



THE DIXIE RANGER

Published Quarterly by the Southern Forest Service Retirees Association
\$8.00 per year Vol. XXX No. 4 November 2000

U. S. FOREST SERVICE RETIREES REUNION 2000

By Dave Jolly

Let me say right off that the reunion was a great success. The Northern Region retirees did a first-class, bang-up wonderful job of hosting the rest of us. The people I talked with had only high praise for the obvious hard work and success. I am proud of the job they did.

Peggy and I decided to drive, and we left Alabama on August 29. I worried some on the way out that the fire situation may put a damper on things. We spent our fourth night in Pinedale, Wyoming, just south of Jackson. When we got out the next morning there was ice on the windshield, and we could tell there had been a light rain during the night. As we drove north through the Teton and Yellowstone Parks we were in and out of rain showers, and the smoke, we had heard so much about, was gone! It was a good sign. The folks in Missoula had been living right and ol' Mother Nature had decided the fires has burned enough. You just got the feeling this was going to be a great week.

The Monday evening icebreaker couldn't have been a more pleasant time. With more than 800 registered, it seemed everyone wanted to talk to everyone at the same time. If there was a time to be frustrated, it was then! There simply was not enough time to do all the visiting you wanted to do. In the end we were satisfied to get a short visit with most of the folks we shared common experiences with during our time on the job. We saw people we expected to see, some we had not thought about in awhile, and we missed some that we hoped would be there. Region Eight was well represented. Max & Jan Peterson, Dale & Mary Jane Robertson, Ted & Beth Schlapfer, Larry & Carol Whitfield, Bob & Lorna Joslin, Lamar & Jannette Beasley, Norm & Eve Gould, Jim & Jeanne Webb, Dave & Elva Jay, "Red" & Vernelle Ketcham, Jim & Joanna Brewer, Dave & Audry Scott, Bob & Evelyn Gashwiler, Bruce & Sharon Meinders, Ed & Marge Ellenberg, Stan Adams, and Billy & Glenda Booth, were all people who I knew served in R8 most of which were there while we were. I'm sure there were others there who served in the Region after we left in 1976.

On Tuesday morning we were welcomed, listened to a panel discuss the view ahead, and heard from Chief Mike Dombeck and former Chiefs Max Peterson, Dale Robertson and Jack Thomas. At the conclusion of his talk Mike made a

presentation to Dale and Jack. On behalf of Secretary Glickman they were both presented a proclamation designating them "Chief Emeritus." Speaking for the Secretary, Mike had many nice things to say about what a great person Dale was and what a wonderful job he had done advancing the programs of the Forest Service while he was Chief. Many of us, perhaps all of us, were sitting there wondering—then why was he fired? Sorry, I know this is a bit negative, but it happened, and I thought you would like to know. Dale graciously accepted but commented to Mike that "perhaps you should have waited until you heard my talk before you made this presentation." All the speakers did an excellent job, but Dale stole the show. I believe, and many others said, it was the best "speech" we had ever heard Dale make. It was hard hitting, to the point and clear. Most of all Dale was really "into it" and he was professional. I hope Mike was listening.

Stephen Ambrose, author of Undaunted Courage and our featured speaker at the Tuesday evening banquet, talked about the unusual friendship between Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. I believe one of the strongest points he made was how this friendship allowed them to lead together, in a very effective way, an endeavor of enormous complexity, difficulty and danger. Because of it, either of them could make a decision of great import to the entire group and to the expedition, and have it accepted and supported. This was especially important since on several occasions the expedition was split and going in different directions. I'm reminded of some of the leaders in the Forest Service and a reason why some of them were so unusually successful. We should be proud that someone with the stature of Stephen Ambrose thinks enough about the Forest Service that he agreed to come spend an evening with us and do it on his own hook.

Because of a prior commitment, we did not attend the FS Museum dedication Wednesday morning, but I do want to say a few things about it since some of the early groundwork was done while I worked in the region. The person leading the effort, from the start, has been Gary Brown, retired Montana State Forester. As far as I know, Gary has never worked for the Forest Service. With the dedication he exhibits it seems obvious that this is a labor of love. Gary was associated with the Forest Service throughout his career and this can only be a demonstration of his respect for the people in the agency and how he views the National Forests. When I asked him why he would only say that he knew of the great influence the Forest Service and the National Forests had on the development of the country, and he thinks it should be preserved in a way that the public can know about it. As retirees, I don't think it is possible to appreciate Gary enough. I hope that, as you see fit, you will take the time and try to tell him that you do. We need to support this effort in any way we can.

Wednesday afternoon and Thursday found us with many choices. Peggy and I decided to drive up the Bitterroot and look at some of the fires that we had heard so much about. As much fire as we've seen in our time, this was awesome. The extent and the amount of heat generated and the number of dwellings involved and why some burned and others didn't was something to see and think about. The land management agencies have some challenges in front of them, which won't be dealt with successfully under the current way of looking at things. The support retirees gave during the "bust" was a credit to all of us as well as those still on the payroll. I hope we will continue that support in the future.

On Thursday Peggy decided to shop in Missoula, and I took the tour to the Gates of the Mountains. It was a nice way to wind down with a boat trip, on the Missouri River, to a place, where as you travel either up or down the river, because of the way the cliffs on both sides are situated, it appears they are gates opening or closing. The point of most interest was Mann Gulch where 13 young men lost their lives fighting a fire on August 5, 1949. Our guide gave a moving account of how the tragedy unfolded. It was a very sad thing to have happened and in such a beautiful place. I can't say from personnel experience what the other tours were like but, if this one was a measure, they must have been very good.

We celebrated a great week on Thursday evening at the "Leave With a Smile Buffet." Bob Rehfeld, who retired in 1982 as Forest Supervisor on the Superior NF, MC'd the event and among other things he regaled us with stories about Ole & Helga most of which were more than a little bit "politically incorrect." It's really good to see that the retirees have maintained their sense of humor. I was struck by a couple of things! It was good to see so many retirees (there must have been 300 in the room) enjoying something so much and they stayed and stayed! More importantly, at one point, Bob asked for a show of hands of all those who had been married for 50 or more years. I believe he expected 2 or 3 couples to raise their hands, and he planned to have them introduce themselves. Well, people just kept raising their hands. No one counted, but there were more than 10 couples who had celebrated a golden anniversary; one or two who had been married for more than 60 years and a bunch for more than 40. As many times as we have heard people say that a Forest Service career can be hard on a marriage, this would seem to argue that perhaps there was a benefit to some.

We left Missoula early Friday morning and missed the closing festivities. I suppose you could say that we were headed home, but we wandered around for three more weeks before we got here. Tired and a bit weary of the car, we are ready to be home for awhile. The reunion was wonderful, and we brought home many fond and lasting memories.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

December 14, 2000



The last luncheon in the year 2000 will be the Christmas Luncheon on December 14. We'll meet at 11:30 a.m. at the Petite Auberge restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center on North Druid Hills Road. Lunch is served at 12 noon. The cost of the luncheon is \$10 per person. Reservations are required. Please phone in your reservation no later than December 12th. Please call either Peaches Sherman 770.253.7480 or the Brays at 770.253.0392. We're looking forward to seeing you at the luncheon. The manager of the Petite Auberge will not serve less than 24 people. In the year 2001, his requirement for a Christmas luncheon is 50 people, if held in December. So please join us on December 14.

° ° °



LETTERS FROM OUR FRIENDS

An apology to Jim Wenner is in order. In the last issue of *The Dixie Ranger* I printed a letter from a Jim Werner (I made a mistake on the name and I am very sorry). I apologize to Jim Wenner. Our names are the most important thing we own and I hate to make a mistake on one.

Bob Williams - Kennesaw, GA - With sadness I noticed in the last *Dixie Ranger* that both Paul Vincent and Hans Raum had passed away in the Spring. It is ironic that Paul Vincent was the Supervisor who hired me and Hans Raum was one of the last supervisors that I worked for before retiring in 1986. Both men had the ability to look ahead to the future and change the course of the Forest Service to manage the National Forests. Paul Vincent, while supervisor of the Chattahoochee, in the late 50's, worked diligently at acquiring foresters with wildlife management training, and other disciplines, to meet the needs of the then developing Multiple Use Act. It was a time when foresters were in short supply. Most of us were veterans having just finished the Korean thing and were ready to sign up with the paper companies to make our fortune. But Paul offered several of us (myself, Pat Thomas, Joe Hogan, and others) summer jobs, and after working with him one found it very difficult not to join with him to support the better forest management that was heading our way.

Hans Raum, I believe, had one of the most significant effects on the positive change in management of the National Forests, particularly in the South, of anyone that I knew in my 32 years with the Forest Service. The "System", a small green book that laid out a series of problems and how the Forest Service could change management to meet these needs, was developed by a task force

headed by Hans. It was significant and had far reaching influence. I was not a part of the team that developed the "System," but did work for Hans later in the implementation of the System and the National Forest Management Act procedures. I personally think that the "System" influenced the development of the National Forest Management Act. From private conversations with folks in other regions, they also were reviewing the "System" and changing. I had the great pleasure of working with Hans Raum for several years in the R.O. I found him to be the kind of supervisor who worked with you to establish joint objectives. This could be sometimes in staff meetings, at personal meetings, during a night poker game or at a run-down little bar across the tracks, but once agreement was reached, he got the hell out of the way and put his all into supporting you in accomplishing the job.

Jim Sabin - Tucker, GA - Wouldn't want to let my membership lapse and miss *The Dixie Ranger* so here's my check. You two do a great job and thank goodness you've agreed to continue.

The Sabins are well, happy and enjoying retirement, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Doing a little of this and a lot of that.

Bob Raisch (retired Area Director, S&PF) has been seriously ill for six months or more. Hopefully he's on the mend, but it will be slow. I know he would appreciate a card or call. His address is 2613 Cosmos Dr, Atlanta, GA 30345-4505. Phone: 404.633.5146.

John Beal - Tuscaloosa, AL - Time goes by so fast that it's hard to keep up with dues on magazines and papers that come monthly and bimonthly. Enclosed are my dues for 1999, 2000 and 2001. *The Dixie Ranger* is a link with the past and all the years I spent with the Forest Service, almost 40 years, and all were in Region 8. There are many memories from the different areas and states that we lived in. We made friends all along the way.

Retirement in Tuscaloosa has been good. Our University town has a good football team and now a Mercedes automobile plant 20 miles away, is livening the economy tremendously.

We enjoy reading Jim Wenner's letters and all the others we used to know on the Ouachita National Forest. Let's all hope we have a good year in 2001.

Marvin Meier - Wausau, WI - This will catch me up and get me through next year. Things are going well here in the Northern Country. Keep busy with my own woodland as well as being active in Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, plus of course, family and grandkids. Had a wonderful summer and now fall is here this morning. Keep your good work going.

Winston Smith - Loganville, GA - our dues for another 3 years are enclosed. Also, I'd like to say a special thanks to all the folks who remembered me in the time of my illness. On March 13 I had a massive stroke. I'm in excellent shape physically, but lost some of my peripheral vision and memory. My speech is somewhat affected. I was very fortunate to recover to the level where I am now and still expect more improvement over time.

Don Peterson - St. Joseph, MN - Here is my money for this year and two more. I don't want to miss an issue of this highest priority reading! Thanks again for your good work!

Charleen and I just returned from a very enjoyable Alaskan Cruise with Dave and Nancy Urbston. Dave was a wildlife biologist with the NF's in South Carolina, the Ouachita NF and now works for the Arkansas DNR.

Am going to retire again from consulting. Have done about 17 Woodland Stewardship plans in the last two years and am now working with a large landowner. Too much office work but interesting and educational. I'll go back to work on my own land.

Like Forest Service retirees I know, I am concerned about what has happened to our formerly good outfit. Have reviewed the draft "Roadless Rule EIS." Preservationists have the ear of our WO and management is top down with political decisions and a bias against scientific management and roads.

Son Bill, wildlife biologist with the FWS, has returned from his first western fire detail on the Kootenai NF in Montana. Good experience for him.

Cliff Faulkner - Lake Placid, FL - Time has come to up the ante again. The 00 on my copy of *The Dixie Ranger* reminded me. So far the only complaint that I can find has surfaced. The young "kids" who were just getting started on their careers are showing up, with increasing frequency on the rolls of the retirees association! It seems like only a short time since I reported into R8. It's only thirty-nine years.

It's a little over 40 years since L.C. Nix and I were detailed to the R-8 Training Branch to revise the Instructor Training manual. I wonder how many fledgling employees worked into the wee hours of the morning on the next day's lesson plan, while silently cussing us for our contribution to their misery! But that's all water over the dam.

Two years ago this month I contracted rheumatoid arthritis. Fortunately, I received very good treatment at Mayo's Clinic in Jacksonville. I'm still taking medication but I'm back to a reasonable life style.

Bob Hitt – Boulder Jct, WI – Read an older issue of D.R. and learned you'll be retiring from the D.R. Boo Hoo! Then I read a newer issue and you'll stay on! Bravo! You both do a great job.

We're (Val & I) still hanging in there. Usual "mature years" maladies catching up to us but no real problems. I still do the Santa thing every year but may have to stop – slight heart problem last year. Val giving the "saw-bones" business with 2 new knees, a painful carpal tunnel and a hurtin' foot.

We summer at our home near Boulder Junction, WI and winter near Leesburg, FL. Seems the new knees can't take WI winters anymore, especially the cross-country skiing. So we've become "snow birds." Spent several weeks in Atlanta enroute to WI. Saw Nathan and Glenna Byrd and LeRoy and Ann Jones while there. Winter address: Holiday Travel Resort, CR33, Leesburg, FL 34748.

Jim & Jeanne Webb – Fairview, NC – Over 800 retirees, spouses, and guests attended the third reunion sponsored by the Northern Rocky Mountain Retirees Association. Our first reunion was held in Glenwood Springs, CO, in 1991, and the second was in Park City, Utah, in 1996. Visiting and greeting old friends and associates was given top priority.

Jim and Ruth Freeman and all the other folks who worked on hosting this reunion did an outstanding job! This was the culmination of four years of work. The program, facilities, food, field trips, and many other details all came together to make the event great fun for all of us who were there.

The fire situation was on everyone's mind. Some rain and cooler temperatures calmed the situation down during the week. However, the lost property and resources along with the safety of the fire fighters on the lines occupied many of our thoughts. Quite a few retirees had served in many capacities to help during the emergency.

Chief Mike Dombeck was joined by three former chiefs – Jack Ward Thomas, Dale Robertson, and Max Peterson – for the week's activities. John McGuire, the oldest of the retired chiefs, was unable to attend.

Some highlights were:

- Dedication of the building site for the National Museum of Forest Service History
- Field trips that were well-planned, conducted, and attended. It was hard to make a choice!
- Banquet with Stephen E. Ambrose, author and historian, speaking on "The Friendship of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark"
- Panel of former Chiefs on "The View Ahead"
- "Leave With a Smile Buffet" – great food, fellowship, and MC Bob "Ole" Rehfeld (His stories were hilarious!)

For the wives, a very interesting paperbook was published and sold at the reunion. The title was What Did We Get Ourselves Into? Stories by Forest Service Wives. If you are interested in buying a copy, you may order from: NRMRA c/o Ruth Freeman, 1637 Red Crow Road, Victor, MT 59875-9791. The cost is \$12.00 plus \$3 for shipping and handling – mailed 1st class in a padded envelope. There was such a great response to it, that a second volume is already being planned. We need to get some of our stories in the next one!

If you missed this one, plan on attending the Reunion in 2005. The chance to visit with folks, celebrate the old traditions and values of Forest Service family, and sharing with others is what it is all about! The year 2005 is the 100th anniversary of the Forest Service. The reunion will have special emphasis and meaning for all who attend. The location hasn't been determined yet but will be announced. Plan on coming, bring some folks who haven't attended, and we'll see you in 2005!

o o o

The following is the speech by former Chief, F. Dale Robertson, given at the Reunion 2000:

HONORING OUR HERITAGE – A LEGACY FOR THE FUTURE by F. Dale Robertson, 12th Chief of the U. S. Forest Service (1987-1993)

I would like to start by telling you a story about one of my heroes in the Forest Service – Chief Ed Cliff. One day during my second summer of working for the FS, I came home from marking timber and picked up the OREGONIAN and there was a big headline: “Ed Cliff is the new Chief of the FS.” I remember being impressed that Chief Cliff was appointed by Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, the ex-Governor of Minnesota.

Due to a long story that I won't go into, I ended up in the Washington Office in 1962 as a GS-9 Management Analyst trainee. Here I was in Washington, DC, at the bottom of the “totem pole” working as a “trainee” not knowing much about what I was doing. Well, as it turned out Chief Cliff lived in old town Alexandria and rode the bus to work. And, I lived in the “low rent” district just beyond Alexandria. As luck would have it, Ed and I rode the same bus to work and we occasionally sat together. One reason I have such a soft spot in my heart for Ed is that when we sat together on the bus, he never failed to put his brief case down and talk with me. He told me a lot about the history of the FS and gave me his perspective on many of the issue that the FS was dealing with in those days.

After 2 years in Washington, DC, I transferred to the NF's in Texas as an Assistant Ranger. On my last day, Chief Cliff came down to my office and spent about 30 minutes telling me everything he knew about the NF's in Texas. I am probably the only Assistant Ranger to ever have gotten direct, personal guidance from the Chief!

Well, 25 years later, I was trying to fill Ed's big shoes as Chief. And, one day I got a call from Orville Freeman, the Secretary who appointed Ed as Chief, and he wanted to take me to lunch. I later found out that what he really wanted was a Smokey Bear doll for his granddaughter. Over lunch, Orville talked a lot about Ed Cliff, and told me how he went about selecting Ed as Chief over the other contenders for the job. As a final step, he interviewed each of the candidates for the Chief's job and asked them to write a 2-page essay on their vision of the future of the FS. He said that he was so impressed with Ed's interview and write-up because Ed came across as a "MAN OF THE LAND" and just fit his image of what he thought the FS should be all about. Secretary Freeman said those impressions were the deciding factors in appointing Ed Cliff as Chief of the FS.

I tell you this story because Ed Cliff, as I knew him and as many of you knew him as well, really did represent the "HEART, SOUL AND CONSCIENCE" of the Forest Service. Unlike today's diversified FS, there was a great deal of convergence in the thinking and values held by the field people and their leaders.

Many of my fond memories of the FS go back to those days that Ed was Chief. There was a general political consensus over how the NF's should be managed and the FS was well-respected, trusted, and looked to for conservation leadership. Supervisors and Rangers had more flexibility to work things out with local communities and make decisions based on their experience and professional judgment without a lot of detailed planning documents and paperwork. To me those were "the good old days" in the FS!

BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED! As always, the FS changes with the times, as it should, to reflect the changing needs and new priorities. To illustrate how thinking in the FS has changed over time, I would like to just briefly talk about the roadless area issue - a hot topic today which had its roots in the Ed Cliff era!

The "FIRST ROADLESS AREA REVIEW" was initiated by Chief Cliff in about 1971. I know that he and Deputy Chief Ed Schultz, were concerned over the controversies that kept popping up in various locations throughout the NF's over timber sales infringing on large roadless areas. The idea at that time was that the FS would deal with this issue by inventorying all roadless areas over 5,000 acres and decide which ones should be protected until Congress could get around to considering Wilderness. AND THE REST OF THE ROADLESS COUNTRY WOULD BE FREED UP FOR MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT WITHOUT BEING COMPLICATED BY FUTURE CONSIDERATION FOR WILDERNESS. Well, that was probably one of the biggest "miscalculations" of all time in the FS. I think both Ed Cliff and Ed Schultz would probably turn over in their graves if they knew that (1) those temporary roadless area boundary lines are still on the

map 30 years later , and (2) the current Administration and Chief are seriously considering designating all of them roadless in one "big decision" in Washington, DC. This proposal and how it is being handled goes against the grain of our Heritage of the Forest Service.

THE PATH TOWARD A MORE REGIMENTED AND FORMALIZED FOREST SERVICE. Another event that I think is important in the history of the FS is the passage of NEPA by Congress in 1969. NEPA required land management decisions to be formalized in environmental documents prepared by interdisciplinary teams and subjected to formalized public involvement processes. As much good as NEPA has done, and I don't want to underrate that, I believe it did start the FS down the path toward formality and regimentation in terms of the procedures by which the FS gets its work done.

At this point, I would like to add another Ed Cliff story. Sometime in the late 1960s, I had the opportunity to do some staff work for the Chief on how the FS would implement the recommendations of the PUBLIC LAND LAW REVIEW COMMISSION REPORT. I vividly remember when I finished my presentation, Chief Cliff gave my boss, Russ Colinger, and me a little lecture. He said "this involves way too much regimentation of the FS and would limit the flexibility of the field to work with local people in managing the NF's." So I went back and completely rewrote the paper to reflect Cliff's philosophy. And, that lecture always stuck in my mind. Well, let me tell you something, what we were talking about in those days is nothing compared to the situation today.

And NEPA was just the start down this path. It has been re-enforced by many other environmental laws and planning laws like the RPA and the NF Management Act - and further complicated by interpretations by the Judges of the land. All of these laws have required more formality and the consideration of issues in ever-widening circles and at an ever-higher context. So, it should be no surprise to us that the FS is losing some of its heritage of being an informal, friendly, personable agency responsive to the needs of the local people. More issues than ever before are being highlighted and decided at higher levels with all kinds of people outside the FS getting involved and influencing the outcome. For example, today the habitat requirements for endangered species are a DOMINANT USE of the NF's and the local Rangers may have little to say about how that affects the management of their District.

Due to the breakdown in the POLITICAL CONSENSUS over how the NF's are to be managed along with the overly complicated planning and decision-making process, I think the "PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE" today in the FS, is toward non-management of the NF's. It takes extraordinary commitment, time, and energy to see any kind of development-type project through to completion. As a result, I think the FS has become much more of a "PLANNING AGENCY" and less of the "CAN DO, ACTION ORIENTED AGENCY" that is an important part of our heritage. Until the current planning deadlock is broken, I believe natural

resource management will be strangled and the FS will continue to have serious budget problems. I think the FS is in a deep hole, budgetwise, and I don't see them getting out of it until they can produce more tangible benefits beyond just planning documents and paperwork.

THE FUTURE OF THE FOREST SERVICE. However, over the long-term, I'm more optimistic about the future of the FS. I say this because the NF's are simply too big and important to ignore. Even though the NF's represent only about 9% of the land area, their importance is far greater than that in terms of the Nation's natural resources. How well these lands are managed over the long term has a lot to do with the overall environmental and economic well being of the American people.

The FS heritage has been to use the concept of "SUSTAINABLE MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT," which has now been updated to more clearly recognize ecological values, as the best way to balance the management of the NF's and maximize their benefits to the American people. Putting aside all of today's high-sounding rhetoric, I really don't see any reasonable, viable alternative to this general concept over the long term. Sooner or later, Canada will no longer be able or willing to bail us out on wood products. Sooner or later, OPEC will not be able to bail us out on oil while we IGNORE THE POTENTIAL of oil and gas on Federal lands. Sooner or later, we will not be able to tolerate letting the NF's become an economic burden to small, rural dependent communities. And finally, Mother Nature is now re-teaching us a valuable lesson in the West, and especially in Montana, that there is a huge price to pay in letting Nature manage the forest without the help of professional resource management. Doug Leisz's recent letter to the President did a great job of describing this problem in rather blunt, but realistic terms! I hope the political appointees in Washington and the FS are listening and receptive to Doug's message.

To paraphrase Gifford Pinchot, the success of the FS depends upon the understanding and support of the people, which is ultimately reflected through the political system. Or, to put it in another way, the "STATE OF THE FS" to a large extent reflects the "STATE OF MIND" of the American people toward natural resources. The environmentalists and their high sounding, and often dishonest, rhetoric are way off the mark. And, to some extent, so are the timber industry and related economic interests. The FS, as a professional organization, is in a very unique position and carries a heavy responsibility to paint a more balanced picture to the American people about the importance of natural resource management.

With the current situation, I don't see any quick fix. It has to be a long-term, turnaround story. The more immediate question is what kind of picture is the FS now painting for the American people? Is it balanced, realistic, and building upon the rich heritage of the FS? Starting down the right path is what is important today!



Welcome New Members

Jim Abercrombie (Lou), 311 Shadybrook Drive,
Walhalla, SC 29691. Phone: 864.638.6727. E-mail:
abbiejim@aol.com

Shirley (Nelson) Hewitt, 602 Jackson Street, Kannapolis, NC 28083. Phone:
704.933.0999

Jim Holbrook, 55 Rocky Ridge, Arden, NC 28704

Marvin Lovin, 233 New Providence Road, Tellico Plains, TN 37385-5377

Please add the following e-mail addresses to the Directory:

Bill & Cheryl Hess - penguinmch@aol.com

Joyce & James Keith - joyjam@mindspring.com

Jim Sabin - a98bon@aol.com

Bob Williams - BobWms9@speedfactory.net

° ° °

SAVANNAH RIVER UNIT REUNION

The Savannah River Unit is attempting to contact former employees in order to determine interest for a reunion and celebration of the Unit's 50th anniversary. If you are a former employee or know of others who worked at the Savannah River, please contact them and tell them of this planned reunion. The event is projected for March 2002. If interested, please contact:

Steve Stine or Bob Crais, USFS, Savannah River, P. O. Box 700, New Ellenton, SC 29809-0700. E-mail: ssstine@fs.fed.us or rcrais@fs.fed.us. Phone: 803.725.0243 or 803.725.0249 or fax 803.725.1807.

° ° °

Something to think about... When trouble arises and things look bad, there is always one individual who perceives a solution and is willing to take command. Very often that individual is crazy. **I've learned...**that you can get by on charm for about fifteen minutes. After that, you'd better know something.

Howard Burnett



IN MEMORIAM

F. Grady Burnett, 93, died on August 31 in Decatur, GA. Mr. Burnett was a civil engineer and retired from RO, Engineering, Atlanta. He is survived by his wife, Ferol, a daughter, stepdaughter and stepson, four grandchildren and one great grandson.

Thomas L. Fendley, Sr., 80, died July 9 in Ocala, FL. He retired as a civil engineer in 1981 from RO, Engineering. He served 41 years in government service. He was a veteran of World War II. Survivors include his wife of 50 years, Mary Evelyn, of Ocala, and son Thomas Jr., Woodstock, GA, and daughters Mrs. Beverly Kilgore, Huntsville, AL and Mrs. Angela Bouchard, Crystal Beach, FL, and seven grandchildren.

Harry E. "Hob" Howard, 91, died October 5 in St. Petersburg, FL. He was a chief inspector with the Forest Service in Washington, DC for 43 years. He retired in 1974. Survivors include his daughter, Dee Ann Donald, Loganville, GA., and a son Wayne H., Charleston, SC.; five grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Lewis J. Smith died August 4 in Clarkesville, GA. He was a Ranger on the Wakulla District in Florida, and also at Mountain Home, Arkansas. He retired as Ranger at Clarkesville, GA. He is survived by his wife and 3 sons. Mrs. Smith's address is P. O. Box 757, Clarkesville, GA 30523. Phone 706.754.6155.

Rudolph A. Wendelin, 90, died August 31 as a result of an automobile accident on Interstate 64 in Norfolk. He was in the Norfolk area visiting family. He lived in Arlington. Rudy worked for 40 years with the US Forest Service and became best known as "caretaker" of Smokey the Bear. Survivors include wife, Carrol of Arlington, VA, two sons, a daughter and three grandchildren.

o o o

What's happening among the membership:

Phil Etchison, Alpharetta, GA had 4 bypasses and a growth removed from the heart muscle. His daughter got married while Phil was in the ICU at the hospital but was able to visit him in the recovery room between the ceremony and the reception. Latest is that Phil is doing well, but not comfortable yet.

Dan Sims, Lawrenceville, GA, former Director of SFSRA, is a member of the Senior Leadership Program Gwinnett Class of 2000-2001. This program is designed to offer a variety of opportunities for mature adults who are seeking new learning experiences and want to make a positive difference in their community. A number of topics are covered in eight one day sessions.

Here is the letter that Doug Leisz, Consulting Forester, wrote to President Clinton as mentioned in Dale Robertson's speech at the Reunion:

"Dear Mr. President:

Through the actions of Secretary of Agriculture Glickman, Secretary of the Interior Babbitt, and CEQ Chairman Frampton and their respective staff people, your administration, not Mother Nature, is substantially at fault for the large number of fires wreaking havoc on the national forests in the Western United States. I am glad that you have personally observed the results of your administration's failing practices with respect to the frequency of catastrophic wildfires on the national forests.

While your administration didn't light many of the fires, your policies assured there would be catastrophic wildfires if there were many ignitions by lightning or other causes during a heat wave when forests are tinder dry. Some have been caused by your own government people setting "controlled burns", resulting in great losses of natural resources and private property. A series of administrative actions are responsible:

First - under your risky scheme of "reinventing the government", the field organizations of the Forest Service have been decimated. Fire fighting capabilities have been reduced to dangerously low levels. Forces for protection of individual forests are only 50% of 1995 strength. Fire prevention personnel and initial attack forces of organized "hot shot" crews are at the lowest number I can recall. Meanwhile, the Washington Office of the Forest Service has increased by 300 people who don't fight fire. It has been impossible for the present fire organization to make prompt initial attack when faced with multiple lightning fires. This insures that many fires will become large and destructive during this hot, dry period. Your administration's resource utilization policy has alienated or driven away most of the local folks (e.g. loggers, mill workers, ranch hands, construction workers) who had helped out in emergency fire situations.

Second - through curtailment of logging, your administration has allowed the accumulation of dangerous levels of fuels. Forests are dynamic. They continue to produce new biomass each year, are subject to wind and snow breakage and losses from insect infestations and disease. These fuels continue to accumulate and build, just waiting to oxidize. A fire, in the dry, hot period we are now experiencing, lets this fuel carry fire up into the tree tops, resulting in crown fires incinerating large and small trees alike. Communities near the national forests face unacceptable fire risks.

Third - your administration decided to deal with the forest fuel crisis in a "natural way", by the use of prescribed fire. The difficulty with this approach is that millions of acres need to be treated and it would take many years before this scheme could be fully tested. This unrealistic proposal flies in the face of personnel reductions imposed on the very same people who are expected to take on this unprecedented level of prescribed fire. The result, of course, can be seen

in the escaped fires in New Mexico and California, burning hundreds of homes and millions of trees. The highly qualified people necessary to conduct prescribed fire on such a large scale are simply not on board. How many more homes will be burned under these policies?

Fourth – the loss of resources associated with catastrophic fires is enormous. Precious old growth is destroyed, public recreation opportunities eliminated for many years, fish and wildlife habitat severely damaged, flood damage likely, and enough wood destroyed to build hundreds of thousands of homes for people who own part of this forest legacy, but can't afford their own home. Catastrophic fires are stand terminating, threatening all forest resource management objectives mandated by multiple-use and other laws; clean air, water quality, recreational values, abundant wildlife, a continuous supply of wood, and a healthy environment for people. Your administration abandoned the multiple use sustained yield management principles mandated by law (MUSY Act of 1960).

It is timely to reconsider the disastrous consequences associated with this combination of policies. Among others, the National Roadless Study and Sierra Nevada Framework Draft DEIS, promise to exclude access and fuel removal from yet another 56 million acres of national Forests. Presidential hopeful Al Gore added another risky proposal when he announced that he would prohibit any logging in roadless areas, even if material were to be removed by helicopter. That would be dangerous, irresponsible management for the national forests, increasing the risk of catastrophic fire to forests and communities, under the guise of environmental protection.

I speak from a 32-year career with the Forest Service serving for years at the field level and as a Regional Forester, Deputy Chief, and Associate Chief. I have an extensive background in protecting and managing the National Forests. My many professional associates and I are appalled by the forest devastation resulting from your administration policies.

Since retirement I have continued to work as a consultant dealing with wild-land fire safety. I recently visited forests destroyed by catastrophic fire that could have been prevented, if only your administration, pressured by preservation zealots, had not halted the Forest Service efforts to remove hazardous fuels before the lightning fires occurred.

The recent \$12 billion proposal for Congress "to clean dense, fire-prone underbrush from 40 million acres" is ludicrous without an overhaul of forest management and fire protection policies coupled with a major rebuilding of Forest Service capabilities, including research. Many of us would be glad to assist in such a review and reconstruction of the failed policies.

FIGHTING FIRES 40 YEARS AGO

Jim Wenner, Hot Springs, AR

Sorry I missed the reunion, but instead, I had the pleasure of hosting a 100th Birthday Party for Doris' mother here in Hot Springs.

This summer's forest fire news mentioning Bitterroot NF and Sula Ranger District piqued my interest. Digging into 40-year old files I found my report of us R-7 guys flying out to R-1 to help out in 1960. Since half of the crew was from the George Washington, Jefferson and "Cumberland," some *Dixie Ranger* readers might well remember this fire-fighting expedition.

We from the White Mountain flew from Laconia via private charter to Philadelphia to meet our charter, an old National Guard flying boxcar that took 24 hours of tree-top flight to arrive in Missoula. And we were all in FS uniform too, to somehow impress those westerners. The Regional Forester met us on landing, but I sure don't remember his name. Charlie Tebbe? He was in R-7 before.

Region 7 guys were at two fire camps on the Saddle Mountain fire. Ours was a dry dusty place with a rack of hard hats for wash basins. The other was at a hot springs with nightly soaks and beer! Boy, were we jealous. The rest of my story is in the enclosed papers. I would like to hear how others who made the trip remember it.

"Following are short notes concerning the time V. Ohlson, H. Swan, G. MacDonald and I spent on the R-7 Emergency Fire Detail to R-1 from 7/22-8/1/60.

Trip out was by Air Force, C-119 (flying boxcar) from Philadelphia (leave 1 p.m. 7/22) with stops at Roanoke, VA, and Lexington, KY, for R-7 personnel. Stops at Kansas City, MO, and Great Falls, MT, for gas. Thirty three men spent about 15 hours on pipe and canvas benches - very ingenious torture devices.

Although we were primarily on a work detail, R-1 never neglected to give as much training as possible. We received briefings at their RO, fire camp and division camps to give us a good background of the overall situation. Ten men went to two fires on the Helena National Forest. The rest of us were on the Saddle Mountain fire, Sula Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest.

The terrain was as steep as any of the timbered land on the White Mountain NF. Yet all fire line built in my division was dozer line, built with D-8's. Ponderosa, lodgepole pine, doug-fir and alpine fir; thin duff layer but heavy blowdown in lodgepole pine. D-6's used for water trucks; 50 gallon drums hauled and spotted along line for back-pack pump refills; 10 gallon cream cans and canvas bags for drinking water.

Dozers also were used to drag men up steep slopes. Fifty men holding knotted rope or fire hose were pulled by 2 dozers to their sectors. Saved 45 minutes on a 2-hour hike.

The fire - 3200-3400 acres in size; 4 Divisions, 1460 line workers, 25 Dozers, 21 miles of line built, 4 separate fire camps. An unusual fire, it burned downhill against a strong up-draft during the day. Burned and crowned up-hill against a down-draft at night. Weather experts still scratching heads.

I noted that the pocket first aid kits had a good supply of merthiolate capsules which came in handy for the numerous scratches and small cuts received from brush and rock. Soap would have little value in this charred, dusty, water-scarce land.

Every single man on the fire was furnished with a hard hat - an aluminum hat much lighter and more comfortable than our fiber glass. While 2 D-8's pushed line up to peak of 8,842 foot high Saddle Mountain, two mountain goats watched nearby.

Fire Cost - \$600,000 plus an estimated \$2-300,000 for rehabilitation (waterbars, seeding grass and trees).

Region 1 Situation: 501 fires from 7/14 - 7/21, mostly lightning caused; 8 of them Class E. 7/25 was the biggest day with 4,700 men, 12 tankers, 90 dozers, 48 planes and 11 helicopters on the payroll.

Red Carpet Treatment: Tour of the Missoula Aerial Fire Dept. Plane trip over large fires in Montana and Idaho. A cargo drop, smokejumper flight for MacDonald for his training. A bus trip to Lolo and Flathead NFs.

While on the National Bison Range, volunteered to aid Fish and Wildlife personnel in extinguishing a grass fire. We saved 18,000 acres and 500 head of buffalo - by containing the fire at 2 acres! On this fire we discovered a new fuel type with low rate of spread but high resistance to control - buffalo chips!

Region 7 personnel were easily recognizable - they were the only ones to wear badges.

Liked their time reports, much easier and neater than the various sized scraps of paper used in R-7 on project fires. Use of this time report permitted timekeeper to keep Fire Time Reports (6500-59) neat and clean in camp. R-1 Pocket Guide for Fire Suppression carried and used by all overhead - a great help!

SNAKE STORIES



We all hear about stories we've experienced during our careers. I thought it would be interesting to share our experiences about animals we've known. Like the time Russ Griffith, serving as a District Ranger on the Chattahoochee, walked out of his office and a woodpecker hit Russ in the forehead and broke it's bill. You can imagine the kidding Russ got and the jokes about "ole wooden head."

I like to tell true snake stories. Everyone has one and we're all fascinated.

One of my early experiences was while I worked for the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station collecting soil-site data in the North Georgia Mountains. My helper was Ben Cobb, a University of Georgia summer student.

As Ben and I drove a jeep along a lonely forest road, a chipmunk ran quickly across the road and up a steep bank. When it reached the top of the bank it leaped four feet straight up in the air and fell to earth. What made the chipmunk do that, we wondered. Curiosity made us stop and climb to the top of the bank. There lay the chipmunk, dead as a door nail. Next to it lay a very large timber rattler who had just done the chipmunk in. Responding in the normal prescribed way (I wasn't environmentally sensitive trained) I swung my soil probe to dispatch this villain. WOW! I missed, and that was one mad snake. You never saw two fellows back-peddle so fast and jump off the bank into the road with the rattler right behind. He chased us onto the road where he finally stopped and coiled. So I got a very, very long stick and beat that poor snake like in B.C. Ben finished him off by severing his head. Then he proceeded to cut off a long length of trophy rattles. But, in so doing, the headless snake whipped around and struck Ben in the arm. Ben's stunned look, from being fatally struck by a headless snake, turned to a sheepish and embarrassed grin. So both of us survived this attack snake and now I let all snakes live and so far they have left me alone.

Charles Huppuch, Verona, VA

o o o

Flashbacks of a Forest Ranger by Harold H. Bush, a retiree from the George Washington NF, is the story of a unique look inside the world of the U. S. Forest Service. From personnel to government bureaucracy, Harold Bush tells of his own experiences in the NFs and the people who made his career more colorful. Some portions deal with internal affairs of the Forest Service, one in particular, "R-7 Had to Die" may be of interest to those who served in Region 7. *Flashbacks of a Forest Ranger* is filled with humor, story telling and even suspense and is a must for anyone who has ever worked for the government. Copies are available for \$12.50, plus \$3 shipping/handling. Order from McClain Printing Company, P. O. Box 403, Parsons, West Virginia 26287. You may use a credit card, call 1-800-654-7179.

ANDREW PICKENS RANGER DISTRICT REUNION

The Andrew Pickens Ranger District is tucked away in the South Carolina mountains. Mountains in South Carolina you might wonder, yet there are a couple in beautiful Oconee County. The Forest Service has had a presence in Oconee County for many years. Lester Schaap, my late father-in-law, was the Ranger there from 1946 till 1957. His tenure was a long one for that age and time. Before, during, and after him a lot of fine men, and now women, have made the Andrew Pickens RD one of the crown jewels of Region 8. On September 5, 2000, a district reunion was held at the home of Frank and Edna Palmer in Walhalla, SC.

Approximately thirty ex-employees and their wives were present. If you had ever worked on the district and were not there, I can assure you, you were talked about and missed. Old stories by the bushel were told and sometimes retold. Several of the "old" Rangers were present and numerous professionals and technicians. I hesitate to list them because I know I'll miss some but here I go—Elaine McConnell was representing her father, Don Thornton, Maxie Gates, Dave Ketcham, Jim Abercrombie, Gene Mooner, Jim Ridley, Charles Myers, Gene Cock, Bob Allen, Jude Thompson, Roy Lewis, Pete Beheler, Chuck Andrews, Jim King, Morris Turpin, Michael Turner and of course, Frank Palmer. Agnus Thrift represented her father, Dewey Thrift. Odom McDaniel, Paul Russell, Dave Devet and several others wrote nice letters but could not come. I guarantee, a good time was had by all.

Jim McConnell, Lilburn, GA



IT PAYS TO KNOW YOUR HISTORY

A New Orleans lawyer sought an FHA loan for a client. He was told the loan would be granted if he could prove satisfactory title to a parcel of property being offered as collateral. The title to the property dated back to 1803, which took the lawyer 3 months to track down. After sending the information to the FHA, he received the following reply (actual letter):

"Upon review of your letter adjoining your client's loan application, we note that the request is supported by an Abstract of Title. While we compliment the able manner in which you have prepared and presented an application, we must point out that you have only cleared title to the proposed collateral property back to 1803. Before final approval can be accorded, it will be necessary to clear title back to its origin."

Annoyed, the lawyer responded as follows (actual letter):

"Your letter regarding title in Case 189156 has been received. I note that you wish to have title extended further than the 194 years covered by the present application. I was unaware that any educated person in this country, particularly those working in the property area, would not know that Louisiana was purchased by the U. S. from France in 1803, the year of origin identified in our application. For the edification of uninformed FHA bureaucrats, the title to land prior to U. S. ownership was obtained from France, which had acquired it by Right of Conquest from Spain. The land came into possession of Spain by Right of Discovery made in the year 1492 by a sea captain named Christopher Columbus, who had been granted the privilege of seeking a new route to India by then reigning monarch, Isabella. The good queen, being a pious woman and careful about titles, almost as much as the FHA, took the precaution of securing the blessing of the Pope before she sold her jewels to fund Columbus' expedition. Now the Pope, as I'm sure you know, is the emissary of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And God, it is commonly accepted, created this world. Therefore, I believe it is safe to presume that He also made that part of the world called Louisiana. He, therefore, would be the owner of origin. I hope to hell you find His original claim to be satisfactory. Now, may we have our damn loan?

They got it!

(A gem from the Internet)

° ° °

Long-Term Care Insurance - On September 19, President Clinton signed the Long-Term Care Security Act, creating the first government-wide benefit program since the start of the Thrift Savings Plan in June 1986. The bill

authorized OPM to create an insurance program to cover a range of services, including nursing home care. Coverage will be offered no later than October 2002. Enrollees will pay the full premiums, which OPM plans to offer at 15 to 20 percent below commercially available rates.

Frank G. Atwater, the President of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, said the bill would help millions of government workers and retirees obtain long-term care coverage "without being sent to the poorhouse, and it will serve as an example to other employers."

I'm sure more information will be available later on this insurance - Editors

o o o

From the Editors: The Board of Directors and those present at the last two luncheons have made the following decisions concerning the Association:

In the year 2001, there will only be 3 newsletters published throughout the year. Our plans are to publish in the months of March, July and November. There could be four newsletters next year as I plan to do a special *Dixie Ranger* giving the oral history by Paul Russell, Rik Eriksson, Ruth Schaap, and Bill Bryan. They warrant a newsletter of their very own.

There will be only two luncheons in the year 2001. Our attendance has dropped tremendously. The restaurant requires at least 25 people for a luncheon, but the Chef did say 24 for the last luncheon in September. But in order to hold a Christmas luncheon in the month of December, they require confirmed reservations for 50 people. We haven't had 50 people to attend a Christmas luncheon in many years. We could not make a reservation for December under those circumstances, so the Christmas luncheon for next year will be November 29th, 2001. The other luncheon will be June 14, 2001. Please mark your calendars now because *The Dixie Ranger* will not be issued prior to a luncheon date.

It's extremely important that all of you continue to send in your letters, articles, etc., for *The Dixie Ranger*. This newsletter would be nothing without your input. So please stay in touch!

o o o

Old enough to remember...

...you could call a Doctor and he would come to your house (the same day).
...Cracker Jacks had a decent and unusual prize in it.
...you only had GM, Ford and Chrysler making cars in the US.
...you believed everything the Government said.

Howard Burnett

SOUTHERN FOREST SERVICE
RETIREES ASSOCIATION
70 WILKES COURT
NEWNAN, GA 30263-6124

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEWNAN GA
PERMIT #34

NANCY SORRELLS (00)
5331 DEEP SPRINGS DR
STONE MTN GA 30087 -3629

*made res
for 2*

Note: Please make your luncheon reservations by December 12th. See page 4 for phone numbers of persons to call.

In This Issue:

Christmas Luncheon -----	4	Fires 40 years ago -----	16
Honoring Our Heritage -----	8	Snake Stories -----	18
Welcome New Members -----	12	Andrew Pickens -----	19
In Memoriam -----	13	It Pays to Know -----	20
Letter to President -----	14	From the Editors -----	21

* * * *

OFFICERS: Robert Bowers, President, (770.205.1902) ; Vice-President (Vacant); Betty Bray, Sec.-Treas (770.253.0392)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Peaches Sherman (2000), Robert Johns (2001), Joyce Keith (2002) ,Ex-Officio, Jerry Edwards
EDITORS: Bert and Betty Bray E-mail: brayira@aol.com Phone: 770.253.0392

Published quarterly in February, May, August, and November. Dues are \$8 per year, payable in January. Mailing address:
Southern Forest Service Retirees Association, 70 Wilkes Court, Newnan, GA 30263