

Bully!



“To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public. Nothing but the truth should be spoken about him or any one else. But it is even more important to tell the truth, pleasant or unpleasant, about him than about any one else.”

Kansas City, May 7, 1918

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“The official newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Forest Service Association, the Rocky Mountaineers.”
Editions are published Fall, Winter, and Spring and posted on-line.

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TR Visits Denver for Forest Service Museum Movie Shoot



“Teddy” welcomes the visitors to the new museum in Missoula, Montana. Using a green screen at **GarceWorks**, a Denver based studio we were able to magically place him in a beautiful home library full of books.

OPENING SCENE IN THEATRE

Ambient light dims as the program begins. Object lighting fades to off. Map image fades to black. The WALL PROJECTION comes to life with a black and white video of Theodore Roosevelt. The footage looks archival in resolution and display.

We hear:

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

“I was honored to serve the American people as their 26th president. But while many saw me as a politician, I was always an outdoorsman at heart. Hunting, fishing, and sitting under the vast starry skies gave me space to think. Something we all needed at the start of the 20th century.”

Joe Wiegand is the world’s premiere Theodore Roosevelt Reprisor. Over twenty years, Joe’s Theodore Roosevelt has been seen by audiences in all fifty states and internationally, from the White House to Yosemite National Park - and most famously at the 2012 Forest Service Reunion in Vail, Colorado.



Stephie Lane, hair and makeup stylist, puts the finishing touches on Joe Wiegand as he “becomes” Teddy Roosevelt for the welcome film at the National Forest Service Museum in Missoula, Montana.



Joe Wiegand and Tom Thompson traded stories about the U.S. Forest Service. According to on-line betting sources, Tom had a slight edge on Joe.

(Continued from page 2)

National Museum's History Corner

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



Dear Rocky Mountaineers USFS Retiree Association:

On behalf of the all of us at the National Museum of Forest Service History, we are pleased to share this interim Museum Update:

* Construction of the National Conservation Legacy Center is progressing nicely! Windows are in, some floor coverings, and the shelving in the repository has been installed. On **March 17, 2026** the general contractor will turn the building over to us. Soon after that, Dave Stack and his team of volunteers will be moving our amazing collection from downtown Missoula to the Center's repository. Work continues by our exhibition contractors. Stay tuned for more information on the 2026 grand opening (dates still TBD, probably mid - July).



* Our Capital Campaign is still alive and well – We so appreciate all your support but must ask again if you can help us. Because...we just learned of a 1+ year delay of the final \$250k distribution from an estate gift that we had been counting on to cover 2026 NCLC/exhibition costs. To cover this temporary funding shortfall, and a list of unfunded items we need to purchase before we can open the Center...could you:

PLEASE HELP US SELL Orientation Plaza Pavers!

Starting at just \$250

*Please spread the word and also consider a commemorative paver/brick for you, your cadre members, and others. Leave YOUR legacy (or for a loved one or colleague) at the doorstep of the NCLC for only \$250.

*If we sell all the pavers, the \$250k estate gift delay and the unfunded items will be covered.

*Easiest way to order pavers is via our website, where you can also specify your text (e.g., "In Memory of" "In Honor of"

<https://forestservicemuseum.org/support-donate/plaza-pavers/>



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Our spring 2026 Online Auction is coming up fast (April 1-21)!

PLEASE HELP US ACQUIRE HIGH QUALITY AUCTION ITEMS!

March 5 is the deadline for NOTIFICATION of donations.

Please help us secure at least two items from the Rocky Mountain Region from each emphasis area.

Experiences and Vacation Stays are great items and you have many to offer in your region!

Themed baskets are a focus again this year. Food items in baskets are popular, as are pet baskets.

For questions, help with donation form, please contact Amanda Wickel
amanda.wickel@forestservicemuseum.org
 or 406-541-6374 at the Museum.

THANKS Rocky Mountaineers Retiree Association for your unwavering support to the Museum!!

Your regional Museum key contacts:

Dan Nolan, Museum Director,
dnolan829@gmail.com, (720) 937-8058

Larry Gadt, Board Liaison,
larrygadt224@gmail.com, (785) 979-3756






2026 SAVING HISTORY AUCTION - APRIL 1-21, 2026

DONATION IDEAS

Experiences

Tickets to events, behind the scenes at museums, zoo, attractions

Hand-Crafted Items

Quilts, woodwork items, art work etc

Vacation Stays

Vacation home use, donation from local hotel or rental company

Themed Baskets

Cultural or regional cuisine, hobbies, pets, regional specialties

Collectibles

Quality vintage items, leather, art, decor, Smokey Bear, hobby items

SEND QUESTIONS TO:
amanda.wickel@forestservicemuseum.org

CLICK HERE FOR DONATION FORM
DONATION DEADLINE
MARCH 5, 2025

or **Donation form at:**
<https://forestservicemuseum.org/>







INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME – a Win-Win

TAX FREE DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM ARE POSSIBLE! IF YOU:

- Are 70 ½ or older
- Have a Traditional IRA

If qualified, in 2026, you can transfer, tax-free, up to \$111,000 to the Museum (eligible charity) using a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). To initiate a QCD, contact your financial institution.

As always, if you have donation/fundraising questions, please contact:

Lisa Tate,
lisa.tate@forestservicemuseum.org
 or Tom Petersen,
tom.petersen@forestservicemuseum.org
 or call the Museum at (406) 541-6374. OR call Lisa at (208) 484-6667 (mobile).



“Imitation is the fondest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness.”

- Oscar Wilde



The Theme: The 2025 meeting adopted the "Camp Berkshire" theme, tying into nostalgia and the community aspect, with special themed merchandise like patches and mints being sold.

If you're in the Mile High City, come and see Danner Shoes and Boots at 16th and Market Street. Shop our collection of high-quality boots and get a free limited-edition gift with purchase. Plus, we'll be raffling off adventure prize packs and serving up refreshments to take the edge off the summer heat.

Your Area Representatives

Denver Area Representative
Jim Thinnnes, Littleton, CO

Wyoming Area Representative
Bill Bass, Sheridan, WY

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

South Dakota/Nebraska
Craig Bobzien, Custer, SD

Southern Front Range and Kansas Area Representative
Debbie Gardunio, Pueblo West, CO

NAFSR Representative
Frank Beum, Denver, CO

Western Colorado Area Representative
Martha Moran, Carbondale, CO

NMFSH Representative
Tom Thompson, Littleton, CO

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

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Memorial Grove - Steve Deitemeyer, sdeitemeyer@msn.com, 303-456-0799 or

Tom Thompson, thom46pson@gmail.com, 303-552-1711

Membership & Others - P.O. Box 270462, Fort Collins, CO 80527

Membership and Finance

February, 2026

Membership in the Rocky Mountaineers has bumped up to **494 members**, our largest membership ever.

We picked up **13** new members during our Membership Drive last month.

We held a Grand Prize drawing for our recruiters of new members. Each recruiter (current member) received one ticket for each new member. The winner was Mary Ann Chambers of Ft. Collins. She (and husband Carl) received a complimentary Lifetime Membership. Thanks to all of you that helped us sign up new members.

Although the Drive is over, we recruit new members year-round. If you know of someone that should be a member, encourage them to join.

Membership is open to both retirees and current Forest Service employees. Remember, dues for the first year are complimentary, so it doesn't cost anything to give the Rocky Mountaineers a tryout.

You can find the Membership Application on our website under the "Membership" drop down at the top of the page. Here is a link -

[Rocky Mountaineers Retiree Association](#)

Our Newest Members

Jesse Boyd, Monte Vista, CO

Jennifer Haney, Bayfield, CO

Ryan Fricke, Grand Junction, CO

Heather Mrzlack, Bailey, CO

Kristen Philbrook, Windsor, CO

Kris Sexton, Yreka, CA

Douglas Wise, Highlands Ranch, CO

Jacquilyn Roaque, Laramie, WY

Patricia Henderson, Ft. Collins, CO

Lisa Heagley, Littleton, CO

James White, Ft. Collins, CO

Mike Hessler, Pueblo West, CO

Bruce Moss, Silt, CO

Thanks to all of you that have paid your dues or made a donation for 2026. We still have some members that haven't gotten around to paying their dues. Don't forget! Annual dues remain \$25 per household and a Lifetime Membership remains a bargain at \$250 per household.

You can receive a printed copy of our newsletter, The Rendezvous, for an additional \$20 per year to cover the cost of printing and mailing. All members with an email address will receive an electronic copy in full color. Go to our payment form to pay the extra \$20 for a full year (3 editions) for printed copies.

You can pay with a check or a credit card. Go to our website to complete the payment form. Here is a link - [Rocky Mountaineers Retiree Association](#).

If you don't need a receipt, you can drop a check in the mail to:

Rocky Mountaineers
Box 270462
Ft. Collins, CO 80527

We have three categories for our donors.

Friend - \$1- \$49

Patron - \$50 - \$199

Sponsor - \$200

You can donate to any of our three funds – **Memorial Grove, Scholarship or General**.

If you would like to donate in memory of someone, you can fill in their name on the donor form.

We will recognize all our donors in the fall edition of The Rendezvous.

The Rocky Mountaineers are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Thank you for your support!

A Simple Membership Flowchart



A message from the Chair

By Paul Peck



My son, Josh, and I on Mt Elbert, 2013

Greetings Fellow Mountaineers. I am pleased to serve as your Chair in 2026. With such a landslide victory as Chair elect, I know this will be a mountain top experience. I extend a hearty thank you to Dan Nolan for serving as Chair in 2024 and 2025. And a little known factoid: Since the start of the Mountaineers, Dan has served three terms, a record that probably will never be broken. I am impressed with the cadre of people who faithfully volunteer on the Board, as Area Representatives, and as Committee Members, working together to coordinate Scholarships, Memorial Grove, Grant Funding, Website, Newsletter, Membership, Annual Gathering, Travel, local gatherings, and more. Each of you helps further our Mission: to enrich and add value to the lives of Forest Service retirees who care greatly about the agency and the Rocky Mountain Region. Please give these volunteers a big THANK YOU when you have an opportunity.

This is a busy spring for the Mountaineers with scholarships, grants, and the Memorial Grove Ceremony. Please share these scholarship and grant opportunities with your local FS Ranger Districts, and with families of high school seniors. Both programs, which are funded by our special donations to the Rocky Mountaineers, are investments in people, in our communities, and in natural resources. Details for these programs are on the Mountaineers website. The website link is posted in this newsletter.

A special hallmark event is the Memorial Grove Ceremony. I have attended several. It is a heart warming event honoring lives dedicated to resource stewardship and public service. And a tremendous honor for their families. This year's Ceremony is May 2, 2026. A workday, to get the grounds ready,

is April 23, 2026. Please come and help with this pre-work. And RSVP if attending either the pre-work and/or the ceremony. Again, details are on the website.

One more comment about the Memorial Grove Ceremony. Expenses have been partially funded by our member donations to the Memorial Grove Fund, and partially by strong support through the years from the Pikes Peak Ranger District, the PSINF & CCNG, and the R2-RO. However, with the ongoing organizational and budget changes, it is becoming more challenging for the agency to help as they have in the past. The employees are committed, but the processes to help are becoming, shall we say, a little more unpredictable. The Memorial Grove Committee, the Board, and the local District/Forest are working through these challenges for this year's event.

I am excited about the grand opening of the Conservation Legacy Center in Missoula, MT, planned for this summer. Many Mountaineers have been involved in this tremendous project to share the rich history and conservation legacy of the US Forest Service. Kudos to the National Museum of Forest Service History (NMFSH) for their vision and diligence in this coming to fruition. If you are not a member of NMFSH, I would encourage you to join.

Plans are being made for the Mountaineers Annual Gathering. It will be in south-central Colorado on the southern part of the Pike-San Isabel, or the Rio Grande. Stay tuned for further information as it develops.

Parting thoughts. I started with the Forest Service in the early 1970's. One of the things that I observed, and felt, and greatly appreciated, was the feeling of family in the agency. The people that we worked with not only became good friends, many also became family. There was caring for each other, looking out for each other. That was the culture. Let's continue those values and that culture as we live each day. The mission of the Mountaineers is to enrich and add value to lives. We can fulfill that mission one decision, and one action at a time, as we "do unto others as we would have them do unto us." Continue meeting in your smaller area groups, and take care of each other.

Have a great spring. **Paul**

Aspen Sopris Ranger Station

Grand Opening - February 6, 2026

The Aspen Sopris Ranger Station reopened during Carbondale's First Friday on February 6, 2026, drawing enthusiastic local visitors. The renovated Aspen Sopris Ranger station located on Main Street Carbondale features sustainable design, an improved conference room, a new laboratory for air quality and monitoring, staff locker room, luncheon area, and a visitor information reception. There are several different size conference rooms to accommodate the cubicle office design as well. Community members welcomed the station's return after its long closure. There are numerous interpretive and education signs and messages throughout the visitor entrance of the new entrance as well.



Rocky Mountaineers 13th Annual Ski Day at Winter Park/Mary Jane



(L-R) Doug Laraby, Jim Thinner, Brad Orr, Steve Johnson, Robin Langowski, Patricia Hesch, Ken Kowynia, Jim Bedwell, Tom Williams, Ann Williams, James White, Susan Weingardt, Deana Harms, Bernie Weingardt, Dave Loomis, Mindy Martin, Mark Martin, Dan Nolan. Cindy Dean, Paul Langowski

The National Forests

by Lynne Schumacher, April 1970

While I was working in the Denver Regional Office of the United States Forest Service about 1940, I did a lot of research to get data for use with National Forest Maps which the drafting department was putting out. After retirement, I eventually ran down and listed all of the National Forests that have been established in the United States since such areas had been authorized in 1891, the total of 387 names.

The list showed the serial number, the name, the date of establishment, the original acreage, and what had become the units not then existent. Units 1 to 6 had been called timberland reserves; unit 7 to 175, Forest Reserves; units 176 to 397, National Forests. Changes in title had occurred on July 1, 1892 and March 4, 1907.

A copy of that list was placed in the conservation center of the Denver Public Library, where it's available for reference.

In 1910 the National Forests were divided into districts, and each group was named and numbered. The units of Colorado, South Dakota, Nebraska, and the western part of Wyoming were placed in the Rocky Mountain District, or District 2. In 1910 the District was changed to Region hence the abbreviation R-2.

A check of the complete list showed that 47 units have been established in region two; in 1940 they have been reduced to 21 units; at present (1970) there are 16 units. The 47 units once existing in R-2 are shown below. Those in Kansas in North Dakota were abolished. The others have been combined with the present 16 units in the interest of economy and better supervision.

Unit Number Year Established

Colorado

2 - White River Plateau	10-16-91
4 - Pikes Peak	2-11-92
6 - Plum Creek	6-23-92
7 - South Platte	12-9-92
9 - Battlement Mesa	12-24-92
44 - San Isabel	4-16-02
81 - Gunnison	5-12-05
82 - Leadville	5-12-05
89 - San Juan	6-12-05
91 - Park Range	6-12-05
92 - Wet Mountains	6-12-05
93 - Cochetopah	6-13-05
94 - Montezuma	6-13-05
95 - Uncompahgre	6-14-05
110 - Holy Cross	8-25-05
113 - Fruita	2-24-06
157 - Ouray	2-2-07
162 - Las Animas	3-1-07
199 - Arapahoe	7-1-08

Unit Number

Year Established

Colorado

202 - Rio Grande	7-1-08
203 - Routt	7-1-08
239 - Hayden	7-1-08
276 - Sopris	4-26-09
281 - Colorado	7-1-10
290 - Durango	7-1-11
312 - Grand Mesa	3-11-24
309 - Roosevelt	3-28-32

South Dakota

24 - Black Hills	2-22-07
66 - Cave Hills	3-25-04
67 - Slim Buttes	3-5-04
98 - Short Pine	7-22-05
286 - Harney	5-16-11

(Continued from page 10)

Wyoming		Kansas	
1 - Yellowstone National	3-30-91	99 - Garden City	7-25-05
29 - Bighorn	2-22-97	189 - Kansas	3-15-08
30 - Teton	2-22-97		
40 - Crow Creek	10-10-00		
48 - Medicine Bow	5-22-05		
148 - Sierra Madre	11-5-06		
240 - Shoshone	7-1-08		
289 - Washakie	6-30-11		

North Dakota

267 - Dakota 11-24-08

The Origin of National Forest Names

White River is the name of the principal stream within the original areas established by President Benjamin Harrison in the White River Plateau Timberland Reserve.

Pike is in honor of the intrepid explorer Captain Zebulon M. Pike, who is among the first to explore that area and incidentally, the first to see Pikes Peak.

San Isabel is a pleasant sounding, easily-spoken contraction of "Santa Ysabel." It goes back to Queen Isabella of Spain and from San Isabel Creek within the first small reservation in the Sangre de Cristo Range.

Gunnison is in honor of captain John W. Gunnison, who was chosen by the government to select a route for an east-west railroad across the Rockies.

San Juan is the equivalent of Saint John, and the frequent use of the name in southern Colorado shows its popularity and the regard of the Spanish settlers for that patron saint.

Cochetopa is a contraction of Cochetopah, a Ute Indian name which meant "buffalo gate." Great herds of bison crossed this and North Pass annually in their migration from the plains to the upland ranges.

Montezuma with the name of the ninth King of Mexico, who opposed the Spaniard Cortez and was killed by him.

Uncompaghre is a Ute Indian name which meant "red springs" a unique physical feature in that area and a popular camping spot for the tribe.

Holy Cross is a part of the name "Mount of the Holy Cross," a peak in the Saguache Range which has a large natural cross on its east face.

Arapaho, is a contraction of Arapahoe an Indian tribe which occupied the plains country adjacent to Denver.

Rio Grande is a Spanish name which mean Grand River. The large stream drains the south-central part of the state and flows southward through New Mexico.

Routt is in honor of John L. Routt a native of Kentucky who was appointed by President Grant as territorial governor of Colorado in 1875.

Grand Mesa is the name of the large plateau in western Colorado supposed to be the largest flat-topped mountain in the world; it averages about 10,300 feet high.

Roosevelt is in honor of President Theodore Roosevelt, the greatest champion of forestry and conservation in our country's history.

Black Hills is the English translation of "Paha Sapa," the Sioux Indian name for that topological feature.

Harney is in honor of General William Harney whose military activities in the area adjacent to the Black Hills are well recorded.

Nebraska is an Indian word which often meant "flat water."

Big Horn is the combined name of Big Horn the river that drains that area. It is the common name for the Rocky Mountain sheep which early Spanish explorers found in that area.

Medicine Bow is the name given to a locality in south-central Wyoming by friendly tribes "to make bows" and in early daily lingo "to make medicine."

Shoshone is a variation of Shoshoni, the name of an Indian tribe who inhabited northwest Wyoming.

Washakie is in honor of Chief Washakie of the Shoshoni Indian tribe. He ruled over the tribe from 1840 until the time of his death in 1900.

What the Heck is a Substack?

A **Substack** is a publishing platform for independent creators (writers, podcasters, artists) to build a direct relationship with their audience through email newsletters and a dedicated website, offering content for free or behind a paywall for subscriptions, and allowing creators to own their work and generate income without relying on traditional media gatekeepers or complex algorithms. It functions as a hybrid blog, newsletter service, and social network, making it a popular tool for fostering communities and monetizing content.

To give you an overview, here are the twenty-nine Substack categories that are the most popular:

Art & Illustration · Business · Climate & Environment · Comics · Crypto · Culture · Design · Education · Faith & Spirituality · Fashion & Beauty · Fiction · Finance · Food & Drink · Health & Wellness · Health Politics · History · Humor · International · Literature · Music · News · Parenting · Philosophy · Science · Sports · Technology · Travel · U.S. Politics · World Politics ·

A couple of the Substacks to check out, are devoted to public lands and forestry.

The Hotshot Wake Up Substack

The Hotshot Wake Up is a popular podcast and Substack newsletter created by firefighters, offering insights into wildfire news, the culture of wildland firefighting, and real-time updates.

It provides exclusive content, workout tips, and a unique perspective on global fire events, making it a go-to source for both the public and fire professionals.

“We cover our planet’s wildfire news and provide real-time updates on wildfires around the world. We interview professionals in the industry and cover wildfire events and incidents weekly on the podcast. Monthly subscriptions to the Substack support firefighters through charitable donations to help injured firefighters and their families in need. Also, paid subscriptions get exclusive workouts, more podcasts, recipes, and complete access to all our podcasts and articles.”

Over 31,000 subscribers

<https://thehotshotwakeup.substack.com/p/forest-service-plans-to-move-dc-staff>

More Than Just Parks Substack

"More Than Just Parks" is a popular Substack by brothers Jim and Will Pattiz, award-winning filmmakers and conservationists, who share stunning visuals, travel guides, and in-depth reporting to advocate for America's National Parks and public lands, highlighting threats like overcrowding and privatization while promoting responsible exploration and conservation efforts.

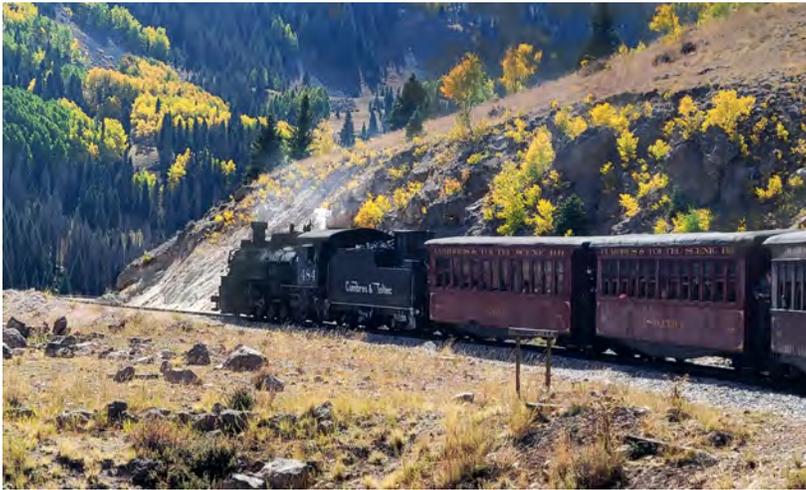
The platform combines breathtaking content with advocacy, providing tips, policy analysis, and calls to action to help protect these lands, with paid subscriptions funding their independent work.

In essence, it's a blend of travel inspiration and vital environmental activism, making it "more than just parks" by fostering a community dedicated to their preservation.

Over 20,000 subscribers

<https://morethanjustparks.substack.com/p/the-us-forest-service-is-starving>
utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&triedRe
direct=true

2026 Annual Gathering Preview



For the first time ever, our Annual Gathering is headed to the Rio Grande NF this Fall.

We are hard at work on the logistics for the Gathering. At this time, we are leaning towards meeting in Alamosa, and we plan to spend one day riding the Cumbres & Toltec train from Antonito, Colorado to Chama, New Mexico.

We plan to meet sometime during the first two weeks of October and hope to catch the aspen in full Fall colors.

More details are to come as we firm up our plans. Stay tuned!

In Climate Crisis News



The successive rounds of layoffs have hit hard at what used to be a total of 3,675 employees listed on the NREL website at the beginning of 2025. President Trump's fiscal 2026 budget pitched \$19.3 billion in cuts to the Department of Energy's allotted 2025 spending, according to the website utilitydive.com.

The Golden renewable energy lab formerly known as the **National Renewable Energy Laboratory** laid off an additional 134 employees across both research and operations Monday, further shrinking the renowned center under changing Trump administration priorities.



The primary federal agency responsible for regulating coal mines in the U.S. debuted a new cartoon mascot named "Coalie" this week. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum in a social media post celebrated the lumpy character wearing a hard hat, boots and vest with a shortened acronym for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

Climate activists criticized the latest attempt by the administration to boost the image of the dirtiest fossil fuel despite its effects on the planet and public health, with one critic describing it as "one of the most heinous ways to produce energy that our world has ever seen".

Free Money!



Is there a high school senior in your life? There's great news for them!

Applications are now being accepted for the 2026 Rocky Mountaineer Scholarship.

Deadline is March 31st, 2026.

Four scholarships of \$1500 each will be awarded, with two being specifically earmarked for natural resource majors. Applicants must have a Rocky Mountaineer member as a sponsor.

Questions: Call Frank Roth - 307 754-7063, Scholarship Committee Chair.

We are no longer outreaching to local high schools and are only reaching out to seniors who are known by Rocky Mountaineer members or children of Forest Service employees.

Apply Here

<https://www.rockymountaineers.us/Scholarships/HowToApply.html>

Were You Smokey?



My name is Leona Allen and I am a second-generation USFS employee. I served in fire suppression and now work as a volunteer Interpretive Ranger for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. I met some of you at the Lake Tahoe retiree's reunion as I accompanied Smokey Bear for the photo op at the top of the Gondola.

Some of you imparted wonderful stories to me about your "time in the suit" as Smokey Bear while you worked for the Forest Service. To share these amazing tales with the public, I'd like to create a compilation of these stories and get them published. To that end, I am hoping you'll honor me by writing up your story and sending it to me. I will work on each

narrative as an editor of sorts and only publish after receiving permission from all the authors. For right now I will not be limiting the length of the story but at some point that may be necessary. Photos would be appreciated as well - even if they are not of Smokey - with you at work. If this project happens, all proceeds will go to the National Museum of Forest Service History's National Conservation Legacy Center.

I can be contacted at allen.leona12@gmail.com. Feel free to send me questions about the project. You can also call me at 530-314-0321, although cell service is sketchy for me most days. Thank you in advance! I look forward to your stories!

Leona

Memorial Grove 2026

May 2, 2026 at Monument, Colorado



The 105th year of recognition of honorees who have served in the Rocky Mountain Region of the United States Forest Service will be held on May 2, 2026, at the Memorial Grove near Monument, CO. The program will begin at 10:00 am and lunch will be served after the program ends and the tree planting is completed. Friends and family members of the 2025 honorees are invited to attend. If you plan to attend it is appreciated that you let Tom L. Thompson (thom46pson@gmail.com) know by April 17 so arrangements can be made for adequate seating and lunches.

The Grove was started in 1921 and among those who were initially honored were five young men who had been rangers or worked in the region and who lost their lives in service to their country during World War I. The District Forester at the time, Colonel Alan Peck decided that the memorial should be established at what was then the Monument Tree Nursery and this year indeed marks the 105th year of this tradition. Names of each honoree are read and the bell is rung to recognize each individuals contribution to the work of the agency in this region.



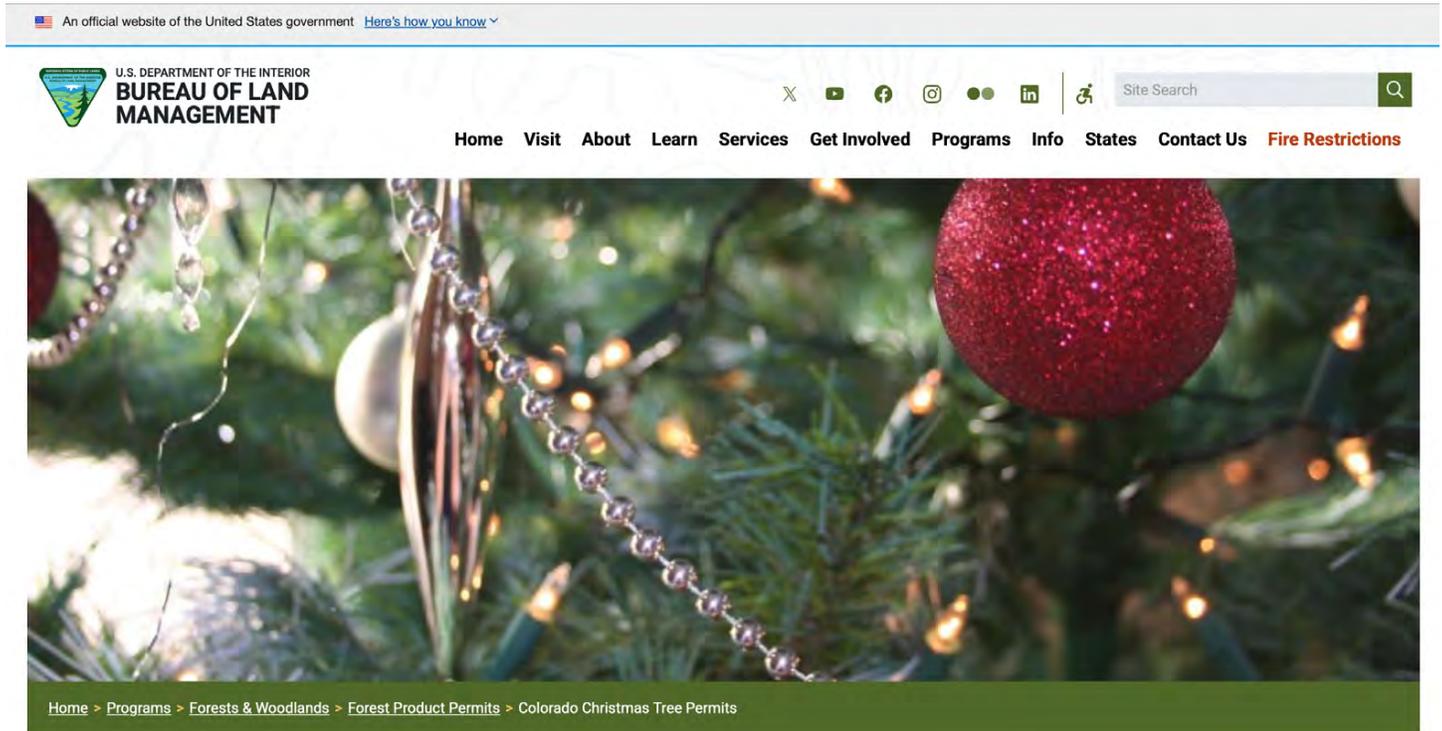
The engraved names of nearly 1500 people who have served in this region can be found at the Memorial Grove site. A listing of all of these can be found on the Rocky Mountaineers website under the tab for "In Memory." The criteria for inclusion in the Memorial are also found there as are remembrances for those honored in the most recent years.

2025 Memorial Grove Honorees

John W. Almond	PSICC/Bighorn NF
Karen Bergethon	PSICC NF
Don I. Campbell	R.O., Arapaho-Roosevelt, White River NFs
N. F., Clarence Newton Carleton	GMUG, Rio Grande NF
Cirilia J. (Lila) Coca	Medicine Bow-Routt NF
Philip (Phil) Norman Geenen	Black Hill N. F., Job Corps
Greg Alan Glasgow	White River NF
Wyoma Jean Hansen	Rio Grande, PSICC NFs
Charles J. (Chuck) Hendricks	R. O., R-4, R-9, JCCC
Dennis Paul House	Black Hills NF
Lee Warren Jensen	Black Hills, Gunnison, Routt NFs
Jennifer Leah (Stadler-Hoffman) Lee	Black Hills NF
Carolyn A McCabe	White River NF
Ross Alan Moncrief	Medicine Bow-Routt NF
Wayne Maurice Quade	GMUG NF, R-10 and R-1
Robert P. (Bob) Newlin	San Juan, Bighorn and White River NFs
Robert (Bob) Eugene Russell	Boxelder Job Corps
Royal Ryser	R.O. Engineering, R-3, R-5
Gerald Dean Scott	Black Hills NF
Steve Vest	PSICC NF - South Platte Ranger District
Doug Wagner	Regional Office
John P. (Dutch) Wierenga	White River NF

Get a Christmas Tree until 1.31.26

This is **NOT** Artificial Intelligence. A real web page from the marketing geniuses over at Interior tried to one-up the Forest Service and offer one dollar Christmas trees in Colorado on BLM land. No word on how the program went, how many were sold or if any permits were purchased after Christmas.



Colorado Christmas Tree Permits

[Interior Department rolls out one dollar, one tree holiday savings on public lands](#): For the 2025–2026 winter holiday period, the cost is **\$1 per Christmas Tree or cord of firewood** for all BLM office areas through **Jan. 31, 2026**.

'Tis the season! Looking for an outdoor experience to celebrate the holidays? How about cutting down your own Christmas tree? Christmas tree permits can be purchased from your local BLM office.

Permits can be purchased online for the following field offices:

- Forest Product Permits
 - New Mexico Wood Cutting Permits
 - Colorado Christmas Tree Permits**
 - Idaho Christmas Tree Permits
 - New Mexico Christmas Tree Permits
 - Oregon-Washington Christmas Tree

[Interior Department rolls out one dollar, one tree holiday savings on public lands](#): For the 2025–2026 winter holiday period, the cost is **\$1 per Christmas Tree or cord of firewood** for all BLM office areas through **Jan. 31, 2026**.

Bean there, done that!



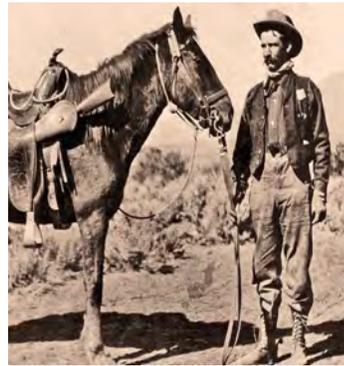
These Denver and Front Range Rocky Mountaineers can regularly be found at the Olive Garden in Lakewood or Clancy's in Wheatridge. They usually average about 30-40 folks who gather to catch up and enjoy each other's company.



I am Not a Robot

Select all images with

Chief of the Forest Service



Verify

“That’s the Way I Remember it”

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



Vinh Le

**41 years of
Federal
Service**

Retired: 2025

Vinh Le receives a 30 years of service certificate from Regional Forester Troy Heithecker. - May, 2024

The Rendezvous: Where were you born and raised?

Vinh Le: I was born in 1968 in Saigon, South Vietnam. My mom made small bags and sold them to make some money. We lived in a very small house in downtown Saigon. My dad mostly worked



Mooncakes are traditional Chinese pastries, typically round or square, eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival to celebrate family reunion, with rich fillings like lotus seed or red bean paste, often with salted duck egg yolks, and are given as gifts symbolizing good fortune.

around the house. I remember he used to make moon cakes. He wasn't a very good businessman because people always told him that they would pay him later, if he gave them a moon cake today.

I have seven brothers and sisters. Five older sisters, one older brother and one younger brother. We were all born and raised

Catholic. I had lots of cousins in Saigon who I played and grew up with.

TR: Did you want to come to the United States to live?

VL: When you turned 18 in Vietnam, you had to join the army. Things were not going well in the country and the economy was bad, so we decided

that I and my older sister, Kim, should escape the country to a better life. Mom could only afford for two of us to leave, so it was me at fourteen and my sister who was twenty-five. Mom gave us the money to pay the captain when we got to the boat that would take us to Thailand. It was a big secret. If the authorities caught you, they would send you to jail.

Our escape from Vietnam had to happen at night. There couldn't be a bunch of people in one spot, so that it wouldn't look suspicious. We couldn't say anything to anyone.

The Rendezvous: Tell us about the escape from Vietnam.

VL: We were the boat people, escaping Vietnam on

a fishing boat. We travelled by [Xe Lam](#), Vietnam's version of a TukTuk, to the fishing village of Can Tho, a city in southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta region. There were seventy-three people on our boat.



May, 1984. Thirty five Vietnamese refugees are being rescued from a 35 foot fishing boat 350 miles northeast of Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, after spending eight days at sea. - Wikipedia

It was a small boat and most of us were loaded into the bottom of the boat.

We were onboard the fishing boat for three nights and two days. Finally, we landed in a small village in Thailand.

We were in luck because we had some food and fuel left. We stayed in Thailand for two days to deal with the authorities, and

then we were sent to a refugee camp for three months. There were lots of people there.

We left Thailand and moved to the Philippines for the next five months. It was much nicer with electricity and good shelter. We were not with the same seventy-three who came over in the boat. It was a large mix of refugees from all over.

(Continued from Page 20)



Approximately 7 or 8 years old - Saigon.

The Rendezvous: How did you know where you would end up?

VL: Our cousin came to the United States in 1975 and he did all the paperwork and sponsored us, so we knew we were going to end up in Denver, Colorado where he lived and worked. The United States Catholic Conference (USCC) did a lot of the work to bring us over to the United States.

We flew from the Philippines to California and spent one day in San Francisco.

Then on February 22, 1982, which was Super Bowl Sunday, we arrived in a big snow storm in Denver. I remember it was the San Francisco 49ers versus the Cincinnati Bengals. It was amazing to be in Denver and it was the first time that I had ever seen snow.

The Rendezvous: Now what? Did you start school and begin learning English?

VL: We lived with our cousin in Lakewood for a few months. He had an apartment near 10th and Sheridan that he shared with us.

My sister Kim started school and met her future husband...they quickly got married and before long had three kids.

I went to school at Lakewood Junior High where some of my cousin's children attended school. I spoke no English at the beginning. They had a class of mostly Vietnamese students, and they called it **TESOL** or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. I had a tutor who helped me learn along with the regular students.

The Rendezvous: This had to be a really difficult time for you?

VL: Well, it was different for sure. I had never seen snow, or blue eyes and blond-haired people. Most of us Asian students stuck together. We were never picked on because most bullies knew if they picked on one of us they would get all of us.

The Rendezvous: So you finish junior high and on to High School. How was that?

VL: I enrolled at Arvada High School and graduated in 1986.

Then I enrolled at Front Range Community College and studied electronics, graduated and enrolled at C.U. Denver in downtown Denver. I commuted on the bus and also carpooled into town.

I dropped out of school for two months because my mom was sick back in Vietnam and I wanted to see her. I didn't want to go in the summer because that was field season for the Forest Service. I went home to Vietnam to see Mom...stayed as long as I could - 6 weeks...but had to get back. Then she passed later that same year in August of 1993.

I went the following winter in 1994 to visit her grave.

After mom passed, my sister and brother-in-law did the paperwork to sponsor my dad. He lived with all of us and got to hang out with his grandkids.



Vinh Le - 1st row second to the left with his classmates and one of his teachers in the center. Saigon, Vietnam.

TR: Tell us more about your family and your close connections with them.

VL: My parents migrated to South Vietnam. They had two children when they lived in North Vietnam. When they moved to the south my grandfather wanted one of the children to stay in the north with him. My parents had to leave one child behind and they decided to leave my oldest sister. It wasn't until after 1975 that I found out I had an older sister in the north. The first time we were all together was when my Dad passed away and we took him home to Vietnam. There at his memorial was the first time we were all together. And most recently it was the fifteenth anniversary of Dad's death that we were all together again.

(Continued from Page 21)

TR: How did you get interested in a job with the U.S. Forest Service?

VL: Jefferson County in Colorado had a summer jobs program for kids ages 16-20. That sounded good to me so I went in to apply for a job. I saw an opening at the Jefferson County Airport working for the U.S. Forest Service in their fire cache and warehouse. It was close to where I was living at the time and it started at I think \$3.25 an hour. I went into the office and met Carlos Gallegos and he liked me and I liked him and he hired me.

It started as an 8-5 job but when we got busy with fires I worked longer hours and got paid more money.

Carlos promoted me to an AD-1 rate. Then I moved to a 13/13 schedule and worked out there for 16 seasons. I never made it to a full-time job.

I did everything at the Jeffco tanker base. Loaded and unloaded trucks, cleaned up all the fire equipment and Nomex and miles and miles of hoses. I also learned how to tend aircraft and mix retardant (especially the powdered retardant which was very dusty and nasty) sharpen tools and how to load and refuel aircraft...I really liked that job.

My job was to switch out Data General computers for the new Personal Computers and set them up with the new systems from IBM. The computers came with the big heavy monitors that were really hard to move.

I worked in Information Resource Management until 2004, when I went down to the Public Affairs Staff group. I did a big variety of work in that office.

TR: When did you start working on web sites?

VL: When the A-76 study began - where contractors showed us how to do the web management for the region. There was no formal training - they just showed me what to do and I learned it. Pretty soon I was running the Regional web pages and providing service to most of the staff groups.

I helped forest web masters with their migration to the web and assisted them with their web sites. I also worked with the video conferencing system and the installation on all the units in region 2.

TR: You stayed connected to fire for your whole career?

VL: I stayed involved in fire working out at the tanker base when fire season got busy. Other base managers liked what they saw in me and they often name requested me to come to their tanker bases around the country and help set them up and support them when they were really busy.

TR: I heard that you once ordered Vietnamese food for the Chief of the Forest Service?

VL: That's true. Chief Gail Kimbell came to Denver for a meeting in south Denver and I suggested that I knew a great restaurant named New Saigon where she and her staff and the Public Affairs staff could eat right before the meeting. Her staff thought that was a good idea and that she loved Asian food. I knew the family that owned New Saigon and I spoke to the Chef about the Chief and had him prepare a special "off the menu" luncheon feast for all of us.

We walked in and were seated at a large reserved table in the back, and the food started coming out immediately. Lots of appetizers and soups and entrees and of course, desserts. Chief Kimbell often talked about that meal in Denver.



In Saigon the house Vinh grew up in. His older brother, Hien, sister Oanh, sister Tuyet, sister Ha, sister Anh, Vinh, and brother Hieu. Not pictured Kim.

TR: How did you make the move from Jeffco to the Regional Office?

VL: In 1998 when the Data General computer system needed to be converted to PCs in the Forest Service, I was detailed to the IRM shop in the Regional Office. They liked my work and they converted me to a GS-5. That's where I met Gary Schmidt, Kari Wardell, Jim Pringle, Kendall Jones, Bob Topic and that whole bunch of fun people.

(Continued on Page 23)

(Continued from Page 22)

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

VL: Well there are a lot of changes happening right now. I don't know if they are organized well or not....I think I got out just in time. I retired counting AD and seasonal in 1984 with 41 years. Unfortunately no extra time for secondary duties in fire. If I would go back and do it all over again, I would join a hand crew or helitack or an engine crew to get the base time in on fire.

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

VL: The current situation right now looks unsettled. We are going through a big reorganization and the fire organization to me is unknown right now. I feel very fortunate to be where where I am today and thank the Forest Service for giving me the opportunity to be successful. I came to the United States with three pair of clothes and no money in my pocket. I feel very blessed.

TR: Any words of wisdom?

VL: "If not for the Communists in Vietnam, I would not be here."

married in the covid year on February 14, 2020 at the Adams County Courthouse. Then we were later married in the Catholic Church. She works here in Westminster at a nail salon.



Vinh caught in the act of dressing up as Woodsey Owl just prior to an appearance for children.



Vinh and Phuong Le, 2020.

TR: We heard you got married. Tell us about that.

VL: Yes, I got married. I was introduced to Phuong by my sister's friend - my future mother-in-law. Her daughter was going to come to the United States and settle here and she thought we would make a nice couple. She attended the same church as me and we met and got along great. Before too long we

Vinh's Lightning Round:

Favorite flavor of Ice Cream.

Ben and Jerry's Peanut Butter Ice Cream

Dogs or Cats?

Dogs

Apples or Oranges.

Oranges

Favorite Vietnamese dish.

[Chè Ba Màu](#)

Favorite American food.

Anything with bacon

Favorite junk food.

Chè Ba Màu

Last book you read.

Tuesdays with Morrie

Most used AP on your phone.

Instagram.

Why was your dog's name Movado?

Movado is a famous brand of watches and jewelry and I wanted a really good watch dog!

Jeffco Aviation and Fire Service Center

A look back at Jeffco

By Dave Clement

I got a sneak preview of the Vinh Le retiree profile and it spurred me to think back to my times at Jeffco and some of the memories of the folks who worked there including Vinh.



and introduced into the air tanker operations. Vinh had a bit of difficulty communicating with a language and cultural barrier. He now talks to all, speaks his mind and has an opinion on many things.

Family members Vinh might remember from this time, Darrell Smith, Mike Daluz, Dave Clement, Carlos Gallegos, Irv, Anthony, Debra Dandridge, Kris Damsgaard, Chris Buckman, Jim Barnett, Nita Rauch, Molly Haddow, Denise Tomlin, Lisa Notch, Lisa's mother, Hank Dominguez, Tex Wright, Ron Bell, Charlotte Larson, KT Roetzler, Greg, Bob Hedrix, Jan Shelly, John Fusaro, Rob Juhola, John Stevi, Jim Lawson, Jim Pringle, Ken Deberard, Paul Koretco, Kyle Sinclair and others. Of course, there was a whole other family that would emerge when the fire bell would ring. Other agencies, casuals, and detailers would come in and work the Fire Cache introducing another complexity. Many personalities were vested into a unique organization for their time. Vinh fit like a glove - a doer and a leader. So much fun.

Jeffco Aviation and Fire Service Center was established in 1983. The center was a multi-functional Wildland Fire Management support organization with Interagency Cooperators including United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and 5 State Cooperators (Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.)

The Center included Regional/Area Coordination, Front Range Zone Dispatch, Area Fire Cache, Lead Plane, Airtanker Base, Helicopter Operations, and Radio networking and maintenance.

Vinh Le joined the group in 1984. It was a unique experience because all the personnel were more like a family dedicated to supporting the firefighter on the ground and in the field. Vinh was a great worker, learning about all different types of fire equipment (thousands of items),



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue with U.S. Senator Cory Gardner present an Award to Vinh Le in recognition of professional performance during a hazardous aviation event of significant contribution to aviation mishap prevention at the USDA Forest Service (FS) Jeffco Airtanker Base, in Broomfield, Colorado, on June 19, 2020.

(Continued from Page 24)

Vinh spent many long hours working and taking care of fire equipment. It was very difficult to get permanent appointments at this time in the fire program. Through negotiations, workload analysis, and due diligence, Vinh and others were promoted into permanent part-time positions and later into full-time positions. Carlos Gallegos (Fire Cache Manager and a great man) took Vinh under his wing. This was unique because Carlos fought for the south's freedom in the Vietnam War as a Marine soldier, Carlos was a point man who stepped on a land mine and lost his leg in the line of duty. Vinh held very special meaning to Carlos. He called Vinh his son.

A story to remember, it was KT's birthday. Vinh was her present. He was hidden in a hot food container box, wrapped and so pretty. She opened her present and low and behold Vinh pops out as a grand surprise.

A second story to remember. The director of State and Private/Aviation and Fire Management was trying to do some team building after reorganization. Vinh went up to the coat-and-tie formal director and requested a hug. The director flinched and backed away. Vinh was insistent that it was his culture to give and get hugs. Not sure Vinh

ever did get that hug from Bjorn but it was a good memory that Vinh talks about to this day.

A third story to remember. There were a lot of fires in the Boise Idaho area. The National Fire Cache requested additional qualified cache management personnel. Jeffco/Rocky Mountain Coordination Center responded with several positions. They had also requested a firefighting crew. We had received a shipment of fire equipment earlier that came by a Sherpa aircraft. This was a converted military aircraft that was used for cargo and smoke-jumper operations. Vinh and others were put on the aircraft to fly to Boise. En route to the fire was a crew from Pueblo who were mobilized and put on the aircraft. This Sherpa was slow going in flight. Vinh got really sick and puked many a time on the way and swore he would never fly in a Sherpa again.

I was privileged to meet up with Vinh again in my retirement life, as he and I continued to work with the air tanker program until 2024. He became a qualified Fixed Wing Parking Tender, working with the modern-day fleet of Jet Powered Air tankers. 2020 was a banner year for the Jeffco Airtanker Base supporting front range catastrophic fires such as the Cameron Peak, Troublesome, Mullen, Grizzly, and others.



Vinh Le standing to the right of Vice-President Al Gore (center with coat and tie) at Jeffco in July of 1994. He was in town to plant a memorial tree to honor of the victims of the Storm King Fire. The wildfire killed 14 wildland firefighters near Glenwood Springs, Colorado, on July 6, 1994.

Vinh was considered part of the "A" team along with Mark Von Almon, Ed Hobaugh, the Denver Fire Cadre of Loaders/timekeepers, Lafayette Fire, Broomfield Fire and myself. The air tanker base recorded a record 1.5 million gallons of retardant delivered with multiple types of air tankers; a perfect safety record and without incident. He is known all over the country for his abilities with aircraft and cooking fried rice. What a great asset.



Where in the World is Jim Thinnes?

The Rocky Mountaineers Traveled to New Heights

by Cindy Dean,
Asst. Rocky Mountaineers Travel Coordinator

At the end of October, sixteen intrepid Rocky Mountaineers and friends embarked on a three-week adventure to Bhutan and Nepal, eager to explore the highlights of both countries. The journey itself was an odyssey—nearly 30 hours of air travel with a couple stops, taking us halfway across the globe. After this long journey, we finally arrived in Paro, Bhutan ready to immerse ourselves in a culture unlike any we had experienced before.

Bhutan – Happiness is a place

Paro, the gateway for international visitors, is nestled amid dramatic terrain, and the approach to its single runway—surrounded by towering, forested mountains—reminded some of us of Aspen. Bhutan immediately revealed its uniqueness. As one of the last Buddhist Kingdoms in the world, its religion is not just practiced but woven into the rhythm of daily life. The country is lightly populated, with about 825,000 residents, and its culture and natural environment are carefully preserved. Beyond Paro or the bustling capital of Thimphu, a guide is needed to explore further – a testament to the country's commitment to protecting its heritage.

that policies are shaped not just by economic growth but by the well-being and happiness of its citizens, making Bhutan distinct from most other nations.

It's a land of cliff-hanging monasteries and Buddhist temples. During our week touring Bhutan, the nation was preparing with anticipation for the Buddhist devotees gathering in Thimphu for the Global Peace Prayer Festival. Nepal – A journey to the roof of the world and beyond



Our flight to Kathmandu, Nepal offered us a spectacular view of the Himalayas, including Mount Everest. Throughout our two-week journey in Nepal, we experienced the majesty of the Himalayas both up close and from a distance. When you live in Colorado, with its 58 peaks over 14,000 feet, you come to realize that in the Himalayas, the snowline begins at 14,000 feet. There are more than 200 peaks over 20,000 feet in Nepal! The sight was truly humbling, with the snowy summits gleaming in the morning sun and colorful prayer flags fluttering in the crisp mountain air.



Everywhere we looked, locals wore their traditional attire: men in belted Ghos and women in elegant long Kiras. The roads and hillsides were adorned with vibrant prayer flags, their colors standing out against deep green forests. The national philosophy here is Gross National Happiness, which means

(Continued from Page 26)

Beyond the breathtaking landscapes, we could see remnants of the unrest that had unfolded not long before our trip began. Nepal is a country in political transition. In addition to its natural wonders, Nepal's culture is a captivating mix of primarily Buddhist, Hindu and Tibetan influences, reflected in the abundance of prayer flags, temples, and sacred sites that dot the landscape. Trekking and hiking traditions, deeply rooted in the mountaineering expeditions of the early 20th century, have become central to Nepal's tourism industry and economy.



Our encounters with locals, whether exchanging smiles in the markets or sharing stories with our guides while hiking—added warmth and depth to our adventure, highlighting the enduring spirit of the Nepalese people.

Our trip continued with a three-day raft trip on the Seti River, one of many large rivers that originate in the Himalayas. It was a nice respite from the busy cities filled with tourists as we stayed at the only lodge along this 20-mile stretch of river. And finally, our active trip concluded with a safari into a forest



preserve near Chitwan where we encountered several one-horned Asian Rhinoceros and Spotted deer.

A fun time was had by all. We finished our trip enjoying beautiful autumn weather with the grand vistas of the Himalayan mountain range. The interest and enjoyment are what we make of our travels with friends along the way, and the spectacular scenery allows for time to relax and reflect on what makes this type of travel so special.

We hope you'll join us on future trips. Space remains available for our Danube River cruise starting in Budapest and ending in Prague July 10-24, 2026, and for our Egypt trip November 12-27, 2026. Email jimthinnes2@gmail.com if you are interested in either trip.



Before the Fiddlin' Foresters



1939 - Hill-Billy Band, Mormon Creek Civilian Conservation Corp Camp.

Left to Right they are Howard Micheau (sitting, guitar), Everet Cartwright (standing, washboard), Earl Weissert (standing, mandolin), Emery Greenwood (standing, violin), Orville Taylor (standing, banjo-uke), William Riddle (sitting guitar). (Forest Service photo by Leland J. Prater)



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September 25-29, 2028

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Contact: Sandy Skrien, Forest Service ACES Program Manager
sskrien@NEWSolutions.org | 571-512-3994



Mick Phillips enjoys his work as an enrollee with the **Forest Service ACES** program as a **R e c r e a t i o n T e c h n i c i a n** conducting trail bridge inspections and trail surveys and associated database entry. A Forest Service employee recommended the ACES program when Mick retired from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF)

Railroad. His passion for hiking National Forest trails combined with his US Army Veteran attention to detail ethos and land navigation skill set provides him with a beneficial foundation for his Forest Service ACES duties.

Mick supports the recreation trails program staff on the Custer Gallatin, Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Lewis & Clark National Forests in Montana conducting major and minor trail bridge inspection and condition surveys and enters data collected into national trail databases. He is looking forward to developing his inspection skills. During his free time Mick enjoys spending time with his wife and children in a variety of outdoor activities especially downhill skiing.



<https://newsolutions.org/programs/aces-program-usfs/>

WWII Fire Prevention Effort

Fag Bags were the answer



Joyce Ryder, 14, and Beverly Baker, 17, members of M. S. Spitfire troop of the Girl Scouts in Los Angeles, mark and cut fag bag material. Los Angeles, California.

1942 - USFS Archives

During World War II, a "fag bag" was a small pouch or bag used for the disposal of cigarette stubs and used matches as a fire prevention measure. The term "fag" was a common British colloquialism for a cigarette at the time.

Fire Prevention: The primary purpose of the "fag bag" was related to fire safety. Posters from the WPA (Works Progress Administration) War Services Project in Pennsylvania encouraged people, including President Roosevelt, to use these bags while in wooded or sensitive areas. This was a wartime measure to prevent forest fires, which were seen as potentially aiding the Axis powers by diverting resources.

A famous WWII propaganda poster, created by Louis Hirshman between 1941 and 1943, featured a menacing, stylized Japanese soldier standing behind a tree with a lit match, with the caption: "Stop and get your free fag bag. Careless matches aid the Axis." This visual linked careless behavior (littering lit matches) directly to the enemy, encouraging vigilance.

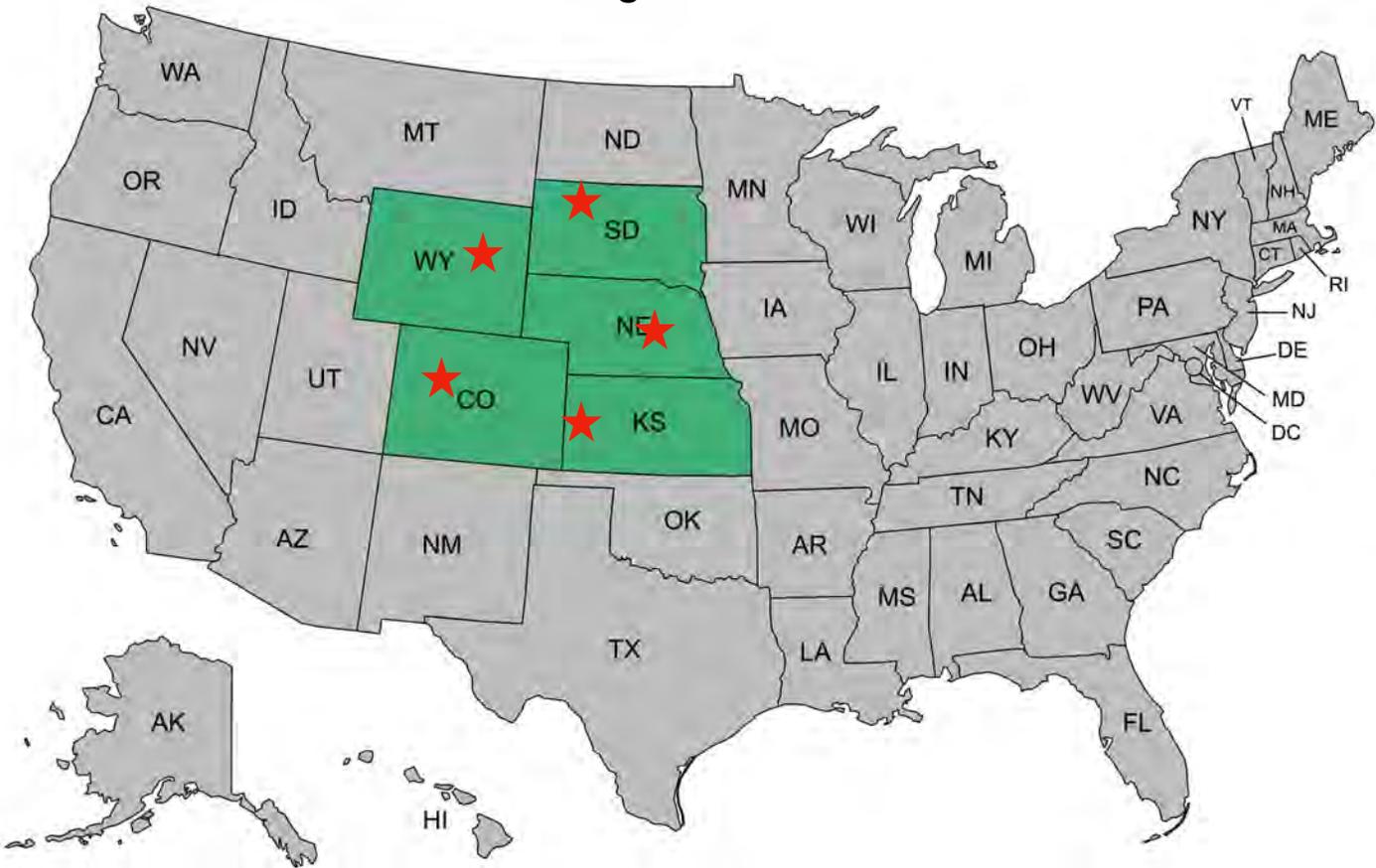


WASHINGTON, July 3, 1942. This WPA poster, emblazoned with "Stop and Get Your Free Fag Bag", is an historic call to action for fire safety. Created between 1941 and 1943 by the Federal Art Project, these bags were part of a broader, urgent fire prevention campaign aimed at the public.

To the bag is attached a tag which has on one side: "Keep your package of cigarettes in this bag while in the forest. The National and State forests are yours. Honor smoking rules and help prevent fires. This bag made by a Girl Scout." On the other side of the tag is printed: "I am fire conscious. I smoke only on posted areas. I realize that fire destroys wildlife and recreation. I pledge my full cooperation in preventing fires."

If We Must Have Hubs

A Region 2 Solution



USDA suggests....Raleigh, NC; Kansas City, MO; Indianapolis, IN; Fort Collins, CO; Salt Lake City, UT; with additional core support in Albuquerque, NM, and Minneapolis, MN.

Some thoughts and reasoning

Lexington, NE - just lost a large beef processing plant - a hub would be a big boost to their economy and is only 1.5 hour drive to the Bessey Tree Nursery.

<https://cityoflex.com/>

Lead, SD - can't shut down the Boxelder Job Corps Center with a Hub nearby.

<https://cityoflead.com/>

Elkhart, KS - excellent temporary quarters at the El Rancho Motel and lots of oil and gas underground.

<https://www.elranchoelkhart.com/>

Bill, WY - great access to a rail line - low cost of living - nice grasslands right next door.

<https://cowboystatedaily.com/2024/03/17/famous-bill-wyoming-is-the-micro-town-that-refuses-to-die/>

Cedaredge, CO - great weather, jet service at Grand Junction and close to Lee Carr.

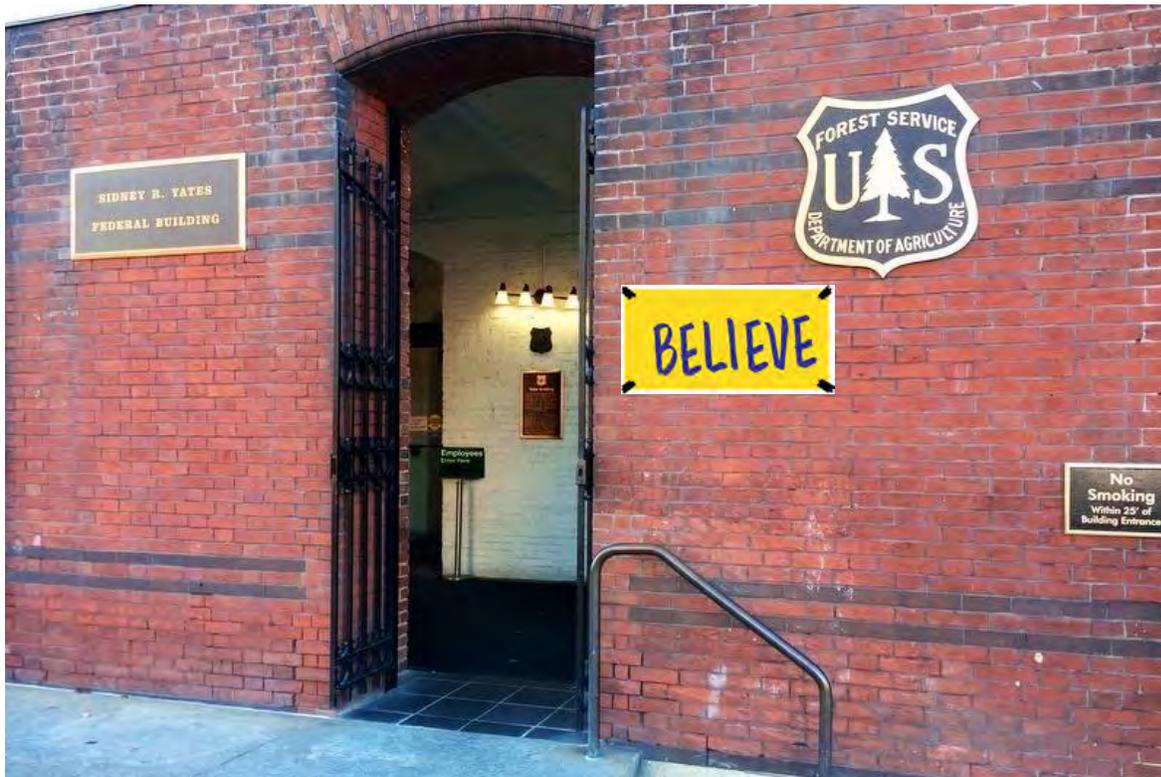
<https://www.cedaredgecolorado.com/>

Forest Service Headquarters



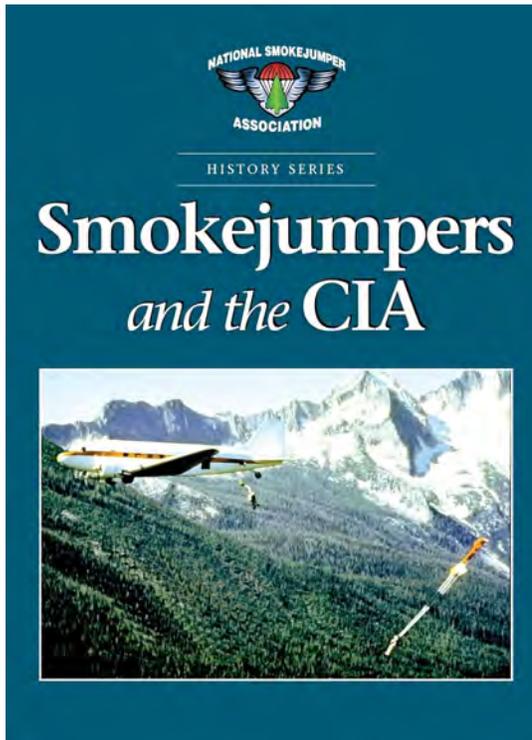
The Sidney R. Yates Federal Building in DC, built 1878-1880, began as the first permanent home for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, later served as the Auditors Building, and is **now the headquarters for the U.S. Forest Service (USDA)**. Known for its Romanesque Revival architecture, grand staircase, and historic vault doors, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places and underwent major restorations to preserve its character while modernizing its facilities.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/out-and-about/living-history-touring-yates-building>



Read These Books

Books with Region 2 Connections



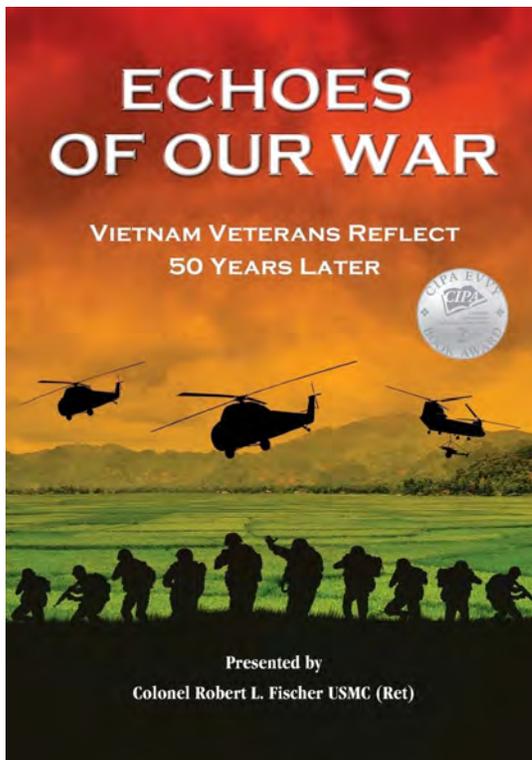
The story goes that somewhere in the spring of 1951, the CIA sent two agents to the smokejumper base at Nine Mile, Montana. The agents were trained to parachute into mountainous and isolated terrain. The U.S. Forest Service smokejumpers had been doing this for over 10 years.

The agents apparently reported back that there was a cadre of men already trained and willing to take on whatever the Agency (CIA) wanted done. Ten smokejumpers were recruited **(including Herm Ball who worked many years in R-2)** and went to work for the Agency that year.

Seven of those smokejumpers went to Taiwan where they trained National Chinese paratroopers and were involved in cargo drops deep into the mainland. In later years, jumpers moved on to Tibet to drop men and equipment to local forces fighting against Chinese occupation. Besides operations in Guatemala and the Bay of Pigs, smokejumpers also took part in the Congo, India and the 15-year "Secret War" in Laos.

Thus started the 25-year working arrangement between the CIA and smokejumpers. Learn more about this fascinating slice of history of the U.S. Forest Service at the link below.

<https://smokejumpers.com/>



Marine vets from all recent wars who meet for lunch monthly at a steakhouse near Denver, ruminate on their wartime service and the war itself in *Echoes of Our War: Vietnam Veterans Reflect 50 Years Later*.

Retired Marine Col. Bob Fischer, a 1955 Naval Academy graduate who served as an adviser to a South Vietnamese marine battalion in 1966-68, selected these 10 veterans - nine Marines and a Navy corpsman - to share their stories because, he writes, "it is time to examine and reevaluate precisely what happened to them and the many thousands who served honorably in a confusing war that was anything but honorable."

Region 2 retiree Bob Averill, wrote one of the chapters in this fascinating account about those who served honorably in a confusing war..

Lt. Bob Averill and MSgt. John Decker add their version of the war's history with their personal accounts. Averill succeeded as a company commander by relentlessly using massive firepower. He then led a Combined Action Company and developed an overwhelming sense of responsibility toward the Vietnamese that continues to this day.

Buy this book in a locally owned bookstore. If you can't find it, then go to Amazon and get it there.

<https://www.amazon.com/Echoes-Our-War-Vietnam-Veterans/dp/1950647404>



Remembrances



John W. Almond

John Almond passed away peacefully at his home on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, after a period of declining health.

Born on February 28, 1938, in Rochester, he was the son of the late William and Beatrice

(Wormhood) Almond.

John earned his degree in Forestry from the University of Maine and later received his master's degree from the University of New Hampshire. After completing his education, he proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He worked in Army Intelligence and rose to the rank of captain, reflecting his leadership and dedication.

Following his military service, John devoted his professional career to the U.S. Forest Service, where he served as a District Ranger and Forest Planner for many years—a role that reflected his deep respect for nature and commitment to conservation.

A true outdoorsman, John found joy in hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking—passions he passed down to his children and grandchildren. He was also a loyal fan of the Boston Red Sox and the Denver Broncos.

John was a faithful follower of the Lord and served in many capacities in the local churches he attended throughout his life. His faith guided his actions, and he was always ready to lend a helping hand or offer words of encouragement.

After living for more than 50 years in Colorado and Wyoming, John returned to his hometown of Rochester to be closer to family and friends.

He is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Doris (Ortman) Almond of Rochester, NH; his children, John D. Almond of Parker, CO, and Debbie Moenning and her husband David of Jacksonville, FL; his grandchildren, Andrew and Taylor; and his great-grandchildren, Ruthie, Amelia, Eden, and Molly. He is also survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Lloyd and Paula Almond of Farmington, NH; his brother- and sister-in-law, Art and Dee Ortman of Boise, ID; and his nephew, Robert Horne and his wife Connie of Whiting, NJ.



Charles Emmett Foster

Charles Foster, age 89, passed away on Sunday, January 11, 2026. Charles was born on October 19, 1936, the son of George H. and Elsie (Brauer) Foster, in Brookings, SD. He attended Trial country school east of Brookings and was a

graduate of Brookings High School in 1954. He

continued his education at South Dakota State College with a degree in Landscape Architecture in 1958.

He was employed by the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks in Pierre, SD from graduation until 1963, during which time he was delegated to Mobridge where he designed and planned the recreation areas along the Missouri River when the Oahe Dam was built. The city of Mobridge hired Emmett to design and complete the landscaping around the new Post Office, he also landscaped a church in Mobridge.

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Remembrances

(Emmett Foster continued)

Emmett enlisted in the United States Army National Guard in 1959 and was called to active duty for ten months in Louisiana during the Berlin Air Lift as personnel officer. He was honorably discharged on May 31, 1965.

His degree in landscape architecture landed a career with the U.S. Forest Service in the Black Hills, Leadville, Pueblo and Denver, CO., Sheridan, WY and back to Pueblo, CO. He designed recreation areas, campgrounds and walks around scenic points of interest. Whenever he came home to South Dakota for a visit he always brought NFS educational materials for the nieces and nephews, the story of Smokey the Bear was a favorite. He received many awards and recognition for his work, the humble guy that he was just said he was doing his job.

Emmett retired from the Forest Service at the age of 56 and bummed around by getting active in the local Master Gardeners Club and was elected president. He designed a memorial garden for a church in Pueblo West. He managed a garden center for five years, and enjoyed giving landscaping suggestions to customers. In his own yard he practiced xeriscaping with mostly native plants and huge variety of cacti that he collected on his many road trips around the southwest. Emmett frequently pinched a cutting or a seed pod to see if he could get it to sprout. He tended many house plants which he showed at the Pueblo Fair and frequently took home the Best of Show ribbon.

He enjoyed hiking in the mountains, down hill skiing until he gave away his skis at the age of 79, bicycling and running races frequently placing at the top of his age division. He enjoyed traveling to Northern Ireland to visit the relatives but also a solo traveler to Europe, South America and the Caribbean then he learned the ease of traveling with a tour group or cruise to Scandinavia, Iceland, the Antarctic and many other destinations.

Emmett was an accomplished stained glass artist designing many intricate pieces. He built a house in Pueblo West where he lived the past 35 years. He was always ready to welcome family for a visit and loved showing off the beauty of the mountains

always having age appropriate activities for the nieces and nephews. His love for writing letters began in his younger years writing to his Irish pen pal cousins. In his later years he suffered a fall which affected his speech but not his letter writing abilities. He still kept up with his sisters, cousins, and nieces and nephews and was the source of information for everyone in the family.

His oldest niece Ann gave him a nudge to consider moving back to South Dakota when he turned 88. He made the move in May of 2025 and thoroughly enjoyed being closer to family and going out for pizza or Mexican food. He had forgotten how windy South Dakota can be.

With a \$25 gift to McCrory Gardens in 2003, Emmett's financial support began to grow. In 2023, he was the Challenge Donor for McCrory Gardens on One Day for STATE, in hindsight, Emmett's final gift to the South Dakota State Arboreum feels almost poetic - a life of stewardship, spent years caring for trees, shaping trails, and creating places where others could walk, wonder and belong.

"I'm so thankful to have met him. The man, the legend." - Lisa Marotz, Director of Operations, McCrory Gardens

He is survived by sister Ardie (Gerry) Wyatt of Scottsdale, AZ, brother-in-law Warren Hatfield of Phoenix, AZ; nieces and nephews Kelly (Dave) Lee, Heather (Dave) Parker, Colin Wyatt, Dan (Ro) Hatfield, Jennifer Draheim, Steve Foster, Ann (Bill) Douglas, Neal (Julie) Foster, Joel (Bonnie) Foster and Jenn Piscopo, great nieces and nephews and great-great nieces.

Emmett was preceded in death by his parents, one brother Robert J. Foster and his wife Geneva, two sisters Gretchen Hatfield and Joan Piscopo and her husband Floyd and one nephew Paul Piscopo.

He was without a doubt the favorite uncle and a legend. Emmett will be remembered for his smile, his love for his family and the great outdoors, his sense of humor and attention to details. He truly had a fabulous life.

Remembrances



Lee Warren Jensen

Lee Jensen, age 93, passed away at Hope West Care Center in Grand Junction, Colorado on Sunday, September 21, 2025. Lee was born on September 28, 1931, in Spearfish, South Dakota. He was the

eldest son of Clifford and Dorothy (Anderson) Jensen. He was raised in Wyoming and South Dakota. He attended Plainview Adventist Academy in Redfield, SD where he met his future wife, Patricia Bieber. Lee was drafted into the United States Marine Corps, and was based in San Diego, California for two years. Lee and Pat were married in Tolstoy, South Dakota on September 27, 1953.

Lee earned a general forestry degree from Utah State University. His career with the US Forest Service took him to Idaho on the Salmon NF, the Gunnison NF in Colorado, the Pierre Grassland in South Dakota, and the Tongass NF in Alaska

Lee and Pat adopted four children. Jay D., Francene, Michele, and Jeff. Lee and Pat were married for 67 years until her passing on June 19, 2020. Lee continued to live in their home in Grand Junction until his passing. Lee enjoyed family, hunting, fishing, camping, and cutting firewood. He was an accomplished horseman and trained most of his own horses. Lee is survived by his children--Jay D. (Twyla) Jensen, Francene (DJ) Jensen, Michele (Allen) Kites, Jeff (Melanie) Jensen; 9 grandchildren; several great grandchildren; and one sister Marolyn (Gary) Hart.



Carolyn A McCabe

Carolyn McCabe, died on August 4th, 2025 at her home in Glenwood Springs. She was born on December 1, 1943 to John and Nettie McCabe. She was raised in Carbondale and graduated from Roaring

Fork High School. She attended college at Mesa College in Grand Junction.

She was a proud career civil service employee with the Forest Service with the majority of her time on the White River National Forest and a short time on the Pike National Forest in Colorado Springs. She began her career at the Mt. Sopris Tree Nursery in El Jebel in May of 1963. She also had assignments at the Supervisor Offices of both the White River and Pike National Forests, Holy Cross Ranger

District out of Minturn and Aspen Ranger District. She retired from the Forest Service in March of 2000. In retirement she enjoyed time with her family, caring for her Father and Mother until their deaths, her cats, Lizzy and Libby, who were her immediate family, her yard and flowers. She liked to read and enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and playing solitaire. She was a good cook and enjoyed barbecuing. She was a huge sports fan especially her Philadelphia Eagles which developed from her seven years spent in the City of Brotherly Love.

She shared special friendships throughout her lifetime with not only her special friends but their four legged pets. She has been a long time parishioner at St Stephen Catholic Church in Glenwood Springs. She is survived by her brother LeRoy (Sandy) McCabe and their children, her sister Shirley (Greg) Thompson, and her brother Ed (Pat) McCabe and their children and grandchildren.

Remembrances



Robert P. (Bob) Newlin

Robert Newlin from Durango, CO, passed away peacefully on December 19, 2025. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, Bob will be remembered for his humor, his generosity, his deep love for family, the outdoors,

and the community he called home for more than four decades.

Born on August 24, 1931, in Casey, Illinois, Bob was the son of Walter and Gladys Newlin. Growing up in a small Midwestern town, he cultivated an early appreciation for hard work and service that would define his life. As a young man, Bob earned the rank of Eagle Scout—a clear sign of the dedication and leadership that would follow him throughout his career and personal life.

Bob graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in agriculture before joining the Air Force as an officer and earning the rank of Major. He then continued his education at Colorado State University, where he earned a degree in forestry.

Bob married his loving wife, Jan, in Wyoming, beginning a partnership that lasted 59 years. Together they raised two sons, Bret and Kurt, and later celebrated the joy of welcoming three grandchildren, each of whom brought immense pride and laughter to Bob's life.

His career with the U.S. Forest Service spanned more than 30 years, the majority of which he spent in Colorado. His work reflected not only his professional knowledge but also his personal love for nature and the land.

He attended the University of Illinois where studied Agriculture, then transferred to Colorado State

University and graduated in Forestry. He served in the Air Force and was on their competition rifle team.

He started his Forest Service career in Montrose on the Grand Mesa, Uncompaghre and Gunnison National Forests as an Assistant District Ranger. He then went to the Powell Ranger District on the Bighorn National Forest as a GS-9 District Ranger. After that, he transferred to the Pagosa District as District Ranger on the San Juan National Forest. He then went to the R2 Regional Office in Fire and Aviation and as Assistant Director for Range Management. His final assignment was as Resource Staff Officer on the San Juan National Forest.

In 1984, Bob, Jan and the boys settled in Durango, a community they quickly came to cherish. Bob's presence could often be felt through his involvement with civic and social organizations—including the Lions Club, the Elks Club, the Durango Coffee Club, and the American Legion. Whether planning a gathering or enjoying a cup of coffee with friends, Bob's kindness and humor left a lasting impression on everyone he met.

Always one for new experiences, Bob filled his life with hobbies that spoke to his zest for life. He found joy behind a camera lens, on the slopes, and on the golf course with friends. He was an avid sportsman who enjoyed taking his family on annual SCUBA trips, and hunting with his friends in the 8-High Duck Club. A loyal Denver Broncos fan, Bob could be counted on for spirited commentary on game day. To those closest to him, he will be remembered for his endless supply of corny, and sometimes inappropriate, jokes. He is survived by his wife, Jan; his sons, Bret (Heidi) and Kurt (Thurese); and his three cherished grandchildren Adrienne, Alaina, and Finn.

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Remembrances



Royal M. Ryser

Royal Ryser died on November 6, 2025. He was born on a farm near Agenda, KS, on Sept 26, 1934, to Frank and Martha (Thompson) Ryser, the youngest of one brother and 17 half siblings. He attended a

one room country school for three years, then moved to Effingham, KS to finish grade and high school in 1952.

He joined the Navy in 1952, during the Korean War and served in the Seabees as an equipment operator in Cuba and Naples, Italy. Royal graduated from Kansas State U in 1959 with a civil engineering degree. Most of his career was with the US Forest Service in CA, AZ and CO and he was a Registered Professional Engineer. Besides engineering, Royal liked woodworking, hunting, and old cars. He was a lifelong Christian and served in many capacities in several United Methodist Churches.

At one of his many addresses, he was President of the Campfire Girls Council, a position that gave him great satisfaction as a supporter of the girls in the program.

In 1943, age 8, he met Regina Happel; they graduated from high school together in 1952. Royal enlisted in the US Navy They married in 1953 and made a life together, starting housekeeping in Naples. After college, work took them several places, and they also produced a family of 3 daughters, Joy, Ann, and Karen. These 3 became the center of their lives and their most significant accomplishment, giving Royal and Regina 5 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Royal had great pride in serving in the US Navy and working for the U S Forest Service. His Navy service provided the gateway to a university engineering degree and the Forest Service work offered a way to protect and utilize the natural resources of the National Forests. He served on the Angeles NF Pasadena, CA; Sequoia NF Porterville, CA; Lassen NF Susanville, CA; Cleveland NF San Diego, CA; Prescott NF, Prescott, AZ, and the Region 2 Headquarters, Lakewood, CO.

Royal was preceded in death by his wife Regina, granddaughter Katie Kolonics, his parents, his brother James and 17 half-brothers and -sisters. He is survived by daughters Joy (Leroy) Medina, Ann (Frank) Kolonics, and Karen (Bill) Flynn; grandchildren Molly Ocampo(Jeff) and Sam Medina, Max Kolonics and Will Flynn; and great-grandson Luca Ocampo and great-granddaughter Mila Ocampo.

Teresa (Terry) Spencer

Terry Spencer passed on January 2, 2026 after an 8-year battle with cancer. She retired from the R2-RO IRM/WO-CIO staff.

Terry always gave sound advice to others using her love of reading and Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Psychology from the University of Redlands (CA) and Montana State University respectively. While attending Redlands, Terry translated the Navajo language into English. During her MSU studies, she met her life-long friend, Hugh, who also became her caretaker. Terry began her Forest Service career in the R1 Gallatin-SO as a librarian, transferred to the Route NF-SO in Steamboat Springs, followed by the information management staff in the RO, and finally as a

Cybersecurity Officer under the WO-CIO.

Terry loved to share her vast knowledge with others. She could discuss topics about life or the universe without any trouble. Her interests included being a Sci-Fi fan, writer/editor, poet, dancer, photographer, traveler, mother-to-many-cats and sister. Most of all, Terry was a dreamer with a wicked sense of humor and a lover of dragons.

Terry is survived by her brother John (Mike), her lifetime friend Hugh, her cat Arlo, and many friends.

No services are planned. In her honor, please be kind to others. Terry left us with this quote: **"I'm done adulting. Let's be dragons!"**

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Remembrances



Ronald H. Stellingwerf

Ron Stellingwerf, affectionately known as “Boxhead,” passed away on February 13, 2026. He was born May 23, 1945, to Harry and Steffie Stellingwerf and was raised in Billings, Montana along with his older sister, Patricia.

After graduating from high school in 1963, Ron began his first part-time Forest Service job as a fire lookout in Slate Creek, Idaho. He went on to attend the University of Montana in Missoula, earning a bachelor’s degree in Forestry in 1971. Following graduation, he married his wife Kathy and they returned to Slate Creek, Idaho, for a full-time position with the Forest Service thus beginning his life long career.

In 1975, they began building their family with the arrival of their first son, Kenneth. Two years later, in 1977, they happily welcomed their second son, Kevin.

Ron dedicated 40 years with the Forest Service, living and serving in several communities throughout his career, including Slate Creek, Idaho; Wisdom, Montana; Camp Crook and Lemmon, South Dakota; Sheridan, Montana; and eventually Sheridan, Wyoming. He retired on September 3, 2005 from the Bighorn National Forest in Sheridan, Wyoming, as the Resource Staff Officer closing a career marked by hard work, integrity, and a deep respect for the land he loved. On September 4, 2005, Ron proudly announced he had perfected retirement.

On April 7, 2000, Ron married Julia Jones Watson, and together they blended their family of five children. Ron’s life was rooted in the outdoors. He found great joy in fishing—especially fly fishing—hunting, skeet shooting, and time spent in nature. In quieter moments, he enjoyed tying flies, reloading shells, reading, and crafting beautiful custom fishing rods for family and friends. As much as he loved the outdoors, nothing meant more to Ron than his family and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Steffie Stellingwerf; his sister, Patricia Olson (Sage); his son, Christopher Watson; his mother-in-law, Patricia Jones; his brother-in-law, Patrick Jones; his grandson, Braxton Quinn; his niece, Laurie Spika; and his nephew, James Jones.

Ron is survived his wife, Julia; his children, Kenneth Stellingwerf, Kevin Stellingwerf (Shannon), Kacey Mallinson (Trent), and Jenny Watson Thom. He is also survived by his cherished grandchildren, Brady, Brianna, Brooke, Robert, Brittlee, Mollie, William, Daniel, Noah, Riley, Jerek, and Kaylia; and his great-grandchildren, Ashton, Josie, Waylon, James, Elliott, Ella, Leanna, and Isabella, who is due March 23rd. He is further survived by his brothers-in-law, Sage Olson and Dennis Jones (Jennifer); his sister-in-law, Jennifer Konrad (Dale); niece Teri (Todd) Wilson; and last, but certainly not least, his trusty best friend and hunting companion, his dog, Guage.

Ron will be remembered for his steady character, strong morals, and deep love for family, friends, and the outdoors. His legacy lives on in the lives he touched, the traditions he passed down, and the wild places he so faithfully served and protected.

Remembrances



Douglas A. (Doug) Wagner

Doug Wagner was born August 15, 1946, in St. Thomas, ND and passed away November 20, 2025 in Wheat Ridge, CO. He loved classical music and graduated from the University of

North Dakota with a degree in music education. He went on to get an associate's degree in electronics before enlisting in the Army, where he played trombone in the Army Band in Virginia and Alaska.

Doug began his Forest Service career in 1993 working in Visitor Information Services in the R2 Regional Office before becoming a computer technician. He worked on numerous wildfires during the summer months throughout his career, providing computer support to Incident Management Teams all over the country. In 1995, and in addition to his regular duties, he joined the Fiddlin' Foresters (who were the official old-time string band of the US Forest Service) playing bass and singing harmony vocals. For almost a decade, he traveled with the band to a variety of events nationwide performing musical programs that educated audiences on the history of the Forest

Service, the value of America's public lands and challenges facing natural resources today. A notable event during his time with the Fiddlin' Foresters was representing the US Forest Service at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, UT.

After more than two decades with the Forest Service, Doug eventually retired and found time to learn the French horn which he played for several years with the Castle Rock Orchestra. He also had the opportunity to conduct the Lakewood Symphony Orchestra after his wife won it for him at the Orchestra's silent auction one year.

Doug loved attending his children's music and theater performances, model railroading, old time radio, history (especially World War II and the Big Band era), football, and all the many family pets. He looked forward to camping trips with family and friends and was especially looking forward to the birth of his first grandchild in February 2026.

Doug is survived by his loving wife, Linda, daughter Jennifer, twins Ashley and Will, son-in-law Damon and new grandson, and is deeply missed by all who knew him.

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Remembrances

John P. (Dutch) Wierenga

John Wierenga, 84, passed away on December 5, 2025. He was born on April 2, 1941, in Muskegon, Michigan, and spent his early school years in Denver, Colorado, where he developed the grit and work ethic that would shape the rest of his life. Dutch proudly served in the United States Army from 1960 to 1963 as a Combat Engineer specializing in mine warfare while stationed in Germany and retired as a SP5. A no-nonsense man through and through, he carried that same straightforward toughness into his career with the White River National Forest.

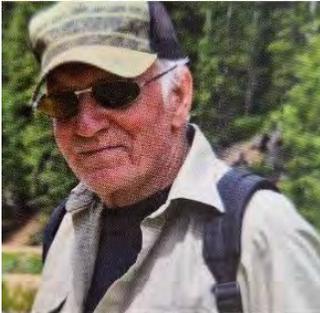
For more than 31 years, based in Glenwood Springs, he worked as a blaster and was responsible for back-country operations, road maintenance, blasting safety training, and installing and maintaining facilities throughout the White River area. He was known for doing things the right way the first time, with a cowboy's grit and an engineer's precision.

In 1996 he married Margaret Brown and together they built their home and family in Glenwood Springs. After retiring from the Forest Service, Dutch and Margaret moved to Parachute, Colorado, in 1997, where he enjoyed a quieter pace of life—though he never fully let go of his cowboy spirit. Dutch's final wish was to be set free on Windy Point, a place he loved deeply. His family will honor that wish this coming spring. Dutch lived his life simply, honestly, and exactly the way he wanted. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Dutch is survived by his wife, Margaret; his daughter Deborah (Joe Sternberger); daughter Shannon Darlene Muse (Dan); son Russell Brown (Sandi); and four grandchildren: Jesse Gilmer, Hailey Brown, Hunter Brown, and Christopher Wierenga. He is also survived by his sister Peggy Farewell (Rich) of Arvada, Colorado, and his brother Mike Wierenga (Kathy) of Palisade, Colorado.

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Remembrances



Fred Winkler

Fred Winkler passed away January 30, 2026. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on August 16, 1938. He attended Ohio State University and participated in ROTC. In 1957 he worked his first

season as temporary on the Nez Perce NF. He returned to Michigan State University where he graduated in 1960. He then spent a year at Yale School of Forestry.

Fred then worked in the Lassen Forest in CA. While there he was offered a permanent job in Crested Butte, CO and was there 6 weeks before being drafted into the Cold War. He served 2 years in Germany as a G2 in the Army. While there he met his wife of 55 years, Marianne, a German citizen working for the Army as a translator on the Czechoslovakia desk. He served in the US Army from 1962 to 1964. After being discharged, Fred returned to the Gunnison N.F. with Marianne and his adopted son Bernd in 1965. There, he learned the duties and ways of a Forest Service district through 1968. The family, now including their daughter Rose, then moved on to the Black Hills NF at the Boxelder Job Corp Center. While there he taught forestry and often led largely Sioux crews on fire assignments.

He then transferred to the Arapaho NF in Fort Collins in 1977. His family now includes his

youngest daughter, Christine. He was silviculturist and timber prep forester there until 1996. During this period, he had many fire assignments including Division Supervisor, Situation Unit and Resource Unit Leader. His assignments were in most western states, Alaska, the Carolinas, Florida, and Kentucky. In 1996 he worked with the regional office helping forests run silviculture computer models to evaluate long term outcomes used in forest planning. He retired from the USFS in 1998.

Fred always highly valued service to others and joined the Colorado State Forest service for another 16 years as a SEAT manager serving on fire assignments in Colorado, Arizona, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Texas. This seasonal work allowed him and Marianne to travel stateside and internationally. Several trips to Germany challenged Fred's German and allowed Marianne and the children to learn of their mother's country. Fred also enjoyed spending time with friends "drinking beer and telling tales", fishing, hiking, kayaking, cross country skiing and his beloved reading. So much to read, so little time.

Fred is survived by his daughters, Rose and Christine; Grandson Nick Winkler and his wife Amber, their daughter Berlyn, daughter in law Donna Marshal, granddaughter Melissa Marshal and her daughter Madoline Marshal.

The Last Word

The Last Word - Thirty-eight Years in the Making

By Tom L. Thompson

In late June of 1988, when I was Forest Supervisor on the Siuslaw National Forest, I was flying from Portland, Oregon to Washington, D.C. with our Forest Wildlife Biologist Lisa Norris to meet with Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield to share how we intended to provide habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl. As we flew over the area around Yellowstone National Park at 33,000 feet, quite a number of small smoke columns could be seen below. The week before there had been repeated lightning strikes across the northern Rocky Mountains and the summer was heating up in an unusual manner.

You know the rest of the story and no doubt remember how the Yellowstone Fires of 1988 intensified the interest, the dialogue, and debate about forests and fire was on television every evening and in the headlines across the country. I remember Regional Forester Gary Cargill sharing that “if you can’t explain your fire policy in 15 seconds, you probably don’t have a policy as far as the public is concerned.” That was thirty-eight years ago and is a significant part of the history of the Forest Service just like the South Canyon Fire fatalities in 1994 six years after Yellowstone. The story of the spotted owl and the Pacific Northwest in the mid-nineties also grew into a major mission-changing episode as well.

Over the last 125 years there are countless stories, significant happenings, and many, many dedicated people who have had a part in shaping the story of conservation and public lands in the United States of America. This Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service has had its share of these - the first Ranger, the first timber sale with Case 1, the first Forest Reserve, Pinchot and the pushback from ranchers, the Wapiti ranger station, the Bessey nursery, Trappers Lake and the story of wilderness, some of the first significant recreation development in places like Squirrel Creek on the San Isabel Forest, the Dust Bowl, the CCC’s and all their work, the development of the ski industry, the national grasslands, the Job Corps program, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem work, the beginning of the Forest Service paleontology program, restoration at the Black Thunder Mine in Wyoming, and on and on with so many important stories over the years. So many of you who are Rocky Mountaineers here in 2026 have been a part of much of this history in one way or another, perhaps half of the history of the Forest Service or more.

That same year as the fires in Yellowstone, the State Forester in Montana, Gary Brown, was inspired to initiate a movement to attempt to establish a place where the history and the story of the U.S. Forest Service could be preserved. He envisioned such a place might be used to enlighten the public about the idea of conservation and the Forest Service which he had great respect for. He believed an agency as important and proud as the U. S. Forest Service should care about their history of “Caring for the Land and Serving People.” Gary, who had never worked for the Forest Service, decided to establish the non-profit “National Museum of Forest Service History” to help remember and preserve the outfits’ history, and the recently retired Chief Emeritus of the Forest Service, Max Peterson agreed wholeheartedly with the idea and the dream started.

Here we are in March 2026 and the building that Gary and others envisioned is finally a reality. It will stand as a source of pride for everyone interested in Forest Service history. It will be a place that I believe will be an inspiration and a place that ensures that the history and legacy of the Forest Service and the story of conservation in America will be shared for all who have interest in their amazing public lands for years and years ahead.

I first joined the Museum Board in 2005 shortly after I retired. Most of us who have been dedicated to this effort were so much younger when we started on this journey;

however, for retirees there has been a growing commitment and dedication to fulfilling the dream of having such an important place to tell the story of conservation and the Forest Service. This has been a huge volunteer effort, and countless hours, days, and months of work over the years have been dedicated to making it happen. As President of the Museum for the last ten years I am proud that we have accomplished all we have, but there is still work ahead.

We have raised over \$17 million and much of that has come from Forest Service retirees. This is no ordinary museum, and it has taken unbelievable commitment, persistence, patience, and teamwork to make it happen. The building is an amazing display of quality, character, and utility. It's design and craftsmanship are stunning. It will house tens of thousands of artifacts that are part of the Museum's collection.

The ribbon cutting for our National Conservation Legacy Center will be mid-summer after all the exhibits are in place and the building is ready to be opened to the public. It will be a time to celebrate, to enjoy, to dedicate, and to commemorate. I hope that when the door opens, that it is also a time to remember and acknowledge that the people whose stories are told there were special people dedicated to seeking the "greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." Those who are no longer with us and who gave so much of their lives to the Forest Service believed in conservation, were committed to serving the public, and they understood the importance of managing and using the land and resources wisely so that generations yet to come could enjoy and benefit from what we have been entrusted to protect.

We have learned much over the last 120 years and my hope is that we continue to learn from our history and experience and not let greed, lust for power, or politics of the moment tarnish the idea that has endured for so long. The Museum is dedicated to the long run and will be a place to remind all those who follow that the Forest Service has been, and is a very special organization dedicated to serving the public and taking care of our very special public land and resources. Your support of the Museum in whatever way you can is so important to our success and we thank all who have helped us get to where we are today. Buy a brick!

