



The Rendezvous

The Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Forest Service Association

Volume 9- Number 1



by Dan Nolan

In this Issue

Chair Notes	7
Membership News	8
Travel Light	12
Lunch Anyone?	14
New Western Code	15
Know Your State Forester	17
Listen to the Podcast	20
Museum News	22
Bill Ott's Story	29
Remembrances	35
The Last Word	39



The Rocky Mountaineers made a great showing at the National Forest Service Reunion in Lake Tahoe, California. Pictured L-R: Frank Beum, Lyle Laverty, Pam Laverty, Susan Weingardt, Dan Nolan, Barney Lyons, Johnny Hodges, Norma Fisher, Jim Fisher, Mike Foley, ?, Pam Skeels, Rich Stem, Melanie Woolever, Larry Gadt, and kneeling in front Craig Bobzien, Rick Cables, Bjorn Dahl, Tom Thompson, Denny Bschor, and Jim Free.

At last count 53 Rocky Mountaineers joined the more than 400 participants at Harrah's in South Lake Tahoe for the ninth National Reunion of Forest Service Retirees. The Region 5 team, led by Nancy Gibson, provided an outstanding program, over four days with a variety of activities for everyone. The chance to reconnect with so many former coworkers and friends was the highlight. Excursions to venture out and learn about the area included a visit to Virginia City, the historic Comstock Logging site, and the Donner Party story.

Many of us cruised Lake Tahoe aboard the MS Dixie paddleboat. A wine social was held at the Forest Service's Tallac Historic Site with classic turn of the 20th century, rich people's "cabins" where we were entertained by the lively cowboy singer, Dave Stamey. One evening we rode the gondola to the top of Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort for socializing and an awesome view of Lake Tahoe.

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(continued on Page 2)

(continued from Page 1)

former chiefs join us: Dale Bosworth, Abigail Kimbell, Vicki Christiansen, and Tom Tidwell. In Randy's remarks he explained that, through new funding initiatives, the Forest Service will receive 10.6 billion dollars over several years to deal with fire recovery, fuels, recreation infrastructure and other programs. He stressed the need to be strategic and smart about how those funds are spent. He also pointed out that the agency needs to adapt to the expectations of the many new users of the national forests in order to be relevant in the coming years.

A variety of speakers updated the crowd on topics of interest. R-5 Regional Forester Jennifer Eberlien and Pacific Southwest Station Director Richard Barhydt provided an update on their programs.

Similarly, the Forest Supervisor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Erick Walker and the Public Affairs Officer of the Humboldt-Toiyabe NF Erica Hobb described their units' issues and programs. Fire recovery and the increased demand for outdoor recreation were common themes that we can certainly relate to in Region 2.

We were also honored to have our current Chief Randy Moore and some of his leadership team engage with us. In fact, we were fortunate to have four



Chiefs: (L-R) Dale Bosworth, Vicki Christiansen, Randy Moore, Tom Tidwell, Abigail Kimbell.

A Recreation Strategies Panel addressed the huge increase in outdoor recreation occurring throughout the country following the Covid pandemic. Deputy Chief Chris French announced the release of the Forest Service's new Recreation Strategy.

Keynote speaker, author John Clayton addressed the relationship between John Muir and Gifford Pinchot. And, Mark Twain made an appearance at our final banquet.

The National Museum of Forest Service History was a major sponsor of the reunion and Executive Director Lisa Tate and President Tom Thompson updated us on progress in developing the Conservation Legacy Center in Missoula. While additional funds are still needed, ground breaking is expected next year.

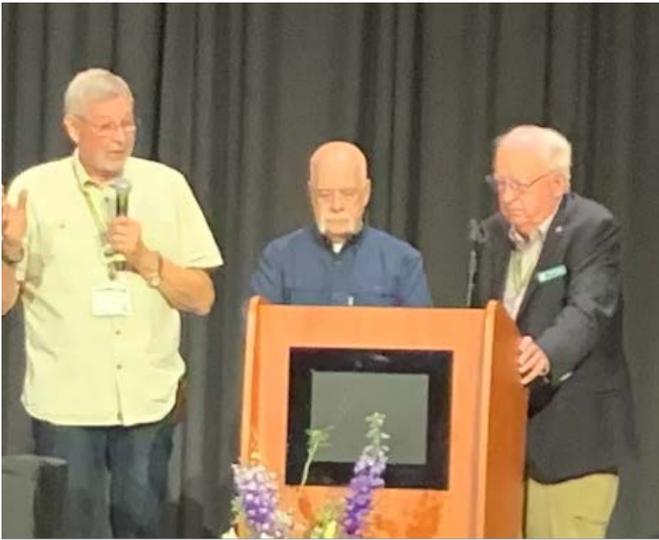
Finally, two of our own, Tom Thompson and Rich Stem were recognized with the 2022 Doug Leisz Leadership Award for outstanding leadership as a volunteer with NAFSR and/or NMFSH. Congratulations - well deserved!

The next reunion will be in Missoula in 2025 to coincide with the opening of the National Museum of Forest Service History's Conservation Legacy Center. Become a member and get free admission!

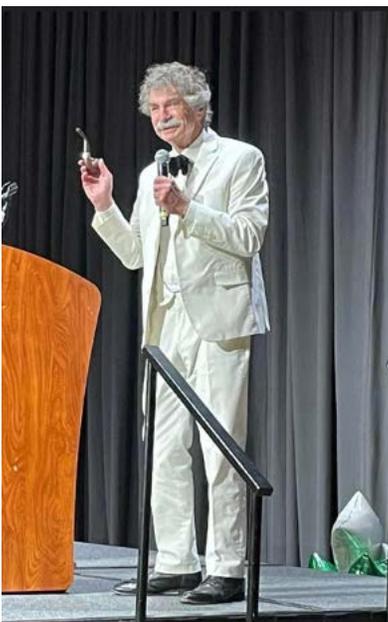
Below are some photos by Dan Nolan from the reunion. You can see a 15 minute slide show created by Bill Disbrow on the Reunion website at <https://2022fsretireereunion.org/>.

(continued on Page 3)

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Jim Caswell, past chair of NAFSR awards Richard Stem and Tom Thompson with the 2022 Doug Leisz Leadership Award for outstanding leadership as a volunteer with NAFSR and/or NMFSH.



Mark Twain made an appearance at the reunion and mentioned that "Death is the starlit strip between the companionship of yesterday and the reunion of tomorrow."



Singer Dave Stamey, cowboy, mule packer, dude wrangler and now one of the most popular Western entertainers working today, serenaded the audience.



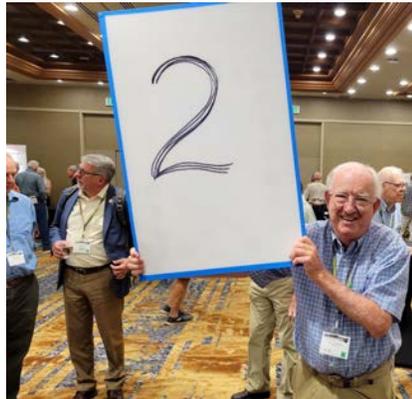
What happened in Taboe stays in Taboe. It's a rule - Smokey doesn't talk!

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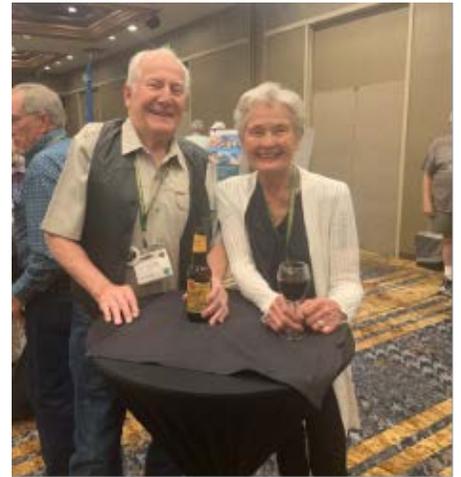
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Richard Stem was counseled by Tom Thompson to try and behave for just a couple of days.



The Powerball number was NOT #2 - but REGION 2 was known to be the best region at the reunion.



Bjorn and Marty offered hearty "uff das" to everyone.



Abh...to be a fly on the wall for this conversation.



Florence Navarro showed up in Taboe.



Pam and...



John Skeels were present.

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Pat and Patty, Kitty, Lorna, Dave and Bob posed for a Mountaineer photo at one of the receptions.



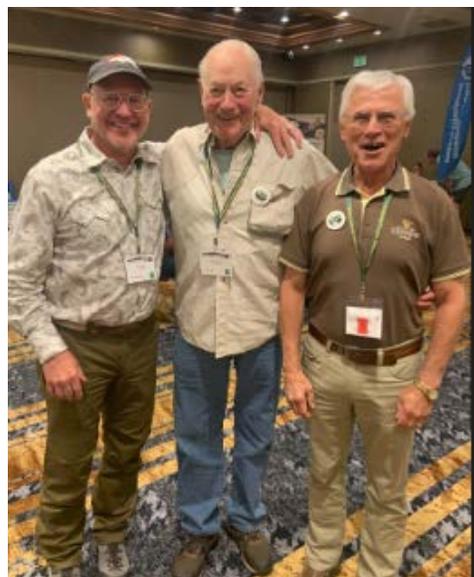
Cheryl and Jim Free made the trek to Tahoe.



Melanie Woolever's arrival confirmed that the party was on.



Pat Lynch sampled and approved the food at the reunion.



Rick Cables, Butch Morita and Jack Troyer had some stories to tell.

(continued on Page 6)

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Chairman of the Rocky Mountaineers, Brent Botts was in the house.



Ellen and Johnny Hodges were there WITH their luggage - see page 12 of this edition of the Rendezvous.



Kitty and Tom Thompson approved of the festivities.



Laura and Bill Disbrow were in attendance.

Your Area Representatives

Denver Area Representative
Jim Thinnes, Littleton, CO

Northern Front Range and Southeastern Wyoming Area Representative
Steve Johnson, Ft. Collins, CO

Southern Front Range and Kansas Area Representative
Barb Timock, Pueblo

Western Colorado Area Representative
Bob Sieger, Durango, CO

Wyoming Area Representative
Bill Bass, Sheridan, WY

South Dakota/Nebraska
Craig Bobzien, Custer, SD

NAFSR Representative
Sharon Friedman, Littleton, CO

NMFSH Representative
Tom Thompson, Littleton, CO

Liaison for Region 2 (not retired yet)
Jace Ratzlaff, Golden, CO

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News and Notes From the Chair



Brent Botts, Chairman of the Board at the National Reunion in Lake Tahoe, California.

As we wind down the 2022 year, I look back on my time as Vice Chair and Chair of the Rocky Mountaineers and what we have managed to accomplish during the “Covid Years.” When I assumed the Vice Chair job in 2000, little did I realize the difficulties that would lie ahead with Zoom meetings, postponed gatherings, postponed Memorial Grove ceremonies and a redo of being Vice Chair in 2021. It was all repeated in our personal lives with cancelled vacations, days of isolation and worries about our health and the health of our loved ones. Twenty twenty-two began to look more like the pre-covid years, but the backlog of things that were canceled or postponed created their own challenges.

I recently returned from The Golden State Gathering With a Silver Lining, held at Lake Tahoe. It was postponed for a year which you might think would provide extra time to plan and make accommodations; however, it required renegotiating contracts, finding new tours and the people to lead them.

In many cases the planning committee had to start over again. In the end, they pulled off a very successful event that everyone enjoyed. Folks were once again happy to meet and greet their old friends and coworkers.

I participated in several great field trips and attended some excellent meetings at the Gathering. One such meeting was with all the other Chairs of the various regional retiree associations to learn what has been working well or what challenges they have faced in the last few years. It was no surprise to learn that newsletters were the number one item that kept membership from falling, and a lack of face-to-face events was the greatest challenge to overcome. What I was surprised to learn was that many retiree organizations find it hard to get members to step up into a leadership role. Many operate by committee or continue to have vacancies in their organizations.

The Rocky Mountaineers are fortunate to have good leaders and people willing to step forward to make our organization what it is today. Dave Steinke is hands-down the best newsletter editor of all the retiree groups. Johnny and Ellen Hodges are the front line of our organization and always there to take registration, arrange Zoom calls and handle the budget. Bill Disbrow keeps our web page current and up to date. The committee chairs for Memorial Grove, Scholarships, Grants, and Travel spend many hours making sure those programs are successful. The Board members and Regional Representatives contribute many hours to the continued success of our association. And you, all 469 members of the Rocky Mountaineers that continue to support our cause by attending events, contributing your time, money and talent, I thank all of you.

As I transition my role to your new Chair, Sharon Kyhl, I know she has a team of excellent people supporting her. I know she will continue to lead our group forward in the great programs we offer and will be a catalyst for even greater things to come. Please think about how you might support her by serving on one of our committees, volunteering to help at the Annual Gathering or even stepping forward into one of the leadership roles of our organization.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Chair of this fine organization. It has been a rewarding and outstanding experience. I look forward to my duties as Past Chair and serving on the Memorial Grove Committee. I hope to see all of you soon.

Brent Botts

Membership and Finance Report

Membership

We currently have **462** members including 159 Lifetime Members.

You can become a Lifetime Member any time for only \$250 per household.

You can help us recruit new members. Go to our website to join. It is quick and easy and dues for the first year are complimentary.

We are not that far away from 500 members. That would be quite an accomplishment!

Other than the Old Smokeys from R-6, we do not think any other regional retiree group has more members than us.

Our Newest Members

Dawn Heiser - Cedaredge, Colorado

Robert Clemans and Victoria Baker - Golden, Colorado

Lori Haug - Pueblo West, Colorado

James and Cindy Hubbard - Ft. Collins, Colorado

Chris Linkenhoker - Dillon, Montana

Robert Mitchell - Mena, Arizona

Laurie Walters-Clark and John Clark - Dayton, Wyoming

Finance

Thanks to all of you that have made donations to the Rocky Mountaineers. We have received a total of \$6,468 in donations so far this year. We appreciate your generosity. We could not do it without you!

As a reminder, you are welcome to make donations at any time throughout the year.

We have distributed a total of \$6,000 to this year's four Scholarship recipients. The checks have been deposited into their school accounts and they are working hard on their degrees. Good luck to them.



History Corner



Frederick Law Olmsted

“The enjoyment of the choicest natural scenes in the country and the means of recreation connected with them is thus a monopoly, in a very peculiar manner, of a very few very rich people. The great mass of society, including those to whom it would be of the greatest benefit, is excluded from it. In the nature of the case private parks can never be used by the mass of the people in any country nor by any considerable number even of the rich, except by the favor of a few, and in dependence on them.”

Frederick Law Olmsted is considered the godfather of American landscape architecture and one of the country’s first environmentalists. He was an avid traveler, farmer, and journalist before submitting his winning design for Manhattan’s Central Park in 1858. Many of his naturalistic, English-style, 18th-century landscapes still thrive today throughout the U.S.

Olmsted designed some of the Chicago area’s most picturesque green spaces. Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1822, he studied engineering, chemistry and farming before settling on a career in landscape architecture. In addition to his design career, Olmsted was an author and social critic, believing that aesthetic beauty was the remedy to many of the social ills he observed around him.

In 1858, Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, won a competition to design Central Park in New York. It was there that Olmsted laid out his vision for a natural environment in the heart of an industrialized city. The park exemplifies Olmsted’s belief that nature has a positive effect on human behavior and well-planned parks and environments can help improve city dwellers’ sense of well-being.

OUTDOOR CLOTHES

For the
OUTDOOR MAN

Filson Duck Coat, double back, front and sleeves.....	\$5.75
Filson Duck Coat, single sleeves, front, but has double back.....	4.75
Filson Field Vest, duck, with sleeves....	3.50
Same Vest, no sleeves.....	3.00
Filson Duck Pant, double.....	4.75
Heavy Duck Pant, Hirsch Welas or Boss of Road.....	4.50
Filson Duck Pant, single.....	4.00

SHOES

8-in. Bergmann, light weight.....	\$13.95
8-in. Bergmann, medium weight.....	13.95
10-in. Bergmann, either weight.....	15.50
8-in. Currin, either weight.....	13.95
10-in. Currin, either weight.....	15.50
8-in. Jefferson, sewed.....	10.00
8-in. Jefferson, pegged.....	10.00
8-in. Olympic.....	11.75
6-in. Olympic.....	8.95

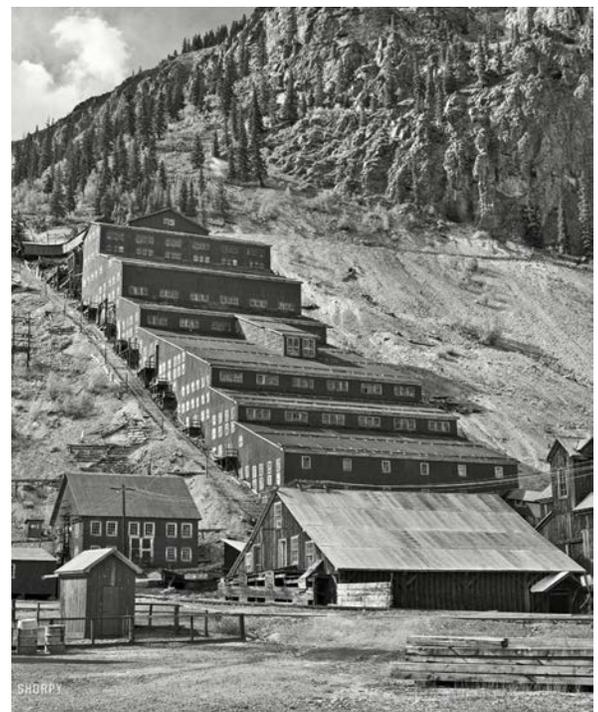
**CALKING, \$1.00 EXTRA
HOBBING, 75c EXTRA**

Sleeping Bags, wool filled, size 36x84, zipper half way down one side, khaki duck covered..... \$11.85
 Same bag as above, zipper all way around..... 13.85
 Same bag, size 40x84, zipper half way..... 13.50

Send for our new catalog, just out.

Send for measurement blank for shoes made to order.

Missoula, Montana



Clothing advertisement in Missoula Montana circa 1935.

The Rocky Mountaineers Are Traveling Again

by Jim Thimmes



Thirty-five Rocky Mountaineers journeyed to the Nordic in June 2022. We traveled four days in Finland and 11 days in Norway, including six days on coastal voyage ship.

The trip started with two days in Helsinki, Finland's capital. We learned that although Finland is a Nordic country, it is not Scandinavian. It has a unique language and culture with historic Russian/Soviet ties but is now firmly part of the European Union. We enjoyed sunny skies and highs the 80s and low 90s in Finland at the beginning of our trip.

We then headed north to the Finland's Lapland region for two more days, where we were greeted with 24-hours of sunshine as the sun never set north of the Arctic Circle. We met some of the Sami people and learned about their reindeer-herding heritage and culture. Historically, the Sami were semi nomadic and moved between the far northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Today they have

permanent homes but still herd reindeer on open range. It was common to see reindeer walking along the highway and even hanging out at the hotel. We enjoyed feeding lichen to tame reindeer.

We continued north from Finland and boarded a Hurtigruten Norwegian Coastal ferry in Kirkenes, Norway for a six-day, five-night, 1400-mile cruise to Bergen, Norway. Unfortunately, a few Rocky Mountaineers tested positive for COVID and had to stay behind in Finland. Most of their symptoms were mild but the travel company

required them to isolate for five days.

Our ship, the MS Polarlys, was a working ferry in addition to being a passenger vessel. While the Polarlys isn't a cruise ship, it has comfortable cabins as well as dining, lounge, and viewing areas. The ship stopped about five times a day to drop off and pick up mail, cargo, and passengers. Some of the stops were only for a few minutes while others allowed us time to get off and explore a bit.

The rugged Norwegian Coast is dotted with thousands of islands and skerries and is home to the famous fjords. The northern coastline has an Arctic climate and is treeless. Further south, trees are established at the lower elevations and expand to forested hillsides near Bergen. We were amazed how many of the islands are inhabited and have roads, electricity, and internet.

(continued on Page 11)

(continued from Page 10)



Sharon Kybl feeds lichen to a reindeer.

We disembarked the Polarlys in Bergen. It lived up to its reputation as Europe's wettest city with 90 inches of annual precipitation. The rain didn't prevent us from enjoying two days in Norway's second largest city, including the wharf area and its UNESCO historic buildings.

A train took us from Bergen to Myrdal where we transferred to the vintage Flam Railway for a spectacular ride across the steep, narrow Flam Valley. We were surprised to see a large cruise ship docked over 100 miles inland on a branch of Norway's longest fjord. After exploring Flam, we transferred by bus to Oslo, stopping along the way to visit the Borgund Stave Church.

We reunited with our fellow travelers who had isolated in Lapland and flew to Oslo a few days before the main group arrived. We finished our trip enjoying more beautiful weather while exploring the Norwegian capital's waterfront, museums, and parks.

I hope you can join us on our trip to the Dalmatian Coast and Greece in October 2023 - information at <https://www.rockymountaineers.us/Activities/Dalmatian%20Coast%20Greece%202023%20021122.pdf>



Life Without Your Luggage

By Johnny Hodges

When Ellen and I checked our bags at DIA on the afternoon of July 4, we never imagined we would never see them again for our entire trip. We have traveled all over the world in the last 30 years and never lost a bag. Our good luck streak was about to end.

Our trip, which had been delayed the last two years due to Covid, included a 10-day roundtrip cruise from Copenhagen, Denmark up the coast of Norway. Then we were on our own with 2 nights in Copenhagen, a train ride to Stockholm, Sweden and 3 nights there before returning home. A total of 16 days.

Our overnight flight to London Heathrow and connecting flight put us in Copenhagen about 2 hours late. I turned on my phone and I had a message from the airline. Our bags did not make the connection, but they would be placed on the next flight which would land at 7:30 p.m. Unfortunately, our ship departed at 7:00.

An agent from our ship was waiting for us. She told us not to leave the airport without filing a claim for our lost bags. The baggage services company that handles our airline (and 14 others) had 2 people working and a line of about 20 customers yelling, swearing, and complaining in a variety of languages. There was a pile of hundreds of unclaimed bags nearby.

I dutifully filed our claim and asked the representative (she looked to be 16 years old) if they would be able to deliver our bags to Bergen, Norway, where we would dock in 2 days. She looked over the top of her glasses and flatly said “no.”

We were the last people to board the ship before they pulled up the gang plank. We tracked down Ramona,

the manager on the ship that handles lost baggage issues. She was very honest – “you will never see your bags again while you are on this cruise” and she was right.

We assessed our situation. In my small backpack I had a long sleeve t-shirt, cell phone and charger, camera, and 7 days of medications. I was wearing my hearing aids, but my charger was in my checked bag. Ellen had an extra change of clothing, her cell phone and charger, 7 days of medications, and a bag of Gummy Savers.

Ramona gave us toothbrushes and toothpaste, shaving cream in a tube, and a razor. She tried providing us with clothes from lost and found, but nothing fit. I wore the same pants for 16 days in a row.

Our ship was small by today's standards with about 500 passengers and 8 restaurants. It is very high end, and everything is included. They are something of a throw-back to the old days of cruising and still have a dress code in the evening. On a 10-day cruise, there were two formal nights (tux or at least a jacket and tie), 4 informal nights (sports coat, tie optional) and casual nights (collared shirt, no shorts). The dress code for women was the equivalent.

We were wearing hiking pants, t-shirts and running shoes. We were not comfortable eating in the nice restaurants, and ate at the grill outside, next to the pool, for most of the cruise.

After a day at sea, our first stop was Bergen, Norway, a very rainy place. The forecast was for a mostly sunny day, and we took off on our first hike. Of course, it started to rain, and we got soaked.



Johnny's bag at home.

(continued on Page 13)

(continued from Page 12)

That afternoon we went shopping for jackets, socks, deodorant, and underwear. We had days when the temperature never got above 50 degrees and one day it sleeted on us.

You may think that when the airline puts a tag on your bag with a bar code, they always know where your bag is located. That isn't necessarily true. And that's assuming the tag is still on the bag. We had an app on our phone where we could check our missing baggage claim every day.

After 16 days, we flew home without our bags. I continued to check for our bags online every day. One day I drove to DIA and talked to a real live person at the airline. I asked what she thought had happened to our bags. She said they were probably lost with the other 10,000 missing bags at Heathrow.

We were beginning to think we would never see our bags again. And then one day, the app reported they had found my bag and it would be delivered to our house. It showed up at 2 a.m. on July 31. It had been missing for 26 days.

A few weeks later I received a call from a woman in baggage services in Accra, Ghana. She said they had

Ellen's bag, and we could come pick it up anytime. I said we were not in Africa, we were in the U.S. Could they send it to us? She asked, "what is your nearest airport?" I said "Denver." She said, "it will be there tomorrow." It showed up 2 days later on August 24 with its Smokey Bear luggage tag intact. It had been missing 51 days

Lessons Learned

- If you attended the "Rick Steve's School of Packing" you would never check a bag in the first place. That is tough to do for trips where you need to "dress up."
- If you are going on a cruise, arrive at least one day before departure.
- Be sure to attach at least one sturdy ID tag to your bag. Also include ID inside your bag.
- You will be amazed what you can live without. We survived without our bags. The fjords in Norway were still beautiful and at the ABBA Museum in Stockholm you can wear whatever you want, and ABBA is still one of my all-time favorite bands.



Ellen's bag safely at home.

By the way, according to the app, the airline says Ellen's bag is still missing.

San Juan NF Retirees Picnic

September 14, 2022 - Elks Picnic Grounds, Durango, CO

by Bob Sieger



San Juan NF retirees, September 14, 2022.

Attendees included: Nona Dale, Bob Dressell, Pauline Ellis, Steve Hartvigson, Liz Hayden, Annett Hitchell, Mike Johnson, Cal Joyner, Brad Morrison and Rosie Ornella; Mike and Cheryl Murphy, Bob and Jan Newlin, John and Margie Quenoy, Tom and Georgena Rennick, Laurie Robison, Chris Schultz, Jim and Ann Shepherdson, Bruce Short, Bob and Mary Sieger, Mark and Bernie Stiles, Mark Tucker, Kay Zillich, June Dunn, widow of retiree, Wayne Dunn, Pat Lamay, widow of retiree, Ted Lamay.

The San Juan NF former employees and retirees picnic was held on September 14, 2022, at the Elks Picnic Grounds north of Durango. The picnic was organized by Nona Dale and Mike Murphy.

Bob Sieger gave a short presentation on the Rocky Mountaineers and a summary of the National Retirees Gathering, which was held in Lake Tahoe. Bob introduced Lorena “Lo” Williams, Shared Stewardship Project Coordinator, for the San Juan National Forest who gave a presentation on the major projects and programs on the San Juan NF. Lorena also gave an update on staffing changes on the Forest.

Some Highlights:

- Forest Supervisor, Kara Chadwick, is transferring to the RO in Region 5.
- The Columbine District Ranger position is currently vacant.
- The forest has had a difficult time filling vacant positions.

- The offices on the forest are open for the public. However, many employees are working remotely, with the exception of field going personnel. It is anticipated that the remote working arrangement will continue.

- The forest has a number of on-going major projects, including the Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative. <https://restoringtherockies.org/>

- There will be a 10th anniversary celebration of the designation of Chimney Rock as a National Monument on September 24th. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/sanjuan/specialplaces/?cid=FSEPRD1033862>

- The San Juan NF and the BLM are continuing to work together across boundaries.



Lorena Williams, San Juan NF speaks to the retirees.

Lorena answered a number of questions from the attendees regarding staffing, office openings, and additional projects on the forest. All attendees look forward to improving communications with the San Juan.

Tips For a New Code of the West

Editor's Note: We saw this short article in the Jeffco Transcript published out of Jefferson County, Colorado and thought that Forest Service folks have been aware of the Old West Code for a long time. Forest Service families were newcomers in many small communities and also welcomed lots of "newbies" to their communities

*With permission by
Dave Marston
Writers on the Range*

It's not always easy living in the rural West, with customs so entrenched that everybody takes them for granted. What makes it hard for the newest newcomers is that they're caught up in a mysterious culture.

Learning the Old West code was easy decades ago.



Norwood, Colorado

Novelist Zane Gray's "Code of the West" told men to wear a hat only outdoors, to never wave but nod at someone on horseback, and to treat women

with chivalry. You - and you were always presumed to be male - were also advised to take your gun belt off before sitting down to eat.

But here we are in 2022, and from what county officials and some jaundiced newcomers tell me, the cultural confusion for newcomers almost always starts with private property. For example, the newbies tend to get huffy about their boundaries and can't believe they have to fence livestock out.

Wyoming, of course, is a classic fence-out state where cows outnumber people more than 2 to 1. Irrigation is another area of contention, as water law can be murky. A ditch may run close to your property but that doesn't mean you can take water out of it.

To make the urban-rural transition easier, I've collected 10 tips guaranteed to ease you into your new life. But first, know that you will *never* become an old-timer, although with patience you might become what Western historian Hal Rothman dubbed a "neo-native." Here's hoping this helps:

1. Always wave at neighbors when you see them and make eye contact with everyone who passes you, either in a car or on foot. This is not a challenge; it means you're neighborly. And be cordial to everyone you see at the post office because you will see them everywhere. You may even see their dual personas, as many locals must work two or even three jobs to pay the rent.

2. Never go for a long hike with new boots. Take enough water and food for yourself and to share. Bring a rain jacket and sweater and waterproof matches. The saying "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes," is dead-on accurate. And when someone on a hike assures you that "it's all downhill," it's only partially uphill. "A little technical" means the mountain has hair-raising sections, while "just around the corner" means the end of the trail is not.



Hot Springs, South Dakota

3. Realize that nobody is more important than anybody else. Rich and poor may sport raggedy clothes. Notable figures in town are probably dogs; learn their names.

4. Know that it's considered rude to insult a person's dog, but if it comes on your land and harasses your cattle, you can shoot the dog. If your dog chases wildlife, you're in for a big fine and maybe worse.

(continued on Page 16)

(continued from Page 15)

6. Notice that law enforcement people are not the only people carrying guns, and a gun on the hip doesn't necessarily indicate political party.



La Prele Guard Station, south of Douglas, Wyoming

7. Always stop to help people on a trail or road because federal agencies are spread too thin for fast rescues. Locals would stop to help you, even if your hat logo fails to reflect their politics.

8. You might be bored senseless, but you will learn what local public service is all about if you sample meetings from school board to county commission. And immediately volunteer at a nonprofit or two, while also subscribing to your local paper if you're lucky enough to have one.



Bessey Ranger District, Nebraska

9. Clean jeans are considered dress-up.

10. Forego saying you're pretty good at something unless you have a death wish. For example, in Durango, Flagstaff or Jackson, saying you're a "good" mountain biker or skier is an invitation to be politely left behind at midday.



Elkbar, Kansas

Bonus tip: If you think about buying a house next to a yard full of old farm implements, don't be tempted. That yard collection is permanent. Complaining, however, rarely works in the rural place you've adopted. A painful lesson might be that like it or not, you can only change yourself. Wagon wheels are always a safe decoration.



Conejos Peak Ranger Station, La Jara, Colorado

Dave Marston is the publisher of *Writers on the Range*, writersontherange.org, an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He grew up in rural Colorado.

Writers on the Range supports local journalism by working with the region's best essayists and thought leaders and paying them for their talent. They develop editorials about the economic, cultural and legislative change taking place in the west with a focus on natural resources and public lands.

Know Your State Foresters



Bill Crapser, State Forester for Wyoming

Bill Crapser is the State Forester of Wyoming. The State Forester leads the Wyoming State Division of Forestry. The Division is charged with the management, protection, and improvement of all forest interests and matters pertaining to forestry within the State of Wyoming, including fire protection and prevention, forest management, urban/community forestry, implementing the National Fire Plan, forest stewardship, and several other service programs.

Bill came to the state from LP Corp., where he managed the forest resource team at the company's location in Saratoga – a position he held since 2000. From 1993 – 2000 Bill served as resource and supply manager for Weyerhaeuser in Montana and Washington. In addition to his work with the forest products industry, Bill has also served as vice-president of the Montana Wood Products Association, chair of the Forestry Committee of the American Pulpwood Association, and President of the Wyoming Timber Industry Association. He is currently the chair of the Central Rockies Sustainable Forestry committee. Bill holds a bachelor's degree in forest management from the University of Montana.



John Erixson, State Forester for Nebraska

Before coming to the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS), **John Erixson**, a Nebraska native, spent more than 20 years managing natural resources in Idaho for a private consulting firm. He holds bachelor and master's degrees in resource management from the University of Idaho. He is an active member of several regional and national organizations, including the Nebraska Riparian Task Force, National Association of State Foresters, and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

"There is an impressive legacy of forest stewardship in Nebraska," Erixson said. "A large part of my role starts with serving Nebraskans and giving back to my home state."

Erixson assumed leadership of the forest service at a challenging time. The emerald ash borer was discovered in Omaha in June 2016, and has since been confirmed in Lincoln and Fremont. It's expected to destroy most of Nebraska's green ash trees as it spreads across the state. In response, NFS has been at the forefront of ash wood utilization, finding new and innovative ways to prevent wood waste and explore new markets. This spring, NFS' fire program was pivotal in supplying volunteer fire departments with the vehicles and equipment they needed to assist in flood recovery efforts.

(continued on Page 18)

(continued from Page 17)

Know Your State Foresters (continued)



Matt McCombs, State Forester for Colorado

Matthew McCombs is the Colorado State Forester and Director of the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). Prior to joining the CSFS in January of 2022, McCombs served as the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger for the 1.3-million-acre Gunnison Ranger District, part of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests. McCombs' career has spanned natural resources and other government experience. He has worked as the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger for the Appalachian Ranger District and as an aide to Senators Ken Salazar and Jon Tester. McCombs is also a veteran, having deployed to Iraq in 2003 as a combat medic with the Colorado Army National Guard and having served as a Medical Service Officer in the Montana Air National Guard, where he achieved the rank of captain before leaving the service in 2012.



Jason Hartman, State Forester for Kansas

Jason Hartman is the State Forester stationed in the State Office in Manhattan. The State Forester oversees, supports and encourages a wide variety of resource management, conservation, and wildland fire management activities of the agencies employees across the state.

In his previous role as an Assistant Fire Management Officer for the Kansas Forest Service, Hartman worked with fire departments, private landowners, communities, and partner agencies on wildland fire education, preparedness, training, response, prevention, and prescribed fire. This work included promoting NFPA's Firewise Communities program in Kansas as well as working with the Kansas Prescribed Fire Council on statewide prescribed fire capacity issues such as prescribed burn associations and smoke management.

He graduated from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in Forestry in 2001.



Marcus Warnke, State Forester for South Dakota

Marcus Warnke was born and raised in Rapid City, SD and after high school he went on to earn a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Forest Resource Management from the University of Montana, Missoula. During summer breaks, Marcus returned to the Black Hills to work seasonal positions with the Black Hills National Forest.

After working various temporary forestry positions with the Black Hills National Forest, Marcus accepted the Forest Health Service Forester position with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture Resource Conservation & Forestry Division in May 2012. Over the past 10 years, he has worked his way up through the division and in 2018 Marcus was selected to attend the Governor's Leadership Development Program through USDA, and earned a graduate certificate in Organizational Leadership. He became the State Forester in June 2022. Marcus married Kelly (Owens) Warnke in 2012, has two children and enjoys woodworking, timber-framing, camping, hiking, and traveling with his family.

Stuff to Do When You Retire

Take a Rail Trail

By Mary Ann Chambers



Interpretive sign at Lincoln Gulch.

There was an article in the New York Times entitled, “Eight Rails to Trails Adventures in the U.S.” by Lauren Sloss. One of the trails listed was the Med Bow Rail Trail.

It made me think of Clint Kyhl, who was a District Ranger on the Laramie District when the idea for Med Bow Rail

Trail emerged. Of course, it was controversial and involved a long court battle. Clint stuck with it, along with others on the Medicine Bow Routt National Forest. The Med Bow Rail Trail is now there for us to enjoy. Sadly, Clint passed away a few years ago. He is sorely missed by many of us who had the pleasure of working with him. I had not been on the Med Bow Rail Trail and wanted to try it.

can handle dirt or gravel roads. Even lightweights like me would feel comfortable on this mostly flat or gently sloping trail. You can hike the trail too. We started at Lake Owen and rode a little way past Lincoln Gulch. There were interesting interpretive signs at the trailheads and picnic tables for a nice lunch. The trail also travels through areas burned by the Squirrel Fire. It severely damaged an old caboose at the Lake Owen Trailhead and melted the plastic windows of the outhouse there. Fire scars are a great interpretive tool and I am always interested in seeing how they evolve after such seemingly cataclysmic wildfires.



Burned trees along the trail.

It was peaceful, quiet and things were growing there. It was a great ride. Despite the fire scars, the vistas were beautiful. The ride was easy, so there was time to enjoy the sights.

According to railstotrails.org, Rails to Trails started informally in the mid-west in the 1960s. As railroads started abandoning unprofitable rail lines,

people started using them as trails. In 1965, the Elroy Sparta State Trail in Wisconsin became the first officially designated Rail Trail. The Rails to Trails Conservancy promotes the rail trails and volunteer efforts for them. Visit railstotrails.org for more information. To find rail trails near you, go to railstotrails.org and scroll down to their TrailLink search feature.

In the Forest Service, we all have had the opportunity to work on projects directly or indirectly that connect people with the land or affect the land. Whatever else happens, the squabbles and the politics, we all have that in common and that is what binds us all after our work is done and we do stuff in retirement.



Burned caboose at Lake Owen trailhead.

On a beautiful July day this summer, My husband Carl and I, loaded up the bikes headed to the trailhead just south of Albany, Wyoming.

The trail is mostly gravel, with some dirt stretches and suitable for a mountain bike or hybrid bike that

NMFSH Oral History Program

Over the past year, the National Museum of Forest Service History has made great strides toward creating a sustainable and productive oral history program. Under the direction of Dr. James Wall, the program has interviewed a wide cross section of Forest Service retirees and spouses. At the same time, Dr. Wall is working to bring these interviews to the public through new mediums. Over the course of the



Dr. James Wall interviewing retirees in Denver, May, 2022.

summer of 2022, Dr. Wall has worked to create a podcast that showcases the contributions of the wives of the Forest Service. That podcast, **“What Did We Get Ourselves Into?”** was launched at the 2022 Forest Service Retirees Reunion just a few weeks ago in South Lake Tahoe.

“What Did We Get Ourselves Into?” looks at the world through the eyes of a group of intrepid women who “married the outfit” in the decades following World War II. To exchange vows with a forester promised an itinerant life filled with constant moves, remote backcountry districts, dangerous wildlife encounters, and endless toil.

The first two episodes of the podcast have already been released and are available to stream on our website (www.forestservicehistory.org/oral-history-program/podcasts) and are also available on Apple Podcasts.

The podcast will continue through the fall and a new episode will be released each month. Coming up in October, our third episode will feature the stories of

Carma Bosworth, who married the outfit in 1965 and spent the next 41 years climbing to the top of the Forest Service with her husband Dale.

In the meantime, thanks to the continued support of our donors, Dr. Wall will be expanding his efforts to interview folks across the country. These trips will build upon the first successful journey to Denver this past May, where Dr. Wall interviewed over twenty narrators in the scope of one week.

The interviewees included Glen Hetzel, Jackie Parks, Dave Anderson, Wally Gallaher, John Korb, Melanie Woolever, Ellie Towns Jerry Schmidt, James Webb, Jim Lawrence, Lloyd Newland, and Bjorn Dahl.

The NMFSH Oral History Program, working with our members, volunteered to conduct interviews at the Wildland Hydrologists Reunion, and added several interviews with longtime Forest Service employees who shed new light on the history of the outfit in storied Region Two. If you are interested in learning more about the Oral History Program at NMFSH or recommending someone to be interviewed, please reach out to Dr. Wall at

james.wall@forestservicehistory.org or 406-541-6374.



Lloyd Newland, retired engineer from the Regional Office in Denver was interviewed at the Regional Office in Denver - May 2022.

(continued on Page 21)

(continued from Page 20)

In this exciting new podcast, you will learn what it was like to marry into the Forest Service during its early years. You will hear stories of rugged terrain, unforgiving dirt roads, spartan housing accommodations, difficult childbirths, wild animal encounters, and much more. You will be taken inside a world that time has left behind, a world powered by loud diesel generators, crank telephones, and wood stoves.

“What Did We Get Ourselves Into?”, premiering August 2022, will be essential listening that acknowledges those ordinary families who made extraordinary efforts to achieve “The Greatest Good.”



Linda Hicks with her children on the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, near Kooskia, Idaho, c.1980.



Linda Hicks, Forest Service spouse, tells her story in Bonner, Montana, 2022.



What Did We Get Ourselves Into?

A new podcast from the Oral History Program at the National Museum of Forest Service History

A fun and educational look back at the wives of the early Forest Service. Their stories of being unpaid employees of the U.S. Forest Service and the adventure of “going along for the ride” on a lifetime in the middle part of the 1900s.

www.forestservicemuseum.org/oral-history-program/podcasts

National Museum's History Corner

Sharing the rich history and stories
of America's conservation legacy



National Reunion Chairperson, Nancy Gibson waves a fond farewell to the large crowd of retirees headed home after a super-successful reunion.

First, many thanks to Reunion Chair **Nancy Gibson** and her team for doing everything they could to ensure we had the best possible time – safely – at the Golden State Gathering: With a Silver Lining, South Lake Tahoe, August 29 – September 2. Nancy first agreed to chair

the reunion about four years ago. Covid and the 2021 fire season were merely bumps in the road for Nancy and her incredible team.

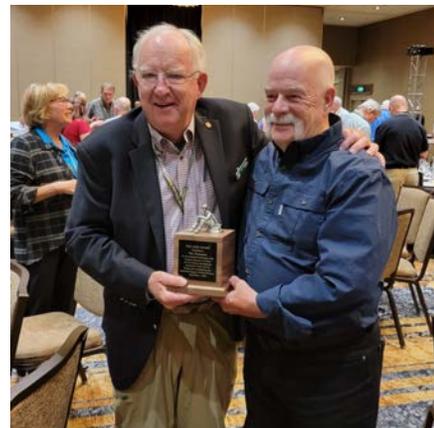
Nancy's team was supported by current USFS employees from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit; Humboldt-Toiyabe, Mendocino, Eldorado, Tahoe and Plumas National Forests; and Region 5's Regional Office. All shared their knowledge of the area, which enhanced our experience, including the tours to nearby scenic and historic sites. The 400+ attendees included of course many retirees, Chief Randy Moore and his National Leadership Council, and the past four chiefs: Vicky Christiansen, Tom Tidwell, Gail Kimbell, and Dale Bosworth.

For more information about the 2022 reunion, including photos and final thoughts from Nancy Gibson, go to: <https://2022fsretireereunion.org/>



Lisa Tate and Tom Thompson shared the stage.

There were many reunion highlights. Executive Director **Lisa Tate** and President **Tom Thompson** provided updates on the Conservation Legacy Center, including progress on architectural design and construction planning, and development of the opening exhibition. Lisa and Tom's presentations really hit home with attendees - 17 new Museum memberships!



Tom Thompson and Richard Stem.

At the Thursday night banquet, President **Tom Thompson** and Board member **Rich Stem** were both presented the **Leisz Leadership Award**, which recognizes their outstanding leadership (and actions!) on behalf of the Museum and the National Association of Forest Service Retirees.

(continued on Page 23)

(continued from Page 22)

Dave Jolly, the Museum's long-serving Southern Region Director, received the **Gary P. Brown Founders Award** for his tireless work that supported the establishment, organization, and operation of the Museum. Dave knew former Montana State Forester Gary Brown and was the Regional Forester for the Northern Region (R-1) when Chief Dale Robertson made the decision to locate the Museum in Missoula. Dave was unable to attend the reunion so Board member Barb Tormoehlen accepted the award on his behalf.

Please plan to join us in Missoula in 2025 for the next reunion! We expect to begin construction of the Conservation Legacy Center (CLC) by mid-2023, so we plan to have a celebration of the opening of the CLC – the Museum's flagship building on our 31-acre campus. 2025 will be the 10th national gathering of USFS retirees (past nine reunions: 1991-Glenwood Springs, CO; 1995-Park City, UT; 2000-Missoula, MT; 2005-Portland, OR; 2009-Missoula, MT; 2012-Vail, CO; 2015-Albuquerque, NM; 2018-Asheville, NC; and 2022-So. Lake Tahoe, CA). The Museum is the sponsor of USFS Retiree reunions which are fundraisers for the organization.

Conservation Legacy Center – Still our Our Highest Priority!

Our highest priority continues to be completing the Capital Campaign for the Conservation Legacy Center (CLC), the flagship building on our Missoula campus. CLC key points:

- Our current Capital Campaign goal is \$14 million. To date we have raised 83% of our goal.
 - ✓ The largest % of donors have been individuals, primarily USFS retirees/ Museum members. Other donor/investors include grants from foundations and donations from corporate/industry partners.
 - ✓ 100% of the CLC lumber needed for the cross-laminated and framing components has been donated thanks to the incredible work of Rich Stem and his Timber sector team. Lumber donations have been secured from 14 forest product companies in six states (ID, MT, NM, OR, SC, and WA).

✓ Included in the funds raised to date is a \$3.5 million Congressional appropriation for the Museum's repository. We recently completed a partnership agreement with USFS-Region 1 regarding these funds and the repository and collection management services the Museum will provide.

- We continue to work closely with Chief Architect Tom Chung and his company ([Leers Weinzapfel Associates](#)) on the building design and construction plans. We have made several improvements to the design to maximize our funding (e.g., repository will be on ground level due to higher cost of constructing a basement in clay soils). Mr. Chung has donated a considerable amount of his time to our project.
- Our exhibition core team continues to work closely with our contractor, [Art Processors](#), and their team of designers on the CLC opening exhibition. We recently completed the 50% schematic design phase and are working now to select the topics, stories, artifacts, and audio-visual technologies.
- **We are working hard to bridge the gap of the remaining approx. \$2.4 million needed!** The Museum has established a Sectors Strategy Committee, which is focusing our Capital Campaign fundraising efforts on five existing sectors (Minerals & Energy, Range, Ski Industry, Technology, and Timber) and these new sectors:
 - Recreation (sub-sectors: motorized, horse groups, water sports, hikers, bicyclists)
 - CLC building infrastructure (e.g., HVAC, concrete, electrical, plumbing, paint, furnishings)
 - Research & Development
 - State & Private Forestry
 - Water (including “Forests to Faucets”)
 - Wilderness
 - Wildlife & Fish
 - Other sectors?

If you have personal contacts in these sectors (or otherwise) with potential donations of materials, services (or cash!), to support the CLC building and/or our opening exhibition, please contact Lisa at lisa.tate@forestservice-museum.org or ph. 406-541-6374.

(continued on Page 24)

(continued from Page 23)

CLC Tree-like Support Columns – Can You Help Us Secure the Wood?

One of the unique features of the CLC building design is 16 tree-like support columns that support the cross laminated timber roof. These 16 “trees” will be hand crafted using beautiful, historic, timber frame joinery. Each “tree” will feature a different species of wood representing forests from across America. Our architect is working with Board member Brian Leisz (timber framing expert) and a structural engineer to determine which of the different species of wood posts (11” X 11”, 12’ long) we currently own that are suitable to use in the construction of the tree-like columns. We will soon ask for donations of wood from species we don’t yet have (e.g., American chestnut, Sitka spruce). Do you know sources of wood or have connections to a sawmill that might have suitable wood?



Ranger & Station Director Roll Call

A few hard copies of the interim Ranger and Station Director Roll Call reports were available for USFS reunion attendees to review at South Lake Tahoe. The lists of research station directors have been completed for all seven stations and transmitted to the current station directors and the Deputy Chief for Research & Development. Kudos to the Museum volunteers and USFS employees who made this possible, including for the Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS): **Wayne Shepperd** and **Steve Ambrose** (both USFS retirees and Museum volunteers); **Jennifer Hayes**, Public Affairs Officer, RMRS; and **Rick Fletcher**, RMRS (retired).

(continued on Page 25)

(continued from Page 24)

Beginning in 2019, an incredible amount of work by Museum volunteers, USFS employees, and others, has resulted in complete (or nearly so) lists of rangers and/or supervisors for 63 national forests & grasslands.

You can view the completed records for all stations, forests, and grasslands here: [Advanced Search Results | National Museum of Forest Service History \(pastperfectonline.com\)](https://www.pastperfectonline.com/advanced-search-results-national-museum-of-forest-service-history).

Regarding Region 2, the Museum is pleased to announce that ranger lists have been completed for the following national forest/grassland units. This would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance provided by:

Museum Volunteers

- Bill Bass**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Sheridan, WY
- Brent Botts**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Colorado Springs, CO
- Dave Cawrse**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Fort Collins, CO
- Brad Exton**, USFS retiree and Museum volunteer, Hot Springs, SD
- Jim Free**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Montrose, CO
- John Heaton**, USFS retiree and Museum volunteer, Fort Collins, CO
- Ellen Hodges**, USFS retiree and Museum volunteer, Fort Collins, CO
- Elaine Langstaff**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Rifle, CO
- Pat Lynch**, USFS retiree, Museum Board member, Encampment, WY
- Dan Nolan**, USFS retiree, Director of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Hot Sulphur Springs, CO
- Sig Palm**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Sheridan, WY
- Jerry Schmidt**, USFS retiree, member of Museum's R-2 Cadre, Laramie, WY
- Samantha Hamilton**, graduate student, environmental science, Johns Hopkins University

Arapaho and Roosevelt NFs and Pawnee NG

- Kathy Anderson**, Office Automation Asst., Clear Creek RD
- BJ Duffy**, Administrative Asst., Sulphur RD
- Larry Fullenkamp**, North Zone Archaeologist
- Scott Haas**, District Ranger, Clear Creek RD
- Vern Koeler**, Lands and Minerals
- Leslie McFadden**, Lands and Mineral Program Manager
- Patty Ybright-Jessop**, Exec. Asst. to Forest Supervisor

Bighorn National Forest

- Kathy Kennedy**, SO
- Marvin Mathieson**, Medicine Wheel RD

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

- Candy Read**, Executive Assistant to the Forest Supervisor and Deputy

Nebraska NF and NGs

- Jack Isaacs**, Forest & Grassland Supervisor, Chadron, NE

Forest History Society

- Lauren Bissonette**, Librarian, Forest History Society

The Museum is still working on supervisor lists for the eight R-2 units (listed above) and also would appreciate your help with creating both ranger and supervisor lists for the Rio Grande, San Juan, and Shoshone.

If you can help, please contact **Andy Mason**, Museum Board member, acmason1954@gmail.com, or call Andy at (571) 214-5536.



NAFSR Report

*by Sharon Friedman, Rocky Mountain
Region NAFSR representative*

Jamie Connell is the new Acting Vice Chair of NAFSR for six months. You may remember her from her time with the BLM in Colorado as State Director.

News from the Reunion in Lake Tahoe

On Monday afternoon, NAFSR held a two-hour open house for our members. Our chair, Steve Ellis, gave an overview of current issues we are working on.

Monday evening featured a social/icebreaker for all reunion attendees sponsored by NAFSR; with almost all 400 retirees in attendance.

- During lunch time on Tuesday, NAFSR Board members and the Fire Committee met with Chief Randy Moore, Associate Chief Angela Coleman and several members of the Forest Service leadership team for a roundtable discussion on managing fire.

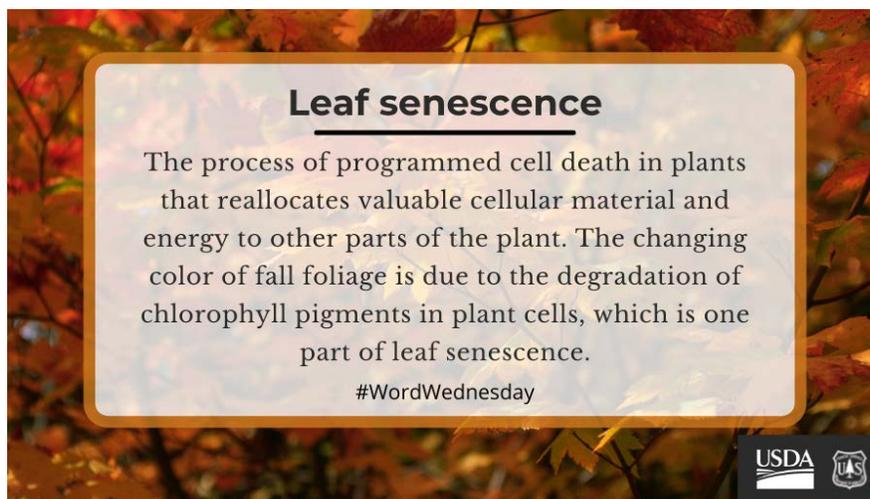
- Following the Chief, there was a "Recreation Strategies Panel" presentation. The NAFSR Recreation Committee, chaired by Nora Rasure, arranged the panel. Nora served as the moderator.

- The three speakers were Chris French, USFS; Colin Robertson, Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation; and Julie Regan, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. We have provided links to each of their presentations on our website. Go about halfway down the left hand column on our home page and they are under the title "NAFSR Recreation Committee Panel."

- Thursday evening at the banquet, Tom Thompson and Rich Stem each received the 2022 Doug Leisz Leadership Award. The award is made jointly with NAFSR and the National Museum of Forest Service History. The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership as a volunteer in NAFSR and/or NMFSSH. Congratulations to Tom and Rich!

In other news

NAFSR, jointly with the Public Lands Foundation and the Society of American Foresters, commented on the USDA/DOI request for comments on managing mature and old-growth forests.



The Wood Chip Pile

A nice little smattering of media from around the world that will make you a little smarter.

Rock Chock Smokey

Did you know that Smokey Bear has a Kansas connection? Learn about the origins of this beloved character and the Kansas roots of his illustrator, Rudy Wendelin. Along the way, we'll discuss New Deal public works programs, fears about Nazi spies during WWII, the environmental movement, and a mural in Rawlins County, Kansas.

<https://www.humanitieskansas.org/get-involved/kansas-stories/nature/kansas-1972-only-you>



Editor's Note: *This lovely bookmark was given to me for my birthday this year inside a good summer book to read. I noted to this close family member the they were in violation of 36 CFR § 261.22 - Unauthorized use of "Smokey Bear" and "Woodsy Owl" symbol. They thanked me for my concern, told me to 'relax boomer,' and reminded me that I was retired and that Smokey didn't mind.*

Reimagine Recreation

From your USDA Forest Service

Americans are finding connections to national forests and grasslands in greater numbers than ever before. Visitation to national forests and grasslands in 2020 surged to a record-breaking 168 million visits, more visitors who came to safely recreate, be restored, and create new memories.

We have embarked on a year-long process for self-reflection and external conversation to learn what we need to do better in our recreation program. In other words, we need to answer the question: "What would it look like if we were wildly successful in this endeavor."

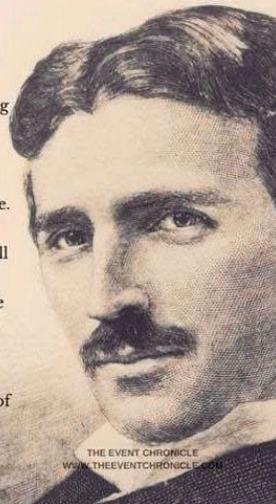
We are going to reimagine what recreation looks like on national forests and grasslands, and we are inviting you to take this journey with us.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/recreation/reimagine-recreation>

Nikola Tesla Describing a Cell Phone in 1926

"When wireless is perfectly applied the whole earth will be converted into a huge brain, which in fact it is, all things being particles of a real and rhythmic whole. We shall be able to communicate with one another instantly, irrespective of distance. Not only this, but through television and telephony we shall see and hear one another as perfectly as though we were face to face, despite intervening distances of thousands of miles, and the instruments through which we shall be able to do all of this, will fit in our vest pockets."

Nikola Tesla, 1926



Nikola Tesla predicting the future once again - any of the below cell phones look familiar in your career with the Forest Service?



Smokey Stuff



Seen at the Pikes Peak gift shop.



Smokey mini building blocks at the Pikes Peak gift shop.



**HAPPY
78TH
BIRTHDAY
SMOKEY**



Lego Smokey would be a perfect Christmas Gift this year!



As seen at the Alpine Visitor Center, high atop Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park.

“That’s the Way I Remember it”

Each newsletter we will be featuring a story about retirees from R-2

Bill Ott



Barb Ott, TEAMS Planning Director, Jonathan Ott, Recreation Tech, Boulder Ranger RD-ARF (currently Engine Captain, BLM, Dolores, CO), Bill Ott R2 Deputy Director FAM/OSH, 2012.

My biological dad died in July 1959 while working as a range and wildlife staff on the San Juan National Forest. He died in the line of duty while working on horseback north of Dolores, Colorado, when his horse was hit by a logging truck. My mom, Mary Ann, remarried to Jack Ott, a forester on the Mancos District and the two of them raised a family of seven children there. I became exposed to and interested in forestry through the 4-H program where my dad was the adult leader for the forestry club.

Barb spent her formative years in Custer, SD. After her dad, Francis, retired from the USFS in 1967, he went on to be a county commissioner for Custer County and had the memorable experience of escaping from the Courthouse when AIM (American Indian Movement) came to town and attempted to burn it down in the mid-1970s.

TR: Tell us about your kids.

BO: We have two children Jonathan & Amanda who were born in Vail Colorado (1988 & 90) while we were working on the Holy Cross Ranger District. In 1992, we moved to Ashland, Montana where I accepted a position as District Ranger on the Custer National Forest. Barb took an extended leave of absence to be a full-time mom and pursue an advanced degree. Jonathan and Amanda began grade school in Ashland and had classmates from the local ranching community and the Northern Cheyenne tribe.

The time in Ashland had some parallels to my experience working in a third world country (Honduras) as a Peace Corps Volunteer. The community was rather isolated, had limited services and a high unemployment and poverty rate.

The Rendezvous: Where were you born and raised?

Bill Ott: I was born in Ames, Iowa while my biological dad (Bill Rawlings) was pursuing a second bachelor's degree in wildlife biology. My wife Barb was born in Rapid City, South Dakota.

I was raised on the western slope of Colorado and moved with my parents to their postings with the USFS, from New England to the 25 Mesa Ranger Station Uncompahgre NF, Delta, Montrose, Durango and Mancos, Colorado. I graduated from Mancos High School in 1971.

Barb was raised in Custer, South Dakota where her dad Francis was posted for much of his career as the first Forest Engineer in Region 2 on the Black Hills NF. She graduated from Custer High School in 1974.

TR: Tell us a little more about growing up.

BO: Both of us grew up in Forest Service families, in small, rural communities in the Rocky Mountain Region.

(continued on Page 30)

(continued from Page 29)

As with many Forest Service families, we had several moves throughout our careers. After Ashland, MT, we went to the Uinta National Forest where I had accepted a position as District Ranger in Spanish Fork. Barb served as the social scientist/economist on the Forest Plan Revision team. The change from southeast Montana's remote eastern plains to an "urban" National Forest on the Wasatch Front was pretty extreme in terms of culture, amenities, population, and very different demands of the public from their National Forests.

TR: You've got an amazing Forest Service family history – tell us more.



Jack and Mary Ann Ott (Bill's parents) Mancos Hill, Colorado (Jack was Assistant Ranger, Mancos RD, San Juan NF), circa 1982.

BO: My biological dad (Bill Rawlings) and stepdad (Jack Ott) both had careers with the US Forest Service, exclusively in Region 2. He began his

career on the recently combined Grand Mesa and Uncompahgre National Forests. He had just completed his MS in Forestry at the University of New Hampshire, Durham in 1956, when he received his first appointment as a "Junior Forester," GS-460-5 at \$3,670 per year in June of that year. Their family of three pre-school children spent their summers at the 25 Mesa Ranger Station on the Uncompahgre Plateau and their first winter in Delta and their second in Montrose. Dad transferred to the San Juan SO in 1958.

Following my father's death in 1959, my mom remarried Jack Ott. He received his forestry degree from Michigan State University and after some work out of the Regional Office doing bark beetle surveys and TSI around Kremmling and on the Black Hills, the draft caught up with him and he spent two years in the

Korean War. After discharge, he resumed his career on the San Juan NF...first on the Animas RD out of Durango, then the Mancos RD where he remained for the entirety of his career, retiring in 1982. He passed in 2014 at his home on Mancos Hill. He "trained" nearly a dozen Rangers during his posting in Mancos.

TR: Tell us about Barb's father.

BO: Barb's dad, Francis Freeland began his career in about 1930 and served as the Assistant Superintendent for the CCC camp at Woodland Park. Subsequently he worked throughout R2 as an engineer. The annual work cycle included summers camped out to conduct extensive road survey work across forests principally in South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado with the winters spent in the Regional Office doing the design work for subsequent road construction projects. He was assigned as the Forest Engineer on the Black Hills National Forest in 1952 and served in that capacity until he retired in 1967. Francis passed away at the age of 93 in 1997.

TR: What are your two children doing now?

BO: Our son Jonathan received his first permanent assignment on the Manti-LaSal National Forest in Utah and is currently working as an Engine Captain for the BLM in Dolores, Colorado. Our daughter Amanda has pursued studies in outdoor recreation and worked seasonally for the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and for Colorado Mountain Expeditions on the Colorado Trail. She currently resides near us in the Denver area.



Bill Rawlings (Bill's biological dad), Junior Forester, Grand Mesa and Uncompahgre NFs, 25-Mesa Ranger Station, 1956.

(continued on Page 31)

(continued from Page 30)

TR: Where did you go to school – early school and college - and what was your favorite subject?

BO: After high school graduation, I started at a pre-forestry program at Fort Lewis College in Durango before transferring to Colorado State University. I completed my BS in forest management there in 1975.

One of my favorite courses was forest mensuration which included a two-week field trip to a variety of forest industries in southwest Colorado and Arizona. Of the dozen or so facilities that were visited for time-and-motion studies, only one or two are still in business today. I returned to Colorado State University later in my career and completed an MS degree with a focus on strategic management.



*First Female Fire Crew on the Black Hills NF, September 1983, L-R:
Back Row: Sandy Kroger, Bonnie Thompson, Phyllis Haar, Jane Capps
Second Row: Barb Freeland (Ott), Nancy Goodwin, Sanna Weber,
Wanda Wheeler
First Row: Carol Thomas, Kim Lentz, Starr Enyeart, Michele Shaw*

TR: Let's chat a bit about your mom's career.

BO: My mother, Mary Ann had an interesting "career path" involved as of a full-time homemaker, raising seven children. She completed her college education at Mt. Holyoke and American International Colleges in Massachusetts. Education was a priority for her. Two of her children received their college degrees in forestry, two in geology, one in anthropology and one in history.

One started his own logging and sawmill business and has one of the few remaining mills in operation in Colorado. The seven children churned out 5-MS/MA degrees and one PhD.

TR: Now let's talk about your wife Barb and the journey she took in the Forest Service.

BO: Barb completed a BA in Business Administration with an emphasis in accounting at Chadron State College, Nebraska. In 1977, she started as a volunteer

intern student on the Black Hills National Forest in Budget and Finance, where she later obtained her first permanent appointment as a Voucher Examiner and later became an Accounting Technician. While on the Black Hills, Barb became active in fire business management and also was a member of the Black Hill's first all-female fire crew.

As a result of that experience, she was asked to make a presentation to the Regional Fire Management Officers about "Women in Fire." In 1984 she accepted an assignment as the support Service Supervisor on the Custer Ranger District where she and I met. We were married in 1986 and both transferred to the White River NF.

Barb was initially detailed to the Dillon Ranger District and later became the Support Services Supervisor on the Holy Cross Ranger District in

Minturn, CO where we started our family. From there we moved to the Custer NF in SE Montana. While in Ashland, Barb completed her MS in Management with a special study of rural economic development. She conducted a survey and wrote a community action plan that was adopted by the community and used to pursue grant funding for needed improvements. The first of those was the community's first medical clinic. Barb received the National Leadership Award for Rural Community Assistance in 1995 from the Chief of the Forest Service for her efforts. That experience helped change her Forest Service career focus and she began working in NEPA. One of her first NEPA projects was as the 'social Scientist and Writer Editor for the high profile Cooke City Mineral Withdrawal outside of Yellowstone National Park. Her next assignment was to the Forest Plan revision team on the Uinta National Forest as a Social Scientist.

(continued on Page 32)

(continued from Page 31)

Once the revision was completed, she signed on with the TEAMS Enterprise Unit as a social scientist and later as an economist. She completed her career as the Planning Director for TEAMS. Her time with the enterprise program afforded her the pleasure of working on projects throughout the National Forest System.

Both Barb and I retired at the end of 2015 with about 80 years of combined service to the agency.

TR: How did you all get interested in a job with the U.S. Forest Service and what were some of your first duties?

BO: During college I spent my summers working for either the US Forest Service or the US National Park Service. My interest in forestry came from my

experiences with my two dads, particularly with Jack. He was the 4-H leader for our forestry club in which I participated for seven years.

My first job with the USFS was as a seasonal on the Dolores RD in 1971..., just out of high school. I began that spring, planting Engelmann spruce in large clearcuts and spent the rest of the summer doing bark beetle control work (spraying of ethylene dibromide) on infested logging slash.

After college, I found that there was a lot of competition from returning Vietnam War veterans for

USFS positions. In fact, my first supervisor on the aforementioned job was a Vietnam veteran who later became the Timber Staff Officer on the San Juan NF. In order to gain a competitive edge and for the adventure, I joined the Peace Corps and received an assignment as a forester in Honduras, Central America where I served for two years. From there I received my first permanent appointment as a

GS-460-09 forester on the Bears Ears District of the Routt NF, out of Craig, Colorado.

TR: What was your first job and GS rating with the Forest Service?

BO: My first job was the seasonal job on the San Juan NF. My job title was “Worker Leader” WL-2 (wage grade). The rest of my summer seasonal jobs during college were as a Fire Control Aid and Park Technician at Mesa Verde National Park near where I grew up.

TR: Tell us a little about your career and the different jobs you’ve held.

BO: From the forester position on the Routt, I was promoted to a forester position on the GMUG out of Gunnison where I was the staff for timber, soil and water programs. From there I transferred to the Black Hills as the TMA and then back to Colorado on the White River NF with responsibilities for a wide range of District programs including timber, range and wildlife, soil and water, archaeology and fire management. Along the way I became qualified as a Timber Sale Contracting Officer and as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss and Operations Section Chief.

I served on incident management teams in Regions 1, 2 and 4. I had two assignments as a District Ranger (R1 and R4), detail assignments as a Forest AO (Custer NF), Deputy Forest Supervisor (Black Hills), Deputy Director for Fire and Aviation Management (R4), Assistant Director Fire Operations and Deputy Director FAM and Occupation Safety (R2) and Senior Advisor for Work Force Development and Training FAM (WO and NIFC). I had numerous temporary assignments throughout Mexico, Central America (Honduras) and Caribbean (Dominican Republic) and South America (Peru) providing technical assistance and training in timber management, indigenous community forestry and fire management.

TR: Who were some of your early bosses that gave you good advice in your career?

BO: One of my first and unique encounters with USFS leadership was having supper with former Chief Ed Cliff in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. He was recently retired in 1976 and was doing consulting work for the Honduran government.

(continued on Page 33)



Bill on assignment in the Peruvian Amazon for USAID/Forest Service to the Peru Forestry Sector Initiative with Jorge Rodriguez, Quiros, former Costa Rican Minister for the Environment, Energy & Telecommunications, Santa Maria de Nieva, Amazonas, Peru, 2012

(continued from Page 32)

I orchestrated a dinner with him, my parents (who were visiting) and a United Nations forester. As a 23-year-old, wet behind the ears forester, I was in awe of being in the presence of a leader of the agency.

A staff officer on the GMUG by the name of Irv Case, advised me that an assignment on the Black Hills NF would be a good career move. During that assignment I met my future wife....(who I later discovered had taken piano lessons from Irv's wife!), so it ended up being a good career and personal move!

At a Region 4 Rangers meeting in 2000, I asked then Deputy Regional Forester Jack Troyer for some career advice. I had a strong staff background in both timber and fire management. He advised me to go toward fire. So, as it turned out, I followed where the money went in the agency and all worked out well! As an aside, my dad worked for Jack Troyer on his first District Ranger assignment in the mid-to-late '70s at Mancos, Colorado.

TR: What were the best and worst parts of your jobs?

BO: Some of the best parts were having a clear mission with SMART goals which were very clear and achievable before the decline of the timber program in the agency. After the NW Forest Plan, land management became more interesting, integrated, and challenging if not achievable. My assignment on the Black Hills was great because that Forest had so much money and many well-funded programs...the Forest back then was known as "Region 2-A".



Francis Freeland (Barb's dad), first Forest Engineer in R2 on the Black Hills NF (1952) at his Custer, SD home circa 1985. He also served as Asst. Superintendent at the Woodland Park, CO CCC camp in the early to mid-1930s.

Of all my postings, the two that were most rewarding were the District Ranger assignments in Regions 1 and 4.

There were two "worst parts" of the job. The first was the difficulty, from a process standpoint of getting

accountability for work accomplishment in the face of budget and staffing challenges and increasing administrative workloads on field level personnel. Over the course of nearly 30 years on Ranger Districts, the administrative workload probably increased five-fold from perhaps 5% of my workload to more than 25%. The centralization of business (budget and procurement) and HR processes, while striking uniformity, ended up being the Achilles heel for achieving agency land management goals in the field.

The second "worst part" is related to the first and that has been the centralization, specialization of services and functions along with combining of Forest and District units. The line officers at the Regional, Forest and District levels have less flexibility and opportunity to achieve work and are less connected with the communities they serve. The endless train of dubious, agency-wide initiatives...basically beta testing new strategies and tactics across the agency, have been detrimental to effective, efficient service delivery to the public and to the land which we steward. In academic management studies literature, there is a common acronym for this paradigm: BOHICA, meaning "bend over, here it comes again" (from my graduate studies in management).

TR: Do you have a funny story from your career you can share with us?

BO: In late 1983 I was the Acting District Ranger on the Custer RD of the Black Hills NF and I had a vacant SSS (Support Services Supervisor) position to fill. I selected an individual for the position. However, the "powers-that-were" (under Forest Supervisor Jim Mathers) had another candidate in mind. Barb Freeland was selected and appointed to the position. As it turned out several years later, she and I were wed (1986). So, there were two "personnel actions" for the price of one...and it even turned out to be a much better deal than a "mail-order-bride"!

TR: What was the most rewarding part of your job?

BO: With few exceptions, working with dedicated professionals throughout my career.

(continued on Page 34)

(continued from Page 33)

TR: You are a member of the Rocky Mountaineers. Why did you join and do you think it's important for working folks to join as well?

BO: Current employees should be considered as a separate class of membership known as "soon-to-be or students of retirement." It would be similar to when I was a forestry student and wanted to join the Society of American Foresters (SAF). I was considered in a separate membership class (student forester). On a more serious note, more inclusion of existing employees could strengthen the connection and perhaps the influence (positive for the agency) back and forth between retirees and employees.

TR: How do you think the current Forest Service is doing? Any thoughts?

BO: To its detriment, the agency continues on a track to become the "US Fire Service"...and this observation is from a guy that spent much of his career in fire management. In recent testimony, the Chief and his leadership do not seem to know or are not being straight-up in their remarks before Congress (and the public) about their capacity to deal with staffing (and pay) issues in the face of increasing wildfire and applied fire in the face of climate change....running the risk of losing credibility across the board.

TR: What advice would you have for a young person looking to start a career with the U.S. Forest Service?

BO: As a potential employer, you can't beat the Forest Service for its mission and the landscapes that you will find under your stewardship. For educational preparation, take a broader rather than a specialized approach. There is already too much of the latter in the agency. It needs more "jacks-of-all-trades" that can take a holistic and integrated approach...whether it be in ecosystem or business systems management. If I had to do it over again, I would have pursued an

advanced degree earlier in my career, if not at the very beginning. Spend a few years working in the field. Too many in leadership positions have not made the connection to the land by never having worked at the field level. It leaves the agency hollowed out when it does not have a sense of the places it stewards and the people it serves. Spend some time working with underserved communities. The lands that the agency manages are becoming more the playground of the elite and well-off in our nation.

TR: What do you fill your free time with?

BO: Since we have retired, we have been quite busy! Like many, we have traveled beyond our borders and have enjoyed reconnecting with old colleagues on trips with the Rocky Mountaineers. I've spent some time teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) locally and outside the country. Hobbies include beekeeping, gardening, quilting, and reading. We stay connected to and supportive of our two adult-children as they make their respective journeys.



Bill's "early fire career" (3-years old) with mother Mary Ann Ott and sister Jeannie at 25 Mesa Ranger Station, 1956 (firefighters were conscripted at an early age back in the day).

TR: Any final words of wisdom?

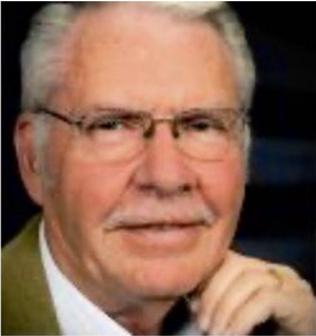
BO: They may be one and the same for a given individual, but it's important to balance career and personal ambitions. A relevant question is "do you live to work or work to live?" The answer to that question will have implications for one's sense of self in terms of fulfillment.

Oh, and don't forget to take advantage of the THRIFT savings plan early on....Have a plan!!!

TR: Any thing else?

BO: By the way, we were able to do an oral history with my mom with the PAO and Heritage Program Manager on the GMUG a year ago and paid a visit to the 25 Mesa Ranger Station. I have the slide show (pictures from the mid-50s, etc.) we presented to the Forest (PPT) and the video they made of the oral history. The Forest Supervisor and his staff were very gracious and accommodating.

Remembrances



Merrill Ray Kaufmann

Merrill Kaufmann, 81, died peacefully at home on June 26, 2022, after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's Disease. His final days were made brighter thanks to his many outstanding caregivers as well as the support of Hope West Hospice. Merrill was born on June 17, 1941, and raised in Buckley, Illinois, along with his older sister Neva, the only children of Leo and Lorine Kaufmann. Buckley is a small farming community, a village less than a third of one square mile in size, with fewer than 600 residents.

After graduating from Buckley-Loda High School in 1959, Merrill headed to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to pursue higher education. He graduated with a B.S. in Forestry in 1963, but he did not stop there. He instead went on to Duke University, where he received a Ph.D. in Forestry in 1967.

Merrill first began teaching and inspiring others as an Associate Professor at the University of California, Riverside in 1967. In 1977 he moved his family to Fort Collins, Colorado to work for the Forest Service as a Research Forest Ecologist, where he remained until his retirement in 2006. Not one to rest on his laurels, after relocating to Montrose, Colorado and overseeing the construction of his dream home with wife Evelyn, Merrill remained active doing consulting and contract work for many years following his retirement. This allowed him to continue to contribute to his field and engage with his colleagues... and get paid to visit National Parks (many of which, it turns out, are near micro-breweries).

Merrill has had an illustrious career, as is evidenced in part by the 180 published articles referenced to this day on Google Scholar, dating back to 1966. Merrill

Kaufmann is well known and revered by anyone who is anyone in the world of ecosystem management, forest ecology or wildland fire management. He remained active professionally through 2017, when he presented on his last publication at a multi-state conference.

What this brief biography fails to convey are the many discoveries Merrill made during his career that have forever changed the course of ecosystem management in our national forests and anywhere with a wildland-urban interface, particularly with regard to fire management. As we face increasing threats from fires every year, his legacy includes starting the conversation on "good fire vs. bad fire," which has elevated the understanding of the significant role fires play in maintaining an ecosystem, as well as the unintended and harmful consequences of large-scale fire suppression. His handprint can be found throughout the pages and publications of the USDA Forest Service, both from his own research and that of the many students, mentees, and colleagues who continue to build upon his work.

In addition to his many professional accomplishments, Merrill could be described as a modern Renaissance Man, with no shortage of interests, skills, and abilities. He built a cabin from the ground up, from clearing the land to pouring the concrete for the foundation to finishing the roof. He built furniture and firearms and clocks; he never met a tool he didn't master. He acquired a small tractor to manage and landscape his property. He played the piano and guitar, and, after his Parkinson's diagnosis, learned to play bass guitar for his church's praise and worship team. He hunted and fished. He ran, hiked, cycled, skated, skied, played tennis and basketball, and made it all look easy.

(continued on Page 36)

(continued from Page 35)

Remembrances

Although he enjoyed many hobbies and activities, and he was intentional about finding the time to do them, he was equally intentional about supporting and providing for his family. He taught his daughters the values of hard work and education, raising them to think about college in terms of “when” and “where” instead of “if.” He acknowledged the mutual importance of responsibility as well as personal enjoyment and satisfaction with these memorable words of wisdom to an impressionable daughter: “Find something you love to do, and then figure out how to make a living doing it.” He also brought his unique sense of humor into his parenting: a head-first crash into a wall would invariably be met with, “Is the wall okay?” (Perhaps it was his way of teaching resilience.)

Merrill will be lovingly remembered for his humor, his brilliance, his steadfast faith, and his enthusiasm for living life to its fullest. By his own account, he lived a

good, full, and blessed life, and he died with peace and contentment, knowing “it is well with my soul.” (See you on the other side, Dad.) He will be missed.

Merrill is survived by his wife, Evelyn, of 28 years, his daughters Kathryn (Richard) Michel and Kristin (Greg) Brown from his first marriage, and stepchildren Michael (Felicia) Mathias; Beth (Doug) Watterson, and David Mathias. Also survived by his grandchildren from both marriages: Anthea Johnson, Ethan Brown, Caitlin (Michael) Lothar, Douglas (Laura) Watterson, Breann Watterson, Avery Mathias, and Madison Mathias; as well as his nephew Samuel (Kimberly) Janssen.

He was preceded in death by his parents Leo and Lorine (Weerts) Kaufmann, and his sister and brother-in-law Neva and Clinton Janssen.

Richard P. Cook

Richard Cook just recently passed away at his home in Arizona. He was born on December 21, 1939. Richard was ranger on the Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forests on the Norwood District for 23 years from 1976-1999.

Before that he served as ranger on the Spearfish District from 1973 to 1976 and was a Forester and Assistant Ranger on the old Rochford District on the

Black Hills National Forest. He started his career there in 1961 and had a degree in Forest Management. He is survived by his wife Carol Ann, son Michael John Cook and daughter Terry Ann Arnold and their families.

Information about services and a more complete remembrance will be forthcoming.

(continued on Page 37)

(continued from Page 36)

Remembrances



John Walter Mumma

John Mumma died Sept. 1, 2022, following a long bout with multiple myeloma cancer. He died at home with his wife Myra holding his hand. It was their 46th wedding anniversary. John was born in Farmington, New

Mexico, on Sept. 30, 1939 to Richard Marion Mumma and Luita Lavina Dufur Mumma.

He graduated from Farmington High School in 1957, where he played high school sports. He especially enjoyed tennis. In 2020 he was inducted into the Farmington Scorpion Hall of Fame. He attended Ft. Lewis College in Durango, Colorado with three scholarships of Merit, Athletics and Music. John graduated from the University of New Mexico, attended Oregon State University and Colorado State University.

He worked summers for the San Juan National Forest Service in Durango while coaching football, wrestling and tennis at Miller Middle School. He was hired at the Pagosa Springs Job Corps on the San Juan National Forest which started a 40-year career in natural resources. During those 40 years, John served as the Range and Wildlife sub staff assistant in the San Juan National Forest Supervisor's office in Durango, Colorado; Assistant Ranger position on the Collbran Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests; Snow Ranger at Powder Mountain Ski Area; Range and Wildlife sub staff on the Apache National Forest in Springerville, Arizona; Fisheries and Wildlife staff to the Southwest Regional Office; District Ranger at the Cloudcroft Ranger District on the Lincoln National Forest; Resource staff for Timber, Range, Wildlife and Fire on the Shoshone National Forest in Cody Wyoming; Director of Wildlife and Fisheries for the Intermountain Region, Ogden, Utah and from there

to the Rocky Mountain Region in Denver as head of Range, Wildlife, Fisheries and Ecology.

He then transferred to the National Office in Washington, D.C. on the Programs and Legislation staff. In 1987 he was reassigned to the Northern Region located in Missoula, Montana, as Deputy Regional Forester. That same year he was promoted to Regional Forester. Four years before retirement eligibility he separated from the Forest Service due to requirements of the Senior Service Executive Act. It was a time of much controversy for the Forest Service and especially the Northern Region. He was a natural resource consultant for four years and in 1995 was named Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife headquartered in Denver, Colorado. John was proud of his accomplishments and awards. He received the Aldo Leopold Medal from the Wildlife Society. He was awarded the Superior Service Award from the Secretary of Agriculture, the Conservation Achievement Award

from the National Wildlife Federation, and the Ernest Thomas Seton Award from the 50 State Fish and Wildlife Agencies for having the outstanding fish and wildlife leadership program.

When he was on the Shoshone he proposed a land stratification for grizzly habitat in the Greater Yellowstone Area that would help provide for grizzly recovery. And he served on the Interagency Grizzly Bear (IGBC) Committee for nearly half his natural resource career. As Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) he spearheaded the purchase of over 100,000 acres of wetland habitat.

After retiring from the CDOW the Governor of Colorado named a native fish hatchery and recovery facility after him. The facility is the John W. Mumma Aquatic Native Research and Hatchery located in the San Luis Valley and is the only one of its kind in the United States. John also had a hand in the acquisition of the Bosque del Apache elk habitat in southern Colorado. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation recognized him for several elk habitat projects in both Montana and Colorado.

(continued on Page 38)

(continued from Page 37)

Remembrances

After the historic 1988 wildland fire season in which every National Forest had a project fire and the Greater Yellowstone complex had nearly a million acres burned, the firefighters recognized him for his outstanding leadership during that historic fire season. John was selected as the chairman for developing and implementing the Congressional Designated Chief Joseph National Historic Trail (the Nee Mee Poo Trail of Tears). While he was proud of acknowledgments and awards, there was a greater influence.

He and his best friend and wife of 46 years took great pleasure in spending time outdoors with their children and grandchildren. Countless field trips were taken from the Colorado and Wyoming mountains to

Canada and to the Kenai in Alaska. He passed on knowledge of plants and wildlife that is now being taught to his great-grandchildren. He always beamed at the text messages with pictures and videos. John was predeceased by his parents and sister, Joyce. He is survived by two children, Rainee (Pete) Loeb and Johnny Lance Mumma, as well as two stepchildren, Marette Riley and Chris Nielsen. The couple boasts of eight grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. John's ashes will be interred at Greenmount Cemetery in Durango, Colorado.

Memorial plans are pending.

The Last Word

Gatherings

by Tom L. Thompson

With this year's Rocky Mountaineers Gathering in Glenwood Springs, our group of retirees and friends will have come together 9 times in the last ten years. When we organized our association in 2013, our bylaws called for an Annual Meeting to be held for our members each year during the winter. After our first such meeting in February 2014 which ended up being during a snowstorm in Fort Collins, we made a wise adjustment in our bylaws and decided to hold our next get together in the summer or early fall. Also, after some discussion about the aversion of retirees to attend "meetings" that weren't the favorite part of their time with the outfit, we made another change and chose to call our get togethers just "gatherings."

The word gathering is an interesting word whose meaning has evolved a bit over the last hundred years. In 1907, gather (gath' er') was defined as a verb to: 1. Collect, acquire; 2. Assemble, increase, or suppurate; or 3. Plait in cloth. There wasn't a notation back then for the noun gathering. In today's dictionary, gather as a verb is defined as: 1. Bring or come together; 2. Harvest; 3. Pick up little by little; and 4. Deduce.

And there is a notation for the noun gathering. The first definition in today's version to "bring or come

together" fits our version of the "gathering" very well. It is what we do.

Each time we have met, we have had a chance to do exactly what was intended and that has been to enhance the connectivity of retirees, spouses, and others who take pride in having been a part of the outfit in the Rocky Mountain Region. It has also given us a chance to reconnect with the great forests, grasslands, resources, and communities that we all love and that so many of us have been associated with for so much of our careers. It is great to get back to the special places and meet new people and see old friends.

For each of our Gatherings we have also had opportunity to meet current Forest Service leaders in those locations and learn about what is happening in today's Forest Service. Frank Beum, now the Regional Forester for our Region, has made a concerted effort to join us for our Gatherings and attend our Memorial Grove ceremonies. He wants to stay connected to retirees whose legacy he truly feels he has responsibility for now. A conversation with Frank leaves no doubt that he truly values the relationship he has with retirees.

Past gatherings have been in; Fort Collins, Colorado - 2014; Delta, Colorado - 2014; Cody, Wyoming - 2015; Custer, South Dakota - 2016; Durango, Colorado - 2017; Golden, Colorado - 2018; Buffalo, Wyoming - 2019; Woodland Park, Colorado - 2021; and now Glenwood Springs, Colorado - 2022. We chose not to gather in 2020 because the coronavirus. By moving the "gatherings" around the region as we have done, we have hoped to encourage all our members who are scattered across five states to have good opportunities to be more easily connected to the Rocky Mountaineers as well as acquaint others with the value of belonging to this association of mostly retirees. At each of the gatherings we have had almost a quarter of our entire membership attend and usually end up with new members, which is a cool thing.



A toast to being together, (l to r) Tom Thompson, Andy Mason, Dan Nolan, Johnny Hodges, and Mike Curran at the Rocky Mountaineers Gathering in Durango, CO, 2017.

(continued on Page 40)

(continued from Page 39)

I suppose the “why” come together is a fair question and there are likely several reasons, but central to most all of them is the value that comes from continuing to nurture friendships and connections with people who you care for and with whom you have spent much of your life. In the Forest Service we have all had unique opportunities to work with great people who share a great passion for conservation and our National Forest and Grasslands. I believe it is a

blessing that we can keep in touch with those we respect and appreciate so much for what they did as a part of the agency and what many continue to do. Without question, we are fortunate to have had the careers we did and coming together in these “gatherings” is just one way of remembering and acknowledging how lucky we were to be a part of such a great organization.

