put on some kind of a training session about conducting training sessions or meetings. Each member of the forest staff was given an assignment to cover different aspects of the training. My assignment was on being prepared.

My bright (?) idea was to start my session with excuses about how I was too busy with other important projects to prepare and I really didn't know the subject. Then, of course, I was going to give some points on preparation.

About three-quarters of the way through my introduction of not being prepared, Gil interrupted. He wanted to know what the hell was wrong with me. I had known the meeting was coming up in plenty of time and this was just as important, if not more so, than anything else I had to do, etc., etc. Well, he made my point a little before I had planned. I don't know if it affected anyone else but it sure made a lasting impression on me for being prepared. I also learned two other things; one Gil Stradt was a no-nonsense Forest Supervisor and two; maybe I should have considered an acting career.

Odom McDaniel, Jr. - Edmond, OK - Enclosed are my dues for two more years. Please note that Dona and I have a new address. We moved into Oklahoma City, but are still served by the Edmond Post Office.

Last spring we passed title to my father's old homeplace near Kentwood, LA, to a second cousin who lives in that community. We had the privilege of being the custodians of this forest property for 28 years, but the 4-6 trips each year became too much of a burden. The land was sold to my great-grandfather William McDaniel in 1856 to settle his father-in-law's estate. It has been held in our family continuously since that time.

One of the highlights of serving in the Kisatchie SO (1961-1973) was getting to work with the Research and State and Private people assigned to the Alexandria Forestry Center in Pineville. All three branches of the FS were located at this one site. The Range Management Research scientists there were Henry Pearson and Harold Grelen, both now retired.

Henry played a key role in establishing the Southern Forest Heritage Museum at Long Leaf, LA, near Alexandria. This sawmill was begun in 1892 and operated until 1969. The Crowell family donated the 57-acre complex so it could be preserved for posterity. I'd recommend a visit there to anyone interested in sawmilling and forestry.

I learned recently through a talented new feature writer on the OKC newspaper staff (Jay Grelen) that his parents were still living in Pineville. The young man said Harold has experienced health problems but is now improving. Harold's son caused me to realize that there are probably hundreds of good, even outstanding, younger men and women who grew up in a R-8 Forest Service household and today are productive citizens of their community.

Guess I'd better close with a reminder that it has been 14 years since you and I spent part of our last day with the Forest Service (1/3/86) sharing a meal with Bert, Dick Woody and wife, and L.C. and Ellie Nix at the Nix' home on Lake Lanier. Happy retirement anniversary and best wishes in the year 2000.

Bob Thatcher – Enclosed is my check to cover dues for the years 2000 and 2001. We look forward to and so enjoy *The Dixie Ranger*. Kudos to you for assembling and sharing all the wonderful letters, stories and other information. One of these times, we will jump in the car and come to one of the luncheons in Atlanta.

As you might suspect, this has been another busy year. One of the weekly joys I have is in meeting with other Forest Service employees, retirees and volunteers for breakfast at the Tastee-Diner in west Asheville every Friday morning. A lot of stories are shared and we have a great time together. I continue to be involved in the Southern Appalachian Men and Biosphere program which involves federal and state agencies, universities, the business community, some communities and yes, other federal retirees. I am still secretary for the Cooperative's Board of Directors. We get involved in a lot of activities relating to cultural and historic norms (?), watersheds, and sustainable development.

I also am active in the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE). Members (550+) of our chapter in Asheville have asked me to serve for another year as president and I have volunteered as a trained person at our Federal Retirees Service Center which serves federal retirees and their families in western North Carolina. After a 10-year struggle, state and federal government retirees in North Carolina or their surviving spouses are getting a tax refund from the State for the years 1989-1997. Starting in 1998, we no longer are subject to state income taxes on our retirement income. Things are looking up!

I continue to do something in a more active way than I was able to while employed—being more involved in my church. I serve as Secretary for our United Methodist Mens' group and pitch in on one of its cooking teams. I also help with ushering, congregational care ministry, Hurricane Floyd relief and whatever else time permits.

You might ask what do you do in your "spare time". Well, we take occasional trips to see family members in New York, Ohio, Nebraska and Texas. I also like to give illustrated talks on birds to garden and service clubs. I get a kick out of serving as a judge at the Transylvania County math and science fair in February.

We had a special occasion this year—the celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary. It was done in two steps here in Asheville. First, we had a family reunion in August so that grandchildren could come before school started. It was the first time in 14 years that all of our 4 children and their children were able to be here with us in one place at one time. My 92-year-old mother also attended from Harlingen, Texas. And my wife's two sisters and two of their children came from

New York, Ohio and Arizona. Our younger daughter's in-laws and their family came too. What a wonderful time! Then, we celebrated our real anniversary by holding an open house for local friends and neighbors in early September. Nearly 50 people came and there was plenty of food, drink and good times. I was fearful that our deck would collapse since the weather was perfect and everyone migrated outside. It was great.

Well, I have gone on at length and should stop. But I wanted to share our wonderful year with others.

Joann Webb - Tallahassee, FL - My daughter and husband were home from Australia in September. It was a great visit - can't believe she has been married a year. Son Robert made Chief in Coast Guard in June and he and family are back in Alaska for three years. This is their second tour up there—they love it! So I have some great traveling ahead.

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Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, once managed by TVA, has now been transferred to the Forest Service. The 170,000-acre NRA, with its outstanding facilities includes a living history farm, a horse camp, several hundred developed camping sites, a planetarium, an elk and bison range, and 250 miles of shoreline on Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake. Many of the employees of TVA were detailed to the Forest Service on October 1.

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Forest Supervisor Takes Chief to Task for Remarks

Several of our retirees sent me the following letter and asked that *The Dixie Ranger* publish the letter to keep our members informed of major problems as well as programs of the Forest Service. With permission from former Forest Supervisor of the Siskiyou National Forest, J. Michael Lunn, this letter to the Chief is printed for your information.

"I read the Portland *Oregonian* article by Bill Monroe on Sunday, June 27, 1999, and have been stewing about it ever since. So I decided to follow the model of Deputy Chief Furnish, and communicate directly with you about my concern.

"I have been a deeply committed employee of the Forest Service for 31 years, and have been Supervisor of the Tongass, Siskiyou, and Rogue River National Forests for the past 12 years. Most of those years, I have received "Outstanding" performance ratings, and I have dealt with some of the thorniest issues facing the agency. But this isn't about tooting my own horn.

"The vast majority of line officers across the Forest Service at Ranger District, Forest, and Regional levels very much support our Natural Resource Agenda. It feels to us that it represents the culmination, our strategic packaging, of work that

was begun a decade ago or longer to change how we manage these precious lands. New Perspectives, the Tongass Land Management Plan, President's Plan for the Pacific NW, ICBEMP; all these have been steps on the journey that preceded your being selected as Chief. The stage was set, and we applaud and acknowledge your leadership in our agency vision. I personally spend considerable time working towards improved stream conditions through my involvement with the National Riparian Service Team; so I cheer on articles such as the one in the *Oregonian* in that context.

"But at the same time, I am deeply offended and frustrated by the continuing characterizations by you and members of your staff that the folks who hold line officer positions in the field are either incompetent or unmanageable. The following quotes are typical of a pattern I've seen in your speeches, whereby blame is transferred to me and others in my position elsewhere for not getting all the problems solved.

" 'Dombeck's opportunity to forge change is far from a dream in the politics-ridden, decentralized agency. Nearly half of his old-guard employees will be eligible for retirement in the next few years...'

" 'People don't want dirty water, no matter what their political persuasion', Sedel said, adding that eventually Dombeck's staff of regional, forest, and district managers will toe the new line. 'We have some people who need to retire' he said.

" 'Can this non-forester, non-timber bureaucrat with the clean water dream bring his staff of thousands into the arena of a water-purified 21st century? After all, ranger districts and individual forests, even forest service regions, are typically independent of mandates from the Washington Beltway. Dombeck clearly understands the challenge. 'How many children do you have?' he asked wryly'. Is that patronizing, or what?

"Those kinds of comments send a clear message that older line officers are not valued by this agency. At worst, they are age-based discrimination, at best they are merely stereotype denigration. But I can tell you, they hit me right in the heart. Partially because of this kind of lack of respect, I have announced my retirement at the end of this year (hold the applause) several years earlier than I had planned. I feel like I have in the past and continue today in providing solid conservation leadership in this agency, even through some tough times. I plan to continue working to restore streams, and helping communities in the West to work together to solve problems with their natural resources and economies.

"Perhaps the worst part of this, though, is the barrier that it creates to implementing some things that we all believe to be the right thing to do. A disenfranchised leadership at the regional, forest and district level cannot be nearly as successful as we could if we were working as a Forest Service team. But we obviously do not have that team environment at this time. If I am not doing what you expect, I would prefer candid and honest feedback from you through my Regional Forester, or even directly, as what you do expect rather than reading about it in newspapers. We teach that in our lowest level supervision courses and I expect more of Forest Service leaders. If you really want to accomplish the things you talk about, I believe there is a better way of moving the agency ahead than continuing this divisive approach.

"Last, our emphasis on Civil Rights has been a shining light to me, and demands accountability. If one of my employees made the statements you and Mr. Sedell made I would sit down with them and counsel them on treating people with respect and not making discriminatory statements linking performance management to how close a person is to retirement.

"I hope you will accept this as my effort to help the Forest Service be the outstanding conservation agency in the world. When I leave it at the end of the year, it will be with a lot of pride both in the work I have done, and the Agency and publics I have served."

The following is a second letter to the Chief.

"Thank you for the telephone call you initiated to discuss the letter I wrote to you last week in which I expressed concerns for what I felt were disparaging statements about senior line officers in the Forest Service. While I doubt that either of us felt particularly satisfied by the conversation, I do appreciate your willingness to be direct and candid with me, and to allow me to be the same with you. I was heartened by your commitment to take this issue seriously, and to work with all of us to improve the way we treat each other in the Forest Service. As I told you, my purpose in writing the letter was to help begin a process of bringing people together, and to eliminate the divisiveness that I have observed since you became Chief, so that we can jointly work towards accomplishing the important agenda that you have so well presented to the American people.

"Since talking to you, I have re-read some of Jeff Sirmon's work on leadership that he teaches in our course "Leadership - Mobilizing People to Act." The first part of leadership he describes is the vision; we have that in our Natural Resources Agenda, and commitment to Civil Rights. The second part of leadership though, is in causing work to be done that leads us toward the vision. He further defines the work of a leader as 'facing, defining, and solving of problems in non-routine situations.' This is the work I offered to help with.

"When we were talking on Monday, you said that you were unaware of the strong feelings that many line officers such as myself felt about things they had read or heard from you and members of your staff. You invited me to continue helping to bring this issue into the open where you could effectively deal with it, and not let it lay around and simmer. While I'm sure there is a diversity of opinion on this issue within the agency, I spoke with some confidence that many people shared the feelings I expressed, and that it was damaging to our ability to perform effectively as line officers. If the perception of the public is that the line officers are unmanageable, out of line with agency policy, or independent to the detriment of agency success, then the Agency cannot be successful regardless of how visionary the individual leader might be. The 'work' of leadership cannot be done. Included as part of this letter are many of the responses I have received from people across at least four regions of the Forest Service, which gives additional emphasis to the concerns I expressed.

"While I trust your word that you encourage and value candid feedback, I have chosen to eliminate identification from the quoted responses because I have not asked people for permission to include their notes that were written personally to me. I have saved copies of each, however. I also realize that most people in the Forest Service probably have not read the letter; I've been mildly surprised at the extent and speed of distribution throughout the Agency. I did not exclude any note that differed with the opinions and feelings I expressed; as of this writing, there were none. The few I did not include were ones who might be easily identified because of the position/statements they made, and I was concerned that sharing could be detrimental to their future opportunities.

"One thing I hope does not happen would be any distraction from the important work we have to do on behalf of the American people. I know there is some risk in undertaking this kind of Agency dialogue that the rhetoric could overwhelm the objectives I seek: a Forest Service that is truly one in carrying out our mission, and one in which all employees are respected and valued. I am aware that you have basically ignored or not heard earlier counseling from some good folks that this was an issue, and that it was detrimental to conducting our work. A note to that extent is included below, and I have heard the same from others. You and your advisors may choose to discount my concerns and those others have expressed as simply the rebellion of the 'old guard.' I hope you won't. In the *Operation Respect* module I have taught at I-420, there is an excellent slogan that applies to this situation: 'What you permit, you promote.' Age bias and disrespect have occurred, and it needs to be corrected!

"We have a proud history as an agency that 'can do.' We have a large reservoir of line officers who very much want to be successful in implementing our Natural Resources Agenda. We will either do it together, or it won't get done. There is only one Forest Service, not one with good ideas and vision, and another independent one which ignores direction. As I told you Monday, you cannot accept the credit for the good things and pass blame on to others for the things you don't like. In good times and bad, sometimes with a lot of warts, you're Chief of the whole Forest Service. And I wouldn't want to have spent my career in any other organization in the world."

The following are quotes that Supervisor Lunn received after his June 30 letter to the Chief:

"Mike, thank you for saying the things that many of us are feeling."

"Hey Mike, your letter was right on! Now whether he heard is another discussion...or cared."

"Mike, your letter to the Chief finally made its way to my desk. I applaud you for saying in writing what so many of us have said in private."

"Just read your letter to Mr. Dombeck. Well said, and rightly done. I have absolutely boiled over some of this stuff. I appreciate that you said the things you said."

"Mike, just read your letter to Dombeck and appreciated your remarks, surely you have shared the feelings of thousands of USFS employees and I applaud your efforts."

"Mike, I just read your June 30 letter to the Chief. I want to thank you for taking time and effort to put on paper the thoughts and feelings so many of long tenured Forest Service employees have."

On July 30, 1999, Chief Mike Dombeck sent the following letter to all employees:

It has become apparent to me that some veteran Forest Service employees feel that I do not respect and honor them for what they have contributed during their careers. Nothing could be further from the truth. But, often perception becomes reality. I accept the responsibility for not effectively imparting my respect and appreciation. I will do better. I often reflect on the past as I try to keep the seemingly immense challenges and frustrations of today in perspective. I'd like to share a few thoughts with you.

July 1, 1889, 101 years and one month ago, was Gifford Pinchot's first day as Chief of the Division of Forestry. Much like today, he and the fledgling agency faced daunting challenges. The great forests of the Appalachian Mountains and the northeast to Minnesota were gone. Competition between cattle and sheep grazers was fierce and much of the western range lands had been decimated. Watersheds were impaired. There was little public support or understanding of the importance of forest and grassland management and the politics were chaotic and controversial. Pinchot and his new employees began building what would become the best conservation organization in the world.

The depression of the 1930's brought poverty and unemployment to millions, while the great drought, compounded by unsustainable land use practices, resulted in massive soil erosion. During this time of great stress, the Forest Service stepped forward and helped make the Civilian Conservation Corps program a success while restoring the health of the land. World War II and postwar prosperity came with greatly increased timber demand. Forest Service employees adapted to meet the challenge of the day, did what was expected of them, and did it very well.

The last two decades have dictated that the Forest Service change to correspond to the direction of new laws passed by Congress, court cases, changing public values, new scientific information, better informed citizens wanting to be more involved, increasing public use of National Forests, a declining Federal workforce, and a flat or declining budget. Steering through this period of turmoil will require the very best that each of us has to offer. Our predecessors faced transitions that were just as enormous and frustrating and traumatic.

The Natural Resources Agenda articulates our direction into the 21st century. The Agenda is a "returning to our roots." It is based upon the years of experience and innovation of Forest Service employees. It is built on the Forest Service legacy. I know that we, in keeping with Forest Service tradition, will get the job done.

When I decided to enter public service, the Forest Service was my choice. I loved the woods. As a youngster growing up in the Chequamegon's Hayward District, I spent many hours listening to the stories of Forestry Technician George Dieckman in the West Fork Lookout Tower, which was less than a half mile from my home. As a new Forest Service employee, I was mentored by longtime employees that I respected and admired. Now, some 40 years later I can still recall many of George's stories about forest fires, wildlife, logging, the CCC and how northern Wisconsin's forests were in better shape than in earlier years. Today, the same forests are even healthier because of veteran Forest Service employees like George.

To be the conservation leaders of the next century, we must pull together and focus our energy. We need to harness the strength and resilience of diversity including age, experience, discipline, background, culture, gender, and race. The diversity of views and constructive discussion within the Forest Service is healthy. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions. To succeed today, the Forest Service needs the absolute best from all its members. My goal is to do the best job I can for the land, for the people who care for and depend on the land, and for the Forest Service. I ask each of you to communicate and coordinate in a manner that enhances morale and increases efficiency. We all have a shared responsibility. I will do the best that I can. Thank you for all you do for the health of the land and for the Forest Service."

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IN MEMORIAM

Elwyn F. "Al" Peffer - Portland, Oregon, formerly of Atlanta, died at the age of 78 on January 1, 2000. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He received Bachelor's degrees from Syracuse University and Montana State University. In 1961 Al moved to Atlanta from Portland, but returned in 1998. He was a forester, environmental educator, journalist and photographer for the U. S. Forest Service for nearly 50 years, retiring in 1994. He is survived by his daughters, Melinda Duwan of Darien, Conn., and Patricia Vecchio of Portland, and five grandchildren.

George W. Cabaniss - Russellville, AR, died December 4 at age 85. He served in the Civilian Conservation Corps and in the U. S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He graduated from Louisiana State University in 1955. He retired in 1972 after 35 years of service with the Forest Service. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Thelma Bates Cabaniss; a son, George Marion; granddaughter and a great-grandson.

Millie Foote – Atlanta, GA, died November 13 at age 62. She is survived by her husband of 40 years, retiree Dade Foote, four children and two grandchildren. Dade retired from the RO Division of Engineering.

Elizabeth Mason Patterson – Atlanta, GA, died in January at the age of 90. Mrs. Patterson was the national Conservation Chairman of the Forest Service where she was head of Women's Activities. She also served in similar capacities for the State of Georgia and Region 8. She is survived by her sister, nieces and great-nieces and nephews.

Lyman Elis Gray – Tallahassee, FL, died October 17, 1999, at the age of 80. A native of Grant Parish, LA, he had lived in Tallahassee since 1948. He is survived by his wife, Nan; a daughter, Lydia Gail Jansed of Peachtree City, GA; five grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Robert A. Tobiaski – Memphis, TN, died January 20. No additional details at this time.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Phyllis K. Cloutier (Joseph), 100 Bradley Drive, Montgomery, AL, 36109-3410 Phone: 334.279.8054

Malcolm N. Cockerham (Fredna), 124 Elice Circle, Hot Springs, AR 71913

Robert J. Daley (Peggy), 170 Carpenter Court, Hot Springs, AR 71901

R. Fred Foster (Mary), 8 Turnberry Place, Arden, NC 28704 Phone: 828.684.6728

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Don L. Thornton - Seneca, SC 29672-6867

KISATCHIE NF REUNION

The Kisatchie NF held its third annual reunion on November 13, 1999, at the Catahoula Ranger District work center, Bentley, LA. Over 50 people attended, including retirees and current employees. Three ranger districts and the supervisor's office were represented. Lynn Neff, current KNF Forest Supervisor and Danny Britt, retired KNF Forest Supervisor, were both there. Dan and Billie Lewis were recognized as having traveled the greatest distance for the reunion. They live in Gainesville, GA., and came to LA for the reunion and to visit friends. Don was the TMA on the Catahoula in the early 1970's.

Catahoula District Ranger Bob Sebastian welcomed everyone to the Forest and District. He also presented a brief update on current KNF happenings. Afterwards, a short meeting was held about future reunions: when, where, etc. It was tentatively decided to hold the next reunion on the Calcasieu Ranger District (for those who don't know, the Evangeline and Vernon Districts were consolidated in 1998 and someone (?) came up with the name Calcasieu), on October 7, 2000, probably at the Kincaid Lake pavilion. Final information will be sent out later so don't miss an issue of *The Dixie Ranger*! Flyers will be mailed to all KNF retirees and we'll try to notify all current employees via computer mailings.

Jack Boren and Joyce Slayter brought some photograph albums with a lot of pictures taken in the "good old days", so everyone seemed to enjoy trying to guess who some of the people were. We heard comments like "he/she sure has changed." A lot of stories were swapped and I think a good time was had by all.

About 1 p.m. everyone was treated to a fish fry with all the trimmings. Those volunteering to cook were: Bill and Lynette Williams (she makes great hush puppies), Ernie Finger and Kay Erwin. Several people brought side dishes and desserts so no one went away hungry. The committee planning this reunion consisted of Alice Martindale, Pat Brister, Sharon Swearengin, Bill Williams, Ernie Finger, Jimmy Crooks and Joyce Slayter. Bob Sebastian coordinated with the committee on behalf of the current Kisatchie folks and served as host. A new committee was elected to plan the next reunion and will be meeting probably in May or June to begin preparations.

We would like to hear from any of you who may have suggestions about how to make the future reunions more interesting and meaningful. If other forests have been doing this, we'd be interested in the outcome. We invite anyone to share your thoughts through this medium (*The Dixie Ranger*) or to us individually. Send comments to: Joyce Slayter, 195 Robin Hood Rd., Dry Prong, LA 71423; Ernie Finger, 8311 Ridgement Dr., Pineville, LA 71360; or Alice Martindale, 2006 Donahue Ferry Rd., Pineville, LA 71360.

Submitted by Joyce Slater

REUNION 2000

The Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association is hosting the third National Forest Service Reunion for all retired and active Forest Service employees and spouses. The Reunion will be headquartered at the Holiday Inn-Parkside, Missoula, Montana, September 4 through 8.

Registration is Monday, September 4. On Tuesday, Bob Gibson will MC the opening ceremonies. There will be a former Chiefs panel with John Sandor as Chair. "The Way We Were" will be stories of coping with Forest Service life by Women of the Forest Service and Forest Service Wives. The Dinner speaker will be author/historian, Stephen Ambrose. He wrote "Undaunted Courage", "D-Day" and "The Victors" among others. Wednesday, September 6 will be Missoula area field activities day. That evening there will be a reception and social at the University of Montana Forestry School. On Thursday, (tentative pending registration), will be tours of Western Montana heritage sites. There are walking tours, rafting the Clark Fork River, a day hike in the Rattlesnake Wilderness and a variety of self-guided walking and driving tours.

To receive a Registration Packet, please send your name, address, and phone number to: James Freeman, % Bitterroot RC&D, 1709 N First Street, Hamilton, MT 59840, Phone: 406.363.5450, ext 117, or e-mail: brrcd@bitterroot.net. These packets will be available on or about March 15, 2000. You may also check out the web site at <http://www.bitterroot.net/brc&d/brrcd.htm>.

~ ~ ~

Steve McDonald, long-time veteran of the U. S. Forest Service, has a new novel just off the press entitled "Bitterroot." In this novel, McDonald takes you on a whopping good romp through the Pacific Northwest. Be prepared to meet unforgettable characters aplenty, as yellow gold turns good people into killers, then to gentry.

First, travel with Chinese laborers across the stormy Pacific and with wild miners and tough trail bosses into the Idaho wilds of the 1860's. Carouse and grub for gold with them. Rioting laborers cause desperate men to cache precious gold. A buried treasure lies in the deep woods, waiting.

Then pin on the pine tree shield of the U. S. Forest Service and join the thin green line managing and protecting public forests in the 1960's. Meet a young, frustrated forester who stumbles upon a huge golden treasure. Betrayed, he pays for the discovery with his life. A beautiful young woman steals the treasure and runs for her life.

In the 1980's, life among the Hudson Valley gentry, where a respected wife's life is shockingly churned into violent turmoil by a chance encounter with an old Forest Service associate. Aware that the murderess is alive, the son of the long-dead forester must weigh revenge against mercy. With his father's old friend's help, he produces a surprising triumph for justice and the human spirit.

If you like exciting historical adventures, with just enough facts and real places to ring true, read "Bitterroot." The trip is worth it!

To order send your name and address along with a check for \$12.95, plus \$3 for S&H (\$15.95) to: **SM & Associates, Publishers, 371 E., 3700 N., Ogden, Utah 84414.** Allow two weeks for delivery.



About Dues

Please note the number in parentheses after your name on the mailing label. The number is the year through which your dues have been paid. (99) means your dues were paid through December 1999.

Dues are still only \$8 per year and cover 4 issues of *The Dixie Ranger*.

Dues should be paid at the first of the year, but because our first newsletter of the year does not get out until mid-February, dues should be paid as soon as possible thereafter. You're doing great on keeping up with your dues. I never have to worry about money. We're in good shape!

SEARCH ON FOR NEW EDITOR

It was with a great deal of sadness that I gave the Board of Directors, at the annual meeting in December, my resignation as Editor of *The Dixie Ranger* effective at the end of 2000. Bert and I have served in this capacity since 1988. When I first took on this project, I had no idea it would last this long. Then I thought I could top Tom Hunt's tenure as editor, but I have decided that Tom should have that distinction as editor of 14 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting *The Dixie Ranger* printed and mailed to each of you. But now I find that the older I get, the less time I want to spend preparing the newsletter. Sometimes my heart is just not in it because of other things going on in our lives. Our Board of Directors and the President of the Association are working diligently to find a replacement. The Board agreed to break out the Editor, Secretary-Treasurer to three positions. If any of you would like to hold one of these positions, I encourage you to let Bob Bowers know. His number is 770.205.1902. His e-mail address is bowertzx@worldnet.att.net. Job descriptions will appear in the next issue of *The Dixie Ranger*.

~ ~ ~

New Forest Supervisor Named - **Jim Gooder**, a 22-year USDA Forest Service employee has been selected as the Forest Supervisor of the four national forests in Alabama. He replaces John Yancy, who accepted a position with the U. S. Park Service.

~ ~ ~

Church Bulletin Bloopers - "For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."

THE MAN WHO OUTFOXED THE CORPORATION

The year was 1948. The Southland Paper Corporation, with its big, new mill at Lufkin, TX, had just gotten a 10-year contract for all pulpwood to be cut from the Davy Crockett District of the Sam Houston NF! It was the first such contract since acquisition in 1935. Plantings and inventory had taken precedence over sales because the land was in such poor, cut-over condition when acquired from the large, cut-out-and-get-out timber companies. Then along came WWII, and the Sam Houston NF (back then, all four forests in Texas comprised the Sam Houston, and the S.O. was in Houston) made a feeble effort to harvest sawtimber for lumber for the war effort. The sawtimber-sized trees that were left by the companies were largely of inferior quality, and, as Tommy Jones, the marking foreman on the (later_ Trinity District put it, the mills cut a lot of "three-man" boards...it took one man at each end, and one man in the middle to carry a board so it wouldn't break in two!) After the war, the FS began salvage and sanitation cuts where needed, to improve the quality of the forest. A lot of this was what we called "thinnings-from-below", or pulpwood. In those days the FS made 10-year contracts because prices were that stable back then. 1957 rolled around and Southland's contract was expiring. Bids had been solicited for the next 10-year contract, 1958-1967. This was to be another consumer scale sale, in other words, the successful bidder would pay the FS according to their scale tickets. Southland desperately needed the new contract.

Marcellus Womack, who lived in a modest little frame house up above Centerville School, had run his own pulpwood crews for years, cutting for Southland on quota. This time around, the company announced they would run their own crews, and they cut poor Marcellus to a quota he couldn't live on. Marcellus wore overalls, had a third grade education, and was a pretty unassuming-looking fellow. In fact, Clyde Smith, who worked on the Trinity, had attended school with Marcellus and told me this story about him: The teacher was holding a spelling bee. When it came a student's turn for a word, he or she would stand in front of the class, hear the word given by the teacher, and then had to pronounce the word, spell it, and pronounce it again, loudly. Marcellus was called upon, and took his place in front. "Baker", called the teacher. "Baker", repeated Marcellus, hanging his head and mumbling, "f-o-ark-er...BAKER!" So...nobody suspected what was about to happen with regard to the upcoming bid. Marcellus asked a company friend what Southland was going to bid, and was readily told they would bid \$3 per cord. After all, the bid was to be opened in Atlanta, GA, halfway around a big world from Marcellus!

The day before the bids were to open, Marcellus twisted the baling wire a little tighter that held his old Ford car together, and struck out for Atlanta! He drove all day and into the night. The bids were to open at 10:00 a.m. the next morning. At 9:59, Marcellus walked into the Timber Clerk's office in the old Peachtree-7th St. Building and laid his bid on the table...\$3.01 per cord!

Marcellus had outfoxed the corporation! Southland harvested all the pulpwood marked on the Davy Crockett for the next several years, until the change-

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over to even-age management (1963) prompted the FS to unilaterally cancel Marcellus' contract for "management reasons." During those five or so years, Marcellus was paid a \$1-per-cord premium by Southland, and never had to cut another stick of wood himself. He built a new brick house and bought his wife and himself matching pink Cadillacs. I saw them with my own eyes!

Larry Trekell

Note: Please make your luncheon reservations by March 7th. See page 3 for phone numbers.

In This Issue:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luncheon 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> In Memoriam 13 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letters from Members 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> The Man Who 19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Supervisor Takes
Chief to Task 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Kisatchie Reunion .16 | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Reunion 2000 17 | |

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