



NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETIREE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Forest Service Retirees:

The NRMRA is looking for ways to improve service to members of our Association. As much as possible we want to help you stay connected and informed about subjects of interest and we try to do this through the Newsletter and our monthly meetings.

Vicky does a great job editing the Newsletter and getting it out twice a year. She's always looking for submissions so please take some time and write about your memorable work experiences for others to read and enjoy.

I also want our monthly meetings to be of value. For those who haven't attended in a while (or at all) we begin with a brief business meeting and often have a guest speaker. For instance, our March speaker talked about the preservation of historic Forest Service facilities. Please join us.

We meet the first Tuesday of every month beginning at 11:30. We are presently scrambling for a new location so if you do not get the lunch info

emails check in with Vicky or me for that month’s location. I encourage all of you to attend whenever possible. It's your Association and we need your participation.

Thanks everyone.

Tim Love



Spring wildflowers from the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Newsletter articles needed – *your editor strives for a variety; stories about the good old days when you were young and there was no NEPA, information on new and interesting second careers or unique hobbies. Do you play the oboe in the Ekalaka Symphony, do you grow hops for the beer industry, are you running for governor? Is there a special place or person from this region that we can highlight? Loose deadlines are March 15, for the spring newsletter and September 15, for the fall Newsletter. 1-2 pages preferred. Photos also welcome. agillabs@mcn.net*

LIONS AT THE BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST ALTA CABIN

by Dixie Dies



Photo courtesy of John Orlando. Left to Right: Don Williamson, Barbara Orlando, Tom Brader, Tanya Neidhardt, Honey Girl, John Orlando, Back row: Jim Whitlock, Dan Rothlisberger, Cheryl Rothlisberger.

September 19, 2021, a ‘pride’ of proud Hamilton Lions Club members met at the Alta Cabin for a social gathering celebrating the end of summer, and a successful Ravalli County Fair Bingo fundraiser. The Alta Cabin has special meaning for the Hamilton Lions Club. The members are always looking for a way to give back to and be involved in their community. That’s where the Alta Cabin comes into the story.

A brief history of the Alta Cabin: The Alta Cabin-Ranger Station was built in 1899 by Than Wilkerson and Henry Tuttle to serve as their

headquarters to administer part of the General Office Bitterroot Reserve. Wilkerson and Tuttle had the responsibility of patrolling thousands of acres of what is now the West Fork Ranger District.

Wilkerson and Tuttle built the cabin to serve as the Ranger Station. The one-room cabin was completed in two weeks. Alta Ranger Station was officially dedicated on July 4, 1899. It was used until 1904, when a survey revealed that the cabin stood on Pete Bennett's mining claim rather than

forest reserve land, and *the cabin was abandoned by the government.*

Recognizing the significance of Alta Ranger Station in the history of the National Forest system, the Hamilton Lions Club purchased the site from Pete Bennett's daughter in 1941 and donated it to the Forest Service. Although documentation is a bit vague, the cabin is probably the oldest surviving building associated with federal forest management. December 1974, Alta Cabin was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tanya Neidhardt, Bitterroot National Forest Recreation Program Manager, West Fork Ranger District, was with the 'pride' at the Alta Cabin and recognized the Lions for their part of serving their community and preserving our National Forest's History.

Although it is unknown how much the Club members paid for Alta or how that decision was reached, it does exemplify the Lions motto "We

Serve". If the Lions hadn't purchased it, would it still be there? However, the Alta Ranger Station stands today and is a reminder of the rich history of the Bitterroot National Forest and the Hamilton Lions Club.

Dixie is President of the Hamilton Lions Club. She is a Forest Service Retiree from the Bitterroot Forest where she was the Public Affairs Officer. Dixie's career took her to Colorado, Utah, and Alaska. She is the Incident Information Officer on Northern Rockies Type 1 Incident Management Team.



From David Smith, RO, Public Affairs. We are beginning to transition out of the 100% telework posture. Many of our senior leaders are working from their offices now, and more employees will begin to do so toward the end of this Spring. Our 25% building occupancy limits have been lifted, and travel restrictions have been lessened to allow for more travel within the Region. As long as the COVID numbers remain low, we should see an increase in the number of offices open to public visitors. We will be holding our first, in-person Regional Leadership Team meeting in early May, and I anticipate that more in-person meetings and training opportunities will be available through the Spring and Summer. We are monitoring the status of new COVID cases county by county, so many of the decisions about having folks in the office or having the office open to public visitors will be made at the local level. We do have national guidance and policies that we must continue to follow based upon current CDC guidance, so things may look a little different from office to office depending upon whether their counties are in the low, moderate, or high category for COVID.

THE NIGHT THE BEAR CAME TO THE POTLUCK DINNER

by Ellen Childress

Spotted Bear Ranger Station is a remote ranger station on the Flathead National Forest for management of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. It is the site of many fond memories made when my husband was stationed there, and our daughter and I joined him for the unique experiences of life on a Forest Service guard station far removed from the conveniences of urban life.

The station is situated at the end of Hungry Horse Reservoir and accessed by about 55 miles of dusty, pothole filled, gravel road. Each spring we eagerly packed for the move for the season. As summer residents on the compound, we planned for at least 3 weeks of groceries and sometimes brought fresh produce up from town for me to can and preserve during the days when my husband was off on back country duties. Since the ranger station was our home for the summer, we moved the whole family including our dog, cats, and horses which my husband used for work. It was a wonderful place for kids, pets, and families. Most of us had small children and we made our own fun with picnics at the swimming beach and potlucks in the evening with any families and crew members who happened to be around on the compound at the time.

Our family was privileged to live in a cabin that had been moved from Glacier Park and renovated for us. The living room had big open log beams and was large enough to hang a swing for our 3-year-old daughter and her small friends. Besides the living room the ground floor held the kitchen, a small bedroom and bath. There were special touches to the cabin, such as cedar shake siding, nice doors with diamond paned windows and a small back porch. A sleeping loft above the living

room was accessed by a narrow spiral staircase and the cats seemed to enjoy climbing it to sleep on a warm bed on a nightly basis. When my husband was off on backcountry trips I would sleep in the small bedroom where our daughter's crib was. I also used the closet in that room to store the extra food and produce such as peaches and strawberries that I brought up for preserving.

On one memorable evening toward fall we were just serving dinner at one of the frequent potluck dinners when the host came in from an errand and whispered loudly, "Shut off all the lights!"

There on the lawn a large grizzly bear which had just come out of the timber was casually turning over logs and browsing through the yard. Most of the residences were located on a loop road not too far from each other and after the bear wandered off into the timber and potluck was over, we were all escorted home, especially those of us who had small children and were "holding the fort" while our husbands were out.



Since Marc was out on Patrol in the Bob Marshall Wilderness that night, I made my usual arrangements to sleep in the twin bed in our daughter's room. I had just settled into a deep sleep when I startled awake at the sound of wood splintering on one of those diamond paned door

panels. The sound brought me bolt upright. I could only think of the reputed sense of smell possessed by bears and the flats of fragrant ripe peaches stored in the closet of the room we were sleeping in.

“How thick are those pretty paned doors?” I wondered frantically. As the splintering continued, I envisioned the bear’s paws coming through the door. My next thought was, “How fast can I climb those spiral stairs with Jenny in my arms?” And then, “Can I move the bed up there to block the staircase and would that keep a bear out?”

Just as I got ready to flee, I heard another sound that brought a huge sigh of relief to my active imagination. I sank back on the bed, my heart beating and listened as the cat clawed her way up those diamond pane windows looking for a way into the warm house while meowing her in protest at being left outside. I had never been so glad to

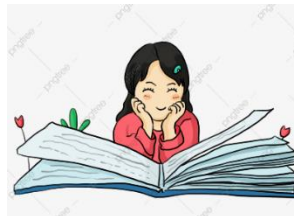
have my sleep interrupted by a cat that just wanted to get in out of the cold!



Ellen was a lookout at Patrick’s Knob near Plains on the Lolo Forest in 1969 and 1970. Her husband to be Marc, was on another lookout and that’s how they met. In 2000 Ellen was a relief lookout on Richard Peak and Cougar Peak also on the Lolo. She also worked on various crews in the 1990s. She is a retired schoolteacher and potter. Husband Marc retired from the Plains District, daughter Jen is an archaeologist on the Helena/Lewis and Clark.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Vicky MacLean and Tom Kovalicky



- When I started to read my new Book “**Idaho Aviation**” by Crista Videriksen Worthy, published in November 2021, I was impressed by all 277 photos with a riveting historical story for each picture - a fascinating way to hold your attention. A power packed introduction launches the reader into the past, present, and perhaps the future. The book has info about the US Forest Service and its role in the development of firefighting airplanes and the Smokejumper program and delivery of supplies and people - back country, wilderness, remote ranches, mining, wild rivers, Forest Service Stations, and gnarly prospectors all fill in the romance and the establishment of flying in central and north-central Idaho for fun and profit. The period is approximately early 1900 to now. Crista is a pilot, lives in Boise and has written about 500 articles on the flying life for work and pleasure. The

paperback retails for \$23.99 and available through Arcadia Publishing (arcadiapublishing.com) and other traditional sources. Tom Kovalicky, Forest Supervisor Nez Perce NF, (RET).

- **“Smoke Jumper and other Stories”** by Nils “Swede” Troedsson. Swede is a retiree from Dillon Montana. He has put together this enjoyable book of vignettes starting with his early days in the Forest service in the 1950s. Most of his career was spent on the Beaverhead Forest. His book includes his time as a smoke jumper and a “timber beast”. His later years he also spent time doing ski patrol work and volunteering on the local (Dillon, MT) ambulance and search and rescue. This book is an easy read, especially if your reading time is limited to brief segments of time. Available from farcountrypress.com in Helena or, if you order from the Dillon Bookstore (406-683-6807) - \$20, it will come signed. Some of his stories will appear in future newsletters.
- **“Voices of Yellowstone’s Capstone, A Narrative Atlas of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness”** Edited by Traute Parrie and Jesse Logan. Traute is a retired Red Lodge District Ranger. Jesse worked at the Rocky Mountain Research Station as well as at Colorado State University. This book is a real treat. A combination coffee table book, easy read science, and history of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness. Its’ essays cover a wide variety of natural resource and cultural topics from wildlife to botany, to geology to archaeology to history. Some of the photographs and narratives are by Forest Service employees or retirees. The book has a wonderful collection of photographs and artwork. For people who believe every book needs maps, it has an excellent collection of relevant maps which precede each section. This book is a publication of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation, abwilderness.org. In 2019 this book won the overall best book by a Montana author at the High Plains Book Festival.



DEAL ME IN, GENTS

by Charlie Fudge

That mystical time between light and dark had begun at the Boswell Blister Rust Camp on that early September evening in 1959. Toby Royal and I were finishing our year-end paperwork. A remnant camp closure crew filled one tent. A cruising crew from the Falls Ranger District on the Kaniksu N. F. claimed a tent opposite our one room cabin/office. A man/wife cook crew lived in the back of the canvas mess hall.

Toby was a tall, lanky lad from Mississippi with a drawl two townships long. His easy manner,

Southern Charm, and past BRC experience made him a popular and effective assistant camp boss. My prior BRC time began after my junior year of high school and covered four seasons. Now I was the camp boss, recently out of the Navy, and back in college at U of Montana studying forestry.

The garbage dump was located 400 yards above camp. After each meal the cook’s flunky (helper) would take the garbage to the dump. Other food supplies were placed in wooden boxes or special cookhouse cupboards. These precautions helped

avoid bear temptation near the cookhouse. But the dump was a common viewing sight for food-conditioned bears.

Toby and I had completed our paperwork. We stood outside the doorway looking across at the tent scene. A gas lantern hung from the ridgepole, the light casting shadows of the card players against the canvas tent sides. Animated shadows projected from the card playing movements. The card game was about to change.

From the dump came the faint bark of a dog. One of the cruisers had a small yapper. The barking grew louder and louder. The pooch came into view followed by an angry bear. Like a “Roadrunner and Wiley Coyote” cartoon the bear’s jaws closed just where the dog was.

All Toby and I could do was watch this scene play out. Through the front flap of the tent went the dog, the bear one jaw snap behind. The pole structures of the tent moved to and fro as canvas

and wood became harmonious with bear, dog, and crew. The individuals were like shadow puppets on a string. The dog found the back flap tight to the tent but with gap enough to escape. The bear, still after the dog but mightily confused, kept butting the back flap. The tent looked like a cowboy on top of a rank bull. A mighty lunge and the bear was free. The poor, frightened animal beat a rapid retreat to cover. Meanwhile four thrashing bodies barreled out the front flap and scattered to the winds. They had folded their hands.

Toby and I waltzed over to the scene of abrupt animation and took a tally of the main event. All was well. No harm. No foul. After cleanup the card game continued. The dog came back the next day.

Charlie has a degree in geology and a background in timber. He spent his career at various ranger districts in Region 1 with a stint at the Regional office and the Washington Office as well as time in Region 2 at the end of his career. Charlie lives in Polson Montana.

MASS TIMBER, BICHAR, WOOD FIBER INSULATION, WHAT’S ALL THE NOISE ABOUT?

by Dave Atkins 02/22/2022

We have all experienced the disruption of our past climate patterns. We have always had “big fire seasons” but the hotter, drier summers are happening more often, and the fires are bigger and often more severe. We also know that our forests are more dense than historically, which also contributes to the “mega-fire” phenomenon. The two together make for the proverbial “perfect storm”.

The good news is that there are new wood product developments that can have positive synergies to help counteract these negative synergies. Forests are one of the most significant natural carbon

solutions on the globe ([2017 Nature Conservancy Study of Natural Carbon Solutions](#)) and wood used in place of fossil carbon intense materials, like steel, concrete, aluminum, etc. can substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If we manage our forests to be more resistant and resilient to disturbances like fire, insects, and disease we can sustain their ability to serve as carbon capture and storage systems. By harvesting and using the wood we can displace a lot of emissions. This is referred to as carbon defense management.

Mass timber, or Post and Beam construction has been around for centuries, but there are new

engineered mass timber products that can make big wood out of small wood. Cross-Laminated-Timber or CLT, Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL), Mass Plywood Panels (MPP) are examples of these new materials. SmartLam, which started in Columbia

Falls, MT around 2007 or '08 was the first CLT manufacturer in N. America. The technology was developed in Europe in the early 1990's, but as with any new product it takes time to get it adopted.



Fig. 1 – University of Idaho's new arena under construction.

CLT panels, up to 10 feet wide and 40-60' long, are revolutionizing tall commercial buildings away from steel and concrete. Architects, engineers, and developers see the potential for cities to become carbon sinks rather than sources and the use of wood is a major part of it. Half the weight of wood is carbon, which translates to a huge storage opportunity in commercial buildings, which almost three quarters of are made of steel and concrete now. It has been estimated that global urbanization

over the next 40 years will result in the equivalent of New York City being built energy month.

Stoltze Timber is a new joint venture branch of Stoltze Land and Lumber, a 107 year old sawmill in Columbia Falls, MT that is going to start making a small scale version of CLT, that I used in our 600 sq ft cabin loft floor. The advantage of the small scale version is that it uses even smaller pieces of wood, down to 2"x2".

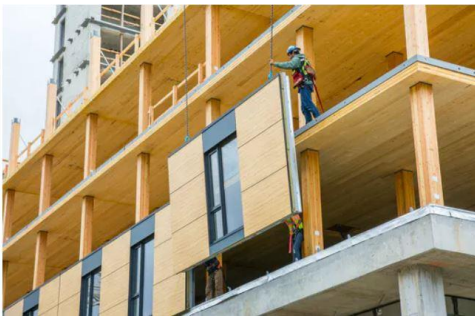


Fig. 2 – University of British Columbia 18-story building under construction using CLT of floors and walls and glu-lam posts.



The translation to forest management is the opportunity to use many trees that would have been pulpwood or in the slash pile because it is too far from a chip market for a higher value product



Fig. 3 - Wood fiber insulation: blown-in, batts and rigid board. Go Lab in Maine.

and thus, make forest thinnings more economically viable. Thus, we could afford to thin many more acres, reducing the density of our forests, follow it up with an under burn and have much reduced wildfire severity and reduced bark beetle hazard.

Another new product is wood fiber insulation. The first North American plant is under construction in Maine. They will be making blown, batt and rigid board insulation from wood fiber.

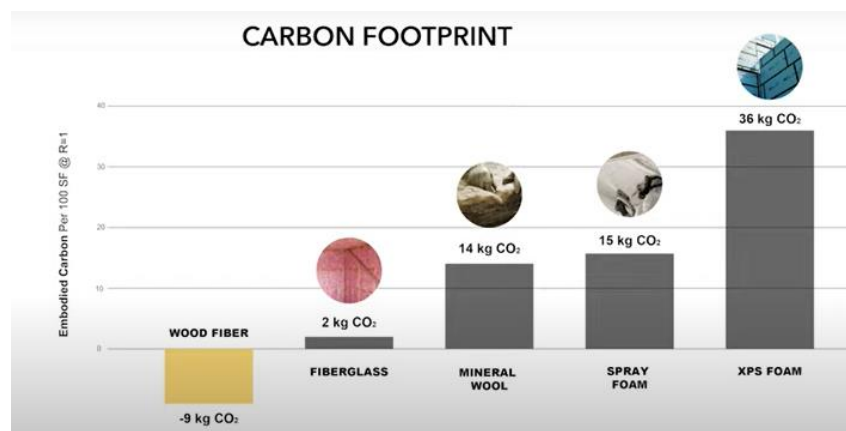


Fig. 4 – Wood Fiber insulation is carbon negative while the other materials are carbon releasing.

This is a value added material that can store carbon for the life of the building (50-100+ years) rather than the life of a cardboard box or newspaper. It is derived from the typical “pulp log” and mill residues. The combination of carbon storage and offsetting the use of carbon emitting products is a powerful one/two punch for climate mitigation. The benefits for forests helps achieve the goal of climate adaptation.

The last example is from biochar, which you may or may not have heard of. Biochar is charcoal from

wood waste/slash that creates carbon that is resistant to decay for hundreds and thousands of years. Ideally the production of biochar will be part of a Biomass Energy Carbon Capture and Storage system, that helps us go carbon negative. The char can be applied to soil to enhance the moisture and nutrient holding capacity, but a company in Berlin, Germany is using it to make a thermoplastic to replace petroleum based rigid plastics. The siding displayed in Fig. 5 is carbon negative rather than a carbon source like petro-based plastic or aluminum or cement based sidings.

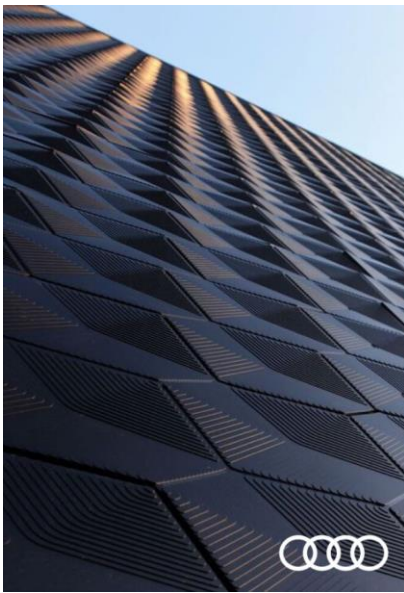


Fig. 5 –Biochar based plastic on Audi Office.

So we can harvest in our forests to make them more resilient and resistant to disturbances to protect their value as habitat, water storage and filtration systems, carbon capture and storage as well as low or negative carbon products to help solve the climate disruption issue and in the process create new businesses and jobs. If you want to read more about forests and carbon management go to treesource.org to see a series of three article I recently completed.

It turns out, Forests are the Answer!

Dave started as a Forestry Tech on the Fishlake NF in R4 in 1976 while in college at Humboldt State

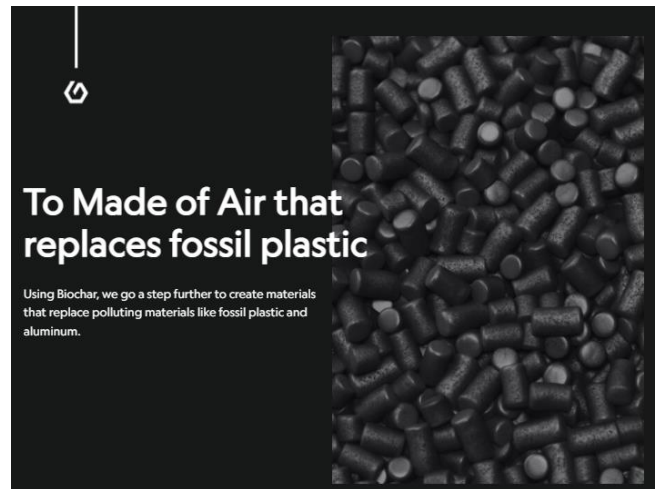


Fig. 6 –Biochar based plastic beads ready for molding.

University. He spent time on the Willamette and Kootenai Forests. Became a District Silviculturist at the Plains/Thompson Falls RD. Moved into the Lolo NF S.O. as the Timber Planner/NEPA Nerd while finishing a M.S. in Forest Ecology, focused on old growth and fire, and became the W. Montana Forest Ecologist then moved into State and Private Forestry in the R1 R.O. in 1996. Dave moved to the W.O. in 2011 and finished his career as the National Program Manager for Wood Energy and Wood Innovations, retiring in 2014 and coming back home to Missoula. Dave and his wife are family forest owners with 159 acres in the lower Blackfoot River drainage, he started Treesource.org an online "magazine" focused on forests.

WOMEN LOOKOUTS

by Vicky MacLean

A June 7, 1921, letter from an Assistant Forester at the Washington Office to the District Forester in Ogden Utah expressed concerns about the number of women interested in serving as lookouts for the

Forest Service. The following letter was found by a retiree and passed on to your newsletter editor.

Dear Sir,

The degree of publicity we are getting over the occasional use of a woman for fire lookout is becoming embarrassing. The recent article in the Sunday newspapers and one of the large magazines have brought down upon us a flood of letters from young girl graduates and others who want a job as a lookout somewhere "in the great west". There would be no harm in this, but some incidents have occurred which indicate that there is a real danger that too much prominence of the women lookout and the boy scout in fire protective publicity may bring down upon us a certain amount of ridicule.

If the use of women as lookouts increases, it is probably inevitable that someday a woman will get lost or suffer some catastrophe which will get us in the headlines in a very unfavorable light for having employed women on such dangerous work.

The Forester would like to have you make sure that the employment of women lookouts is kept well in hand and that there is no danger of a mistake in any single case.



Mt. Elwell Lookout, Molly Ingalsby, Plumas National Forest, California, 1922. Courtesy of the National Museum of Forest Service History.

*Your editor is working on a story about the **Powell Ranger Station School** for the fall newsletter. If you have memories as a student, teacher or parent please send them on to me at agillabs@mcn.net. If you worked at Powell and have stories of the area, those are welcome too. Photos please.*

***Missoula area lunch gatherings** are the first Tuesday of the month. An email notice is sent out to area retirees a week beforehand as a reminder and to let people know where we are meeting. We strive to have a speaker of interest at these gatherings. If you have suggestions for speakers, please let Tim know. If you are in another area and have regular gatherings, please let me know and I will put it in the newsletter.*



INHOLDINGS TAKE YOU BACK IN TIME

by Vicky MacLean

Some parts of the Helena Forest were full of homestead inholdings, some of which had been settled before the Forest Homestead Act even came to be in 1906. Some of these are owned by permittees, some had been purchased by people from far away who built mansions on them and hated dealing with stray cattle. A few however are occupied by the descendants of the original settlers and stopping by to visit was stepping back in time.

My first encounter was during my early days on the Helena District, and I did not really know my way around. It was midday on the headwaters of Little Prickly Pear Creek. I missed my turn and had to go to the end of the road to turn around. At the end of the road, I started to jockey my truck around when out of nowhere appeared a tiny gray haired old woman. I figured I was in trouble for driving on a private road, but no, this was Lila Anderson and there was no getting away. There was an old homestead cabin tucked away in the trees and suddenly I felt like I had traveled back to perhaps 1920. Lila practically hauled me out of my truck to get a tour of the place. I mentally clocked out of work, figuring I could be here for a while. This inholding was homesteaded by her husband's parents. A cluster of little buildings was cozy and tucked away in the shelter of a grove of trees; a cabin, some out buildings and a vegetable garden. I had to go in and meet her husband, whose name I do not remember, and a friend who was with them. They did not live here but rather came often to get out of town, have lunch or spend a summer day. I got the family history about growing up here

and attending the one room schoolhouse down the road. Years later I connected with their nephews who each had a beautiful photo album put together by Grandmother Anderson. They were kind enough to loan me the albums so I could scan the photos. They shared more family stories some of which I was able to include in my History of the Helena National Forest.

Another trip back in time was to a homestead on the Little Buffalo Allotment west of Clancy. We had a weed spraying project in the area and had to get permission to access it through private land. It was a cool summer morning and the smell of wood smoke drifted up through the trees. A yard fence surrounded the cabin, I let myself through the gate and knocked on the door. I was greeted by May Wing, an older woman who, age wise, probably could have been my grandmother. I got a glimpse into the cabin which looked as it probably had 50 years earlier. There was a big wood cook stove going in the kitchen. I was able to escape with the weed crew to go on through her land and get to work. However, she was so insistent that we stop by at lunch time that I knew we had to be polite and not insult her by declining the invitation. It is often a balancing act, a little old lady who was obviously starved for some company and wanted to visit versus you are not supposed to accept favors/gratuities from the public. We did appear for lunch which was a small bowl of soup and as one of the crew members recollects, she probably counted the noodles to make sure that we all had

exactly the same amount. I think there were peanut butter sandwiches as well.



Anderson homestead. From Helena National Forest file.

It took several days of spraying to finish up the project and before we were done, we of course got the tour of the garden. I don't know how a vegetable garden made it up in the woods with deer all around, but it flourished and probably provided her with a winter's supply of canned vegetables and berries. In a fine example of everything somehow being connected, I later figured out that one the little girls in my 4H group was her granddaughter.

Vicky spent her career working in range on the Helena National Forest.



FOREST SERVICE MUSEUM UPDATES

The Conservation Legacy Center (National Museum of Forest Service History) has been busy this past year. Here are some highlights of their accomplishments and activities.

Conservation Legacy Center – Fundraising and Design Move Forward

Our highest priority is to complete the Capital Campaign for the Conservation Legacy Center (CLC), the flagship building on our Missoula campus. We have received significant cash donations in the past year from several new donors. Rich Stem, our Forest Products Sector lead, and his committee have been successful in securing cash and in-kind donations (e.g., lumber) from 12 forest product companies. As of this update we have firm commitments for about 80% of the lumber needed and hope to be close to 100% soon. The CLC requires a lot of wood because the building design is based on mass timber technology. We are most fortunate to have Tom Chung as our architect who specializes in mass timber design. We are also pleased to announce the completion of the CLC exhibition conceptual design by Art Processors, a technology company which specializes in designing exhibits and visitor experiences; and we are now developing preliminary historical themes/story lines for each conservation sector (forest management, recreation, wildlife, and fish, etc.).



Conceptual rendering of exhibition entrance of the conservation legacy center.

Ranger Roll Call – Interim Report to be Published Spring 2022

The Museum’s Regional Director Cadres continue to help us document the names of every district ranger and their years of service on each national forest and grassland dating back to 1905 (and sometimes earlier). Fifty four forest/grassland histories with ranger lists (including Region 1 forests) and directors of the Rocky Mountain Research Station) have been published and can be viewed online: [Advanced Search Results | National Museum of Forest Service History \(pastperfectonline.com\)](#). We are also documenting the directors of all research stations and very recently made a decision to include forest and grassland supervisors. If you are interested in helping the Museum complete the ranger lists for the Gallatin National Forest, Dakota Prairie Grasslands, or fill in missing info for the IPNF, please contact **Andy Mason**, acmason1954@gmail.com, (571-214-5536).



The National Smoke Jumper Association reunion is August 12-14 in Boise Idaho. For details go to their [website](#)



Remembering George Gibbs and His Lasting Legacy

The Museum's oral history program, including the hiring of our professional oral historian, James Wall, was made possible by a generous donation from USFS retiree **George Gibbs**. Sadly, George passed away earlier



*George Gibbs at the Mount
Headley Fire Lookout, Lolo
National Forest. 1955.*

this year. George gave the Museum several significant gifts, including a donation to support the Conservation Legacy Center project. George's professional career was in R-8, however, his first USFS job, in 1955, was a summer student position on the Lolo National Forest, stationed at Thompson Falls. In his 2021 oral history interview (conducted by James Wall), George said he always wanted to make it back to Montana. George Gibbs truly left us a lasting legacy at the Museum.

So far James has done 25 interviews. He made one short trip to Louisville, KY in October and outside of that most of the interviews have been in Montana. James is traveling to Denver in May to interview folks at the Hydrologists Reunion and will be at the FS Retirees Reunion in Tahoe and the Smokejumpers Reunion in Boise but is not scheduled to do any interviews for those. Between local interviews and working on the Wives Podcast (follow up in the fall newsletter) the museum's oral historian is keeping busy.

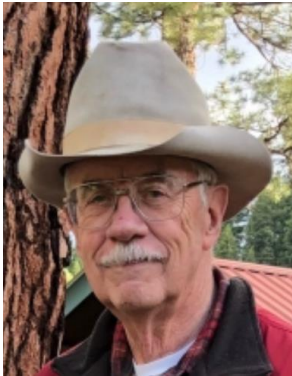


Spring 2022 Online Auction and FS Retiree Reunion In-person Auction

Building on the success of our spring 2021 online auction, the Museum is planning its next auction, scheduled for May 1-15, 2022. The 2021 post-auction survey of our bidders and the feedback was very positive! Once again, we are requesting donations of suitable items (valued at \$100+), including vacation rentals, fishing trips, artwork, ski tickets, musical performances, and more. If you have items to donate or questions about our 2022 online auction, please contact **Andy Mason**, acmason1954@gmail.com, (571-214-5536).



WE REMEMBER



John Edward Burns – passed away in Carmen, Idaho January 6, 2022. He was born in Louisville Kentucky August 20, 1939, to Mary Elizabeth and Foster Samuel Burns. John loved the outdoors and after high school headed west to the University of Montana where he earned his degree in Forestry in 1961. His first full time assignment was on the Pike National Forest in Colorado. He and his wife Elizabeth Conn had three children and were later divorced. In 1972 he married Ruth Fenton while he was District Ranger on the Aspen District of the White River Forest.

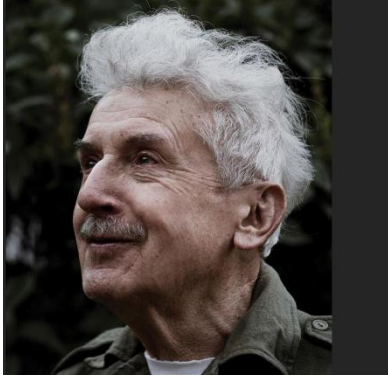
John and Ruth went on to assignments all across the country including Denver, Washington DC San Francisco and the Shasta Trinity National Recreation Area. Eventually they came to Idaho where he was supervisor on the Targhee Forest and where they began owning horses and mules and began a passion for back country pack trips. Later he moved on to the Salmon National Forest where, as supervisor, he managed the largest wilderness in the lower 48 plus 60 head of riding and pack stock. He retired from the Forest Service in 1994 after a 33-year career.

In retirement John served two terms as Fish and Game Commissioner for the Salmon Region. He also served on the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors for 5 years. He was an avid member of the Salmon River chapter of the Back Country Horsemen. John is survived by Ruth, his wife of 50 years, 3 children, 5 grandchildren and a great grandson.



Marjorie I. Fisher – of Whitefish passed away February 22, 2022, at the age of 89. She grew up in Minnesota. She was an auditor and contracting officer on the Flathead National Forest prior to going into private business as a certified financial planner in Whitefish. She was involved in local and state politics as mayor of Whitefish and as a Montana state legislator. Marge was active on many community charitable boards and activities. She was a musician and played 5 instruments.

Marge is survived by daughters Virginia Goodrich and Jennifer Hershman, 2 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, and a brother.



Joseph J. Gutkoski - passed away August 5, 2021 at the age of 94. He was born to Barney and Mary Gutkoski in Wilkes Barre Pennsylvania. He was raised as an outdoors person, hunting, fishing, gathering nuts. After high school he enlisted in the Navy where he served on the Destroyer Lansdowne. After the war her graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Landscape Architecture.

He started with the Forest Service as a fire fighter in Idaho, then transferred to Missoula where he was a smoke jumper for 13 years. During this time, he married Milly Siminich with whom he had 3 children. He worked in Bozeman then at the Regional Office in Missoula as a Landscape Architect. He retired in 1982 with 32 years of service. In his retirement he was active in a number of conservation minded organizations.

Joe was predeceased by his parents, three siblings, a daughter, and his wife Milly of 62 years. He is survived by a son and a daughter, grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.



James Mershon – of Trout Creek Montana passed away November 21, 2021, with his wife of 62 years, Janlyn by his side. Jim was a graduate of the University of Montana and spent his career with the Forest Service retiring as District Ranger from the Cabinet District on the Kaniksu Forest.

After his retirement he and his wife enjoyed traveling around the world and also visiting family. He volunteered for various community organizations including the Boy Scouts and Rifle and Bow Hunter Education and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Jim leaves his wife, 3 children, 9 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.



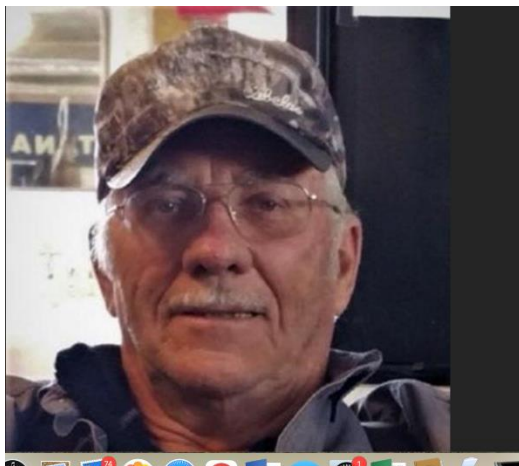
Christopher David Risbrudt – Chris was born August 25, 1950, in Fergus Falls MN to Glenn and Delloris Risbrudt and grew up on a farm north of Ashby MN where he graduated from High School. He married his high school sweetheart Sue Alvstad while attending Fergus Falls Junior College. He then completed his degree in Forest Resources Development at the University of Minnesota. After college they joined the Peace Corps and spent 2 years in Morocco. Upon returning to the United States, he completed a masters and a PhD in Forest Administration and Economics from Michigan State. Chris spent 35 years with the Forest Service including serving as Director of Policy Analysis in Washington DC, Deputy Regional Forester in Missoula and at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin where he was named Laboratory Director of the Year in 2004.

Chris was involved in many conservation organizations including Trout Unlimited, Ruffed Grouse Society, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and the Boone and Crocket Club. Upon retirement Chris and Sue moved back to Minnesota where he enjoyed outdoor activities and woodworking. Chris is survived by his wife of 52 years, 2 daughters, 3 siblings and several grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.



Stephen Alan Simon – of Billings Montana passed away on December 3, 2021. Steve was born in Glasgow MT and raised on Bagpipes and hunting in the Missouri Breaks. He served as a Marine and joined the Forest Service after his service time. Steve spent 30 years as computer specialist and developed the wildland fire computer program that supported fire resources nationally.

Steve was a naturally born storyteller with a repertoire of stories about the history of the Missouri Breaks and family history. In retirement he was a Mason, an active member of the American Legion, worked on the family ranch and was involved with various community groups. He enjoyed family camping trips and fishing adventures. Steve made several trips to England and Scotland to visit family, friends, and ancestral castles. His spirit is carried on by his wife, children, grandchildren, siblings, extended family, and a worldwide family of friends.



Roger Siemens age 82 of Silver Star Montana, passed away December 30, 2021, hunting with a friend out in the hills that he loved. Roger was born and raised in Iowa and came to the University of Montana where he studied Range Management, Wildlife Biology and Forestry. In 1960 he married Rita Stafford, who passed away in 2019. Roger worked as a smoke Jumper while in college and was a survivor of the Higgins Ridge Fire. During the course of his career, he and Rita had 3 sons. He worked all over Montana over the course of his 35-year career.

Roger and Rita had a business which helped ranchers and landowners with land management, predator control and rattlesnake management. He was involved with various education and training courses for the state and local businesses. He loved the outdoors, hiking, fishing, and exploring. For his 80th birthday he went skydiving with his son and grandson. Roger will be part of an upcoming documentary about bluebird houses and Mountain Bluebird Trails.

Roger is survived by his 3 sons, a brother and 5 grandchildren.



Gerald Gerhardt “Jerry” Stern of Sagle Idaho passed away July 31, 2021. Jerry was born July 28, 1928, in Hortonville Wisconsin to Gerhardt and Dora Stern. He attended River Falls College and graduated from the University of Montana with a Forestry degree. In 1951 he married Frances Sexton. He served in the US Navy on the USS Topeka. Jerry worked for the Soil Conservation Service, as a forester for Montana and for the Forest Service in Montana, Idaho, and Washington. He served as a District ranger on five districts and as a class 1 Fire Boss. Jerry loved his wife, family, the Lord, church, friends, gardening, Gonzaga Bulldogs, and the Green Bay Packers, and taking care of other people. He enjoyed

watching his grandchildren and great grandchildren play sports, cribbage, and pinochle.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Fran “Toots”, sons Scott and Greg, daughters Jackie and Tonya a sister and a brother as well as 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.



John Warofka – hiked his last trail and planted his last garden November 27, 2021. John was born to John and Louise Warofka on March 16, 1957, and grew up in Parma Ohio. A backpacking trip to Glacier Park in the 1970s introduced him to the west. In 1978 he began working on the Nez Perce Forest doing timber and stand exams. He eventually transferred from Kent State to the University of Montana earning a degree in botany while working summers on the Selway District. He sold Christmas trees, worked as a rural mail carrier and a variety of other jobs before starting his career in biological science and botany on the Selway (now Moose Creek) District. He loved his job and the people he worked with and living on the Selway River.

John retired in 2019 after 24 years with the Forest Service. He spent his time gardening and enjoyed sharing his homemade salsas and pickled vegetables. He enjoyed Griz games and traveling.

John is survived by his wife Ann, his border collies Hotch and Griff, a number of nieces and nephews and extended family.



Nettie Myrl Anderson Wood – age 98 passed away January 5, 2022. She was born in 1923 to John & Mable Anderson in Woodward County Oklahoma and moved to Idaho in 1936. After her college her first job was at Boise Cascade, and later at Wickes Forest Industries. She retired in 1971 and volunteered at the Moose Creek Ranger Station. Nettie then got a permanent Forest Service position at Grangeville until the office moved out of Grangeville. She then volunteered at the Visitor Center for many years.

Nettie is survived by her husband of 73 years, Jim, three children, four grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association

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The new Nez Perce - Clearwater Supervisor's Office at Kamiah Idaho. Photo by Heidi Long/Longview Studios Inc. More info and photos are planned for the Fall Newsletter