NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETIREE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024

REFLECTIONS ON A FOREST SERVICE CAREER – WHO IS YOUR FOREST SERVICE COMMUNITY

by Vicky MacLean

Dear Forest Service Retirees:

Early this summer I made a trip to Helena to catch up with old friends and attend a wedding in Elliston. The wedding made me reflect on my 20 years working in range on the Helena Forest. Attendees at the wedding were mostly attired in jeans, cowboy hats and boots. It was the wedding of one of my old permittee's children – a wonderful young man who I had known since he was 10 or 12 years old. How did I get here – a transplant from New England to the west, a consulting job, and eventually to the Forest Service. After a divorce and the need to change careers so that I didn't have to travel a lot, I decided to go back to school. With a geology degree and good natural resources background it was hydrology or range management.

There were some summer slots for range techs on the Townsend District. I learned the lingo, allotments, permittees, guard school. As the years went on, I learned the ropes and I tried to spend time in the field with permittees during the grazing season – pounding fence posts or helping moving cows. It was very good for public relations. One day I stopped by a permittee's ranch to show my summer crew how a beaver slide worked. The permittee asked if I knew how to drive a tractor and soon, I was moonlighting on a hay crew, running a dump rake on weekends. Anything for a good meal when you live alone.

Over the years I went to a lot of old permittees' funerals, several of their kids' weddings, and community events in Avon. I had no desire to climb up the career ladder or move, how do you move with 15 sled dogs anyways? Many FS folks' community was that of their fellow employees. My community was mostly the permittees from small towns around Helena – Clancy, Elliston, Avon. At a recent retirees' lunch meeting Regional Forester, Leanne Martin, reflected on how the Forest Service community has changed. People work remotely, they no longer know the other employees in their "office." The older generation I lunch with had an extensive community of folks that they worked with over the years. Their paths crossed and recrossed over the years, on fires and on different forests. People had potlucks and got together for Christmas parties.

One of the speakers at the recent National Conservation Legacy Center groundbreaking

ceremony mentioned how much collaboration there was working with Forest Service folks on the museum project. I think this is typical of the FS community. We are used to working with other people, with give and take and exchange of ideas. I think this helps build a feeling of community that is very different from the private sector. Who is your Forest Service community? Is there a Forest Service community anymore?

MOTHER AND SON'S TIME ON THE FIRE LINE

by Traute Parrie

In Fall is- well, used to be, fall was fire season. The fires this year have me reminiscing about my own time on the fireline, previous generations of firefighters, my sons' experiences on fire crews, and the ways that fire framed our lives together.

Sons Zach and Chris and their sisters grew up in a house where they might wake up with a pile of stinky fire gear in the garage and Mom sound asleep after returning from a 21-day fire assignment. I started with the US Forest Service in Wyoming in 1984, not as a firefighter, but as an engineer. A year later, I was called out on my first fire assignment, as part of a 20-person crew hand digging fireline – a two- to three-foot-wide path that looks a whole lot like a hiking trail, meant to rob an approaching fire of the fuel it needs to keep burning. It's fireline, either handline or dozer line, that stops a fire; all the air support you see is just that – support. Fire remained a large part of the job throughout my 31-year career and through my kids' childhoods.

Despite hearing stories of a narrow miss from a falling snag, or a night spent on a rocky Idaho ridge as fire burned all around the crew, Zach joined a Forest Service engine crew while in college. To my delight, we ended up on a fire together. After graduating, Zach went in a different direction, and now it is Chris who has joined the Forest Service in Colorado as a fisheries biologist and resource advisor on the fireline.

This year, Canadian fires had burned 2 million acres already by early June so that drift smoke inundated much of the eastern seaboard, creating dystopian scenes among the skyscrapers of New York City, leaving firefighters and civilians alike on edge.

1910 –

Although many may think of this year's fires as unprecedented, the history of firefighting itself has roots in a similarly brutal year. During the Big Burn of 1910 when wildfire burned roughly 3 million acres of Idaho, Montana, and Washington forest, the need for firefighters was severe. The rangers of the 5-year-old, lightly staffed U.S. Forest Service set up recruiting stations where the men (just men, then) were. Nearly ten thousand men were recruited; anyone with a pulse was considered fit enough. Elers Koch, wrote in Forty Years a Forester in 1998, "The modern Forest Service has things pretty well organized, and cooperative action worked out, so that it is usually possible to get organized competent fire crews from logging camps, mines, and the like, but in the earlier days of the Service we had to gather together such men as we could get from the streets, the saloons, and off the freight train. As a result, there was almost

as much misery from handling the men as with fighting the forest fire." Back in 1910, Forest Ranger Ed Pulaski saved all but 5 of his 45-man crew by leading them into an Idaho mine tunnel and threatening to shoot any man who left. And yet, 86 people died in the Big Burn, rattling the new agency and providing it with a sense of purpose: extinguish all wildfires.

The 1980s-

The new agency's efforts were effective enough that by the time I started fighting fire in 1985, I thought a 10,000-acre fire was huge. I fought wildland fire for my entire US Forest Service career and my sons have spent time on the fireline as well. The contrast between our experiences is sometimes striking. For starters, my son experienced 40,000-acre DAYS on the Cameron Peak fire in 2020.

The summer of 1985 is my first of 31 fire seasons. We are a put-together crew of foresters, hydrologists, engineers, and archeologists - no dedicated recreation staff yet! The crew of varied forest specialists that made up my fire crews is a progression from those recruiting stations a few decades prior. By the 1980's we earned our "red-cards", required before you could go out on a fire, by passing a 5-minute step-test. Later, after 1998, a firefighter would have to pass the more rigorous pack test – carry a 45–pound pack 3 miles in 45 minutes.

We work without "line gear," backpacks developed later specifically for working on the fireline. Instead, we rig up systems to carry everything but our Pulaskis on our belts – and work hard to keep our pants up! We have canvas holsters for plastic canteens with loops that snap over belts, and lunches in plastic bags long enough to loop around our belts. Our headlamps are connected by cords to battery packs we carry on our belts. We do have these newly developed first-generation fire shelters, in narrow bright orange pouches with the belt built in. Our fire-resistant Nomex shirts have recently changed from that same bright orange to yellow – still visible to pilots, but not the same hue as the flames, as too many firefighters have been doused with slurry drops by helicopter pilots who thought the Nomex shirts were active fire. Upon finding ourselves descending a very steep slope in the dark one night (night shifts were routine business then), we devised a belay system using fire hoses. And after 3 days of digging line, the fire boss gets permission from the local rancher for us to wash up in the local stock tank, powered by an old Chicago Aermotor windmill.

Without all the computerization and real time communication that supports fire suppression these days, fire assignments in the 80s were not as efficient. "Hurry up and wait" was a common refrain, and during the down times, while waiting to be picked up at a checkpoint by a deuce-and-a-half crew carrier for example, the sounds of harmonicas were common, or maybe the shouts of a well-played hacky sack game. The ability to sleep anywhere is still a useful skill. One of my crew mates could even sleep in a rolling deuce and a half.

Cameras were still film, and too valuable to carry on the fireline. I think I'm glad there are no Instagram posts of my soot-blackened face at the end of a day – just memories of all the laughter that sight provoked.

Fires Grow, Along with Fire Suppression Infrastructure –

The Yellowstone fires of '88 burned roughly 800,000 acres and it was the first time drift smoke affected folks beyond small mountain towns, with people experiencing the sun as bright orange orb.

These were the first fires to catch my generation's attention. As fire camps got larger, in response to larger fires, an industry started to build around firefighting.

One of the most popular improvements to first come to fire camp was the communications tent, where a bank of telephones was brought in for firefighters to call home. However, it could be supremely disappointing if no one was at home to answer your attempted call after standing in line for maybe half an hour. That prompted me to use one of my early fire checks to go home and buy an answering machine.

We saw the advent of shower units, and food catering trucks Where my lunches might have been provided by local restaurants when available, there was also a chance we'd get nearly inedible military MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat), or even older military C-rations! My son's lunches include fresh fruit and vegetables – oh my.

The scale of today's wildfires is so complex that Federal, State, and local agencies are supported by rapidly expanding cadres of contractors to provide support utilizing the latest technologies. This has contributed to the evolution of public lands-based jobs - from primarily logging, grazing, or mining to recreational outfitting and guiding - and fire suppression and support.

Significant changes have been driven by the benefits of and dependence on digital devices. My fire crews were handed paper shift plans at the 5 a.m. briefing. These included maps with crew assignments, locations of heli-pads, drop points, mobile water pumps, and medical clinics, and a list of radio frequencies for each division of the fire. Now crews travel with devices for downloading and plotting perimeter maps, forecasting fire behavior more accurately, crew timekeeping, or using drones. Where our incident command posts (ICPs) used to be close to the fire, with "spike" and coyote camps on the fireline, ICPs have migrated so far down valley to be close to necessary infrastructure that there's a newly added layer of camp - the FOB (forward operating base). Along with the changes dictated by technology, there are realities dictated by new societal challenges. Specifically, a new training requirement for overhead team members is Active Shooter training, based on an incident in Montana.

While I could look forward to "termination dust" (snow) by mid-September, the 2020 Cameron Peak fire that my son worked on was declared contained on December 2nd – 60 days more after getting 8-10 inches of snow over the Labor Day weekend. Since fire "season" is now year-long, there is much less reliance on Type II "militia" crews, made up of employees for whom firefighting is a collateral duty, as it was for me. And while I served as a squad boss for an all-female squad and worked on another crew that was majority women in the 80's, I saw that change by the twenty-teens, with less women on fire crews. A 2023 BLM report confirmed that only 12 percent of regularly employed wildland firefighters in the Federal land management agencies are women. On the other hand, I now see women Operations Section Chiefs, Incident Commanders, and Regional Directors of Fire and Aviation, so there are women who have stayed and worked their way into the top fire jobs.

Back to the Future?

A tribal presence was always part of my fire experience. The first organized Indian crew, an Apache crew called the Red Hats, formed in 1948 and by 1954 had so distinguished themselves as fire warriors they earned the Interior Department's top honor for meritorious service. Tribal leaders

considered their work a positive reflection on the tribes, and Hopi, Navajo, and Pueblo Indian crews soon followed, including a crew called the Zuni Thunderbirds. Fire assignments were, and still are, a way for tribal members – both men and women - to earn good money when reservation jobs are scarce. I particularly loved hearing ceremonial drums in a separate part of camp after a long shift on the fireline, pairing up with them for pranks on crew mates, receiving the gift of a carving, or noting leather fire gloves personalized with art inked during down time.

But also, the tribal connection with fire is ancient. "They consider themselves fire-dependent cultures," said Melina Adams from the San Carlos Apache tribe in a 2022 news story about her tribe's use of prescribed burns. "They depended on that in everyday lives for their cultural and social well-being [and] to take care of their homelands as well." With their long-term cultural relationship with fire and post-fire restoration work, the tribes are now providing leadership in managing fire at the landscape level. A new Stanford-led study with the U.S. Forest Service in collaboration with the Yurok and Karuk tribes found that incorporating traditional techniques into current fire suppression practices could help revitalize American Indian cultures, economies and livelihoods, while continuing to reduce wildfire risks. "Burning connects many tribal members to an ancestral practice that they know has immense ecological and social benefit especially in the aftermath of industrial timber activity and ongoing economic austerity," said study lead author Tony Marks-Block.

Perhaps recognizing some of that cultural wisdom, how and where we fight fire has been the most significant change that my sons have witnessed. During the 1980's, my home forest was jokingly called "the asbestos forest" (it has since had major fires), and a fire assignment meant travel, exploration, and adventure. And then, while on a fire in Colorado in 1994, I couldn't comprehend what had happened when a fireline supervisor shut down radio communications on a neighboring fire. I learned the next morning that 14 firefighters had died fighting a fire above Glenwood Springs, the worst firefighter casualties since the Mann Gulch fire in 1949. Ten Standard Firefighting Orders, used by all wildland firefighters, were developed after that 1949 fire, and remain the foundation of safety culture. Those protocols emphasize situational awareness, communication, looking out for each other, and having known safe zones and escape routes. Fires on par with the 1910 fires are once again commanding our attention. With more extreme fire behavior, there is much more consideration of what values are at risk when putting firefighters' lives on the line. With my own experiences informing my more anxious about their departures to a fire assignment than I ever was about my own.

While the focus of today's suppression efforts is on the front-country and a son of mine on today's fireline is acutely aware of where every threatened structure is located, he also can't ignore fire starts in the backcountry. With most forest ecosystems so far out of alignment from historic fire regimes and wind-driven events on the rise with climate change, he's aware of just how quickly that remote fire start can threaten a front country community.

His approach to fire and natural resource management has been defined by watching simultaneous plumes from the 209,000-acre Cameron Peak, 194,000 acre East Troublesome, and 177,000-acre Mullen fires from a single lookout tower in the fall of 2020. It's one thing to watch ginormous California fires on the news, such

as the 2018 Camp Fire which like the 1910 Big Burn killed 86 people. It's quite another to have your favorite trout stream turned into a temporary thermal feature. In his words, "That event radicalized me," clarifying for him both a sense of purpose and urgency. How best to manage for cutthroat trout and water and air quality in the face of that? He's learning to accept some short-term losses in the form of prescribed burning or logging to reduce fire fuel in order to reduce the probabilities of a whole watershed getting nuked by catastrophic fire. He wonders if the agency isn't feeling an existential crisis akin to the period following the 1910 fires.

A Continuum of Firefighters

In the end, there are some basics that haven't changed in many decades, like using a Pulaski tool to dig line, or the reliance on protocols to keep us safe. Everyone these days is coming to terms with climate change, and while some have seemingly been more insulated from the impacts, firefighters have been directly confronted. While we continue to work out how to live with catastrophic fire and its impact on the ecosystems which we are part of, for those that fight fire, whether for a few seasons, or for a lifetime, there's a sense of being part of a continuum of folks dedicated to each other and our communities.

My own family is part of that generational continuum. We share an understanding of the challenges of losing a cherished landscape (or more) and realize just how fragile that wishful paradigm of a static environment, or even a Forest Service, was. But in addition, we have all the questions that come with family. What did my absences on fire assignments mean for my kids, when Dad and family stepped up? Did my young kids benefit from the sense of confidence that firefighting bestowed on their mother? Critical life skills learned in the mountains on the fireline have been extended to other family ventures, AND to being part of a family, team, or community: situational awareness, communication, looking out for each other, providing safe zones. My sons observed and learned that a sense of camaraderie earned on fire crews carries over to teamwork of another kind, the day-to-day business of forest management that is anything but routine. That respectful engagement is of immense value to my kids. I see them seeking and doing the work to maintain that throughout all aspects of their own lives. We definitely have each other's backs.

Born and raised in Wyoming on rope-tows and horseback, Traute Parrie continued that outdoor trajectory through her 31-year career working on public lands with the Forest Service. Following retirement, as coauthor of the award winning "Voices of Yellowstone's Capstone: A Narrative Atlas of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness," she recruited a band of fellow wilderness tramps to share hard-earned knowledge. She stays engaged in the backcountry through skiing along the northeast corner of Yellowstone, bikepacking, and fire lookout tower restoration work - preferably with husband Don, kids, and grandgirls based out of a cabin in a small mountain community. She retired in 2015 after eight years as the Beartooth District Ranger in Redlodge, Montana.

Traute and son Zach on ae fire.

MONTANA BOOKS, FOREST SERVICE AUTHORS

Two Northern Region retirees have put together an incredible amount of information on various topics pertaining to work in the woods and the Forest Service facilities in Montana. Their books have compiled and cataloged a lot of information that required years of research and will provide much information for future researchers as well as background for other topics, Forest Service projects and area histories.

Your newsletter editor has written two books on the ranger stations of Montana: "Home on the Range, Montana's Eastside Ranger Stations" and "Home in the Woods, Montana's Westside Ranger Stations." Recently published is Jack Losensky's book "Logging for the Company, Marcus Daly and Flume Logging Near Anaconda, 1883-1917."

MacLean's books detail the development of Forest Service administrative facilities from the early days. Where they were, how they were designed and constructed and often information about the rangers and their families who lived and worked there. Losensky's book details the system of flumes developed by the Anaconda Company in the area around Anaconda and Daly's smelter. These areas include locations now part of the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest and the Mount Hagan Wildlife Management Area. His book includes numerous old photos as well as pictures taken by the author of the remains of these old structures

and woodcutters' camps. It also includes detailed maps of these flumes as well as details about the men who worked these projects, their ages, and nationalities. The areas where they worked must have been bustling with workers and were eventually completely stripped for cordwood for Daly's smelter.

Vicky MacLean: I always loved old photos and old buildings. There were several photos of old ranger stations hanging in the front office at the Helena Ranger Station where I worked. At some point I thought I should find out something about them. Digging through old photo albums on the forest I found an assortment of ranger station photos, but none of the ones on the walls of the office. Dead end there. One fall I was helping a permittee gather cows on the Little Blackfoot area near Elliston. With a nod of his head and a wave of his arm he pointed across the river and said something like "there used to be an old ranger station over there." Hmmm, I thought it might be fun to find a photo of each of the ranger stations on the Helena. Where to start? I had no clue, but somehow must have figured out that the Montana Historical Society might have old Forest Service maps. They did, and I put together a spread sheet to document the facility, forest, date, and location. Somewhere along the line, when I discovered that there used to be probably 10 old stations for each currently existing district, the project expanded from wanting to collect a few old photos to trying to document all the old ranger stations and guard stations in Montana. This should be easy I thought. All the old facilities had a file of their own, in triplicate – one for the district, one for the S.O. and one for the R.O. Well, not so easy, the RO had none of these files and only the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce S.O. had a complete set of withdrawal files for administrative sites.

So, the somewhat haphazard hunt was on. Contact all the heritage folks, make arrangements to dig through district and SO files and look for photos. Some forests had no idea where their info was if it even existed. Others had carefully cataloged photos and scattered old facilities files. The RO had a great collection of old facilities photos in their engineering files that nobody seemed to know about. I was lucky to just stumble across them in a basement storage room. Some forests were very welcoming and turned me loose in the files while others wanted me to practically go through a security check. The National Archives in Seattle provided lots of information and was very helpful. This took several years of sporadic trips hither and yon to existing ranger stations, back road locations with old buildings or old foundations. A great source of information, as well as photos, were the contacts I made with old timers, both old FS employees and their children who remembered living at some of these remote locations. Some of them had old photo albums. Almost everyone I met up with had another contact or two for me to track down. One of the most fortuitous encounters I had was with a woman whose grandfather had been an early day ranger. I was at the visitor center at Nine Mile delivering some of my eastside books for their gift shop. I chatted with the volunteer there who told me that an older woman had been through there the day before and her grandfather had worked for the Forest Service on the old Missoula Forest. Any idea how to contact her I asked – no, but she had told the volunteer she would be back in a few days. I gave the volunteer my card and said please have her get in touch – and she did! This gal's grandfather was the ranger at Petty Creek during the 1910 fires and there were stories of the family evacuating the area ahead of the fires which actually never quite got there. In addition to stories, she had her grandfather's photo

album which she scanned for me from front to finish. How lucky could I get? A friend in Helena was the granddaughter of Guy Brandborg who spent his career in the Northern Region from the early 1900s until he retired as the Forest Supervisor from on the Bitterroot. Correspondence found in some files was priceless even if I did not need it for my books. No need to beat around the bush back then. They called it as it was. Who was lazy and ought to be canned, who had so many kids they needed a larger ranger station or what new ranger had a wife from back east that needed an extra nice ranger station if the FS was to keep that ranger.

Vicky peeling logs. Big Hole Lookout Pit Project, 2016.

The research was the fun part. Writing was not so much fun. I hired an editor and from there hired a graphic artist who put everything together to be published by Amazon. Promotion and sales were not my thing. I sent copies to all the ranger stations in Montana, sold to some Montana bookstores, and donated copies to various nonprofits, like the Museum of FS History, to sell in their gift shops. I had envisioned the books being of interest to people who liked local history, but it turns out that they have been of value mostly to the FS heritage and lands folks. The information and photos documented a lot of information needed for restoration projects and background/historical information for various FS projects. The regional preservation team has well used, dog eared copies, in their office as do some of the RO lands people and the forest heritage folks. Most of my sales are through Amazon and I get a quarterly (or there abouts) royalty payment. Not getting rich off these books! My website has added photos that were found after the books were published. I am working on a sequel for the ranger stations of the Clearwater and Nez Perce. My webpage is montanarangerstations.net

Vicky MacLean worked in range on the Helena for 20 years and has always had an interest in old buildings and early days in the Forest Service. Aside from range duties she was certified as a para-archaeologist which made for a good excuse to occasionally divert from grazing areas to check out old cabins, logging areas and old mines. Vicky lives in Ronan MT.

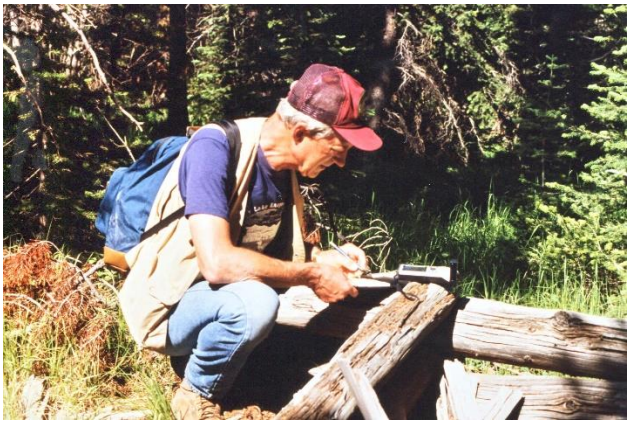
Jack Losensky: Local history always intrigued me, and I was fascinated by the stories of old mining activities and development in Montana. I absorbed the history of the settlement of the state by visiting all the old ghost towns, panning for gold, reading stories of local history, and visiting museums of all sizes. In addition, my work focused on forest conditions at the time of settlement, so I had an opportunity to visualize what people were faced with during that period. After retiring I became a volunteer at both the Ravalli County Museum and the Daly Mansion which again were heavily

influenced by the Daly story. Just before I retired, much of the present-day Mt Haggin state wildlife management area was acquired by the state. There was an active timber sale in the area which was permitted to continue. A friend of mine got a contract from the state to administrate the sale and he kept telling me about the numerous cabins and other features he encountered and that really sparked my interest. So, in 1996 I decided to retrace the flume and build a database of what I found. My intent was to provide the Forest Service and the state with the location of historical items so that they would not be overlooked when management activities occurred. Based on my initial study I had some idea where the major flume was located. Since most of the area on the Anaconda side of the Continental Divide was in private ownership I decided to concentrate my search on the Big Hole side. I began by starting on the spot where the flume crossed the Continental Divide and by following the evidence on the ground, I retraced the flume. I took frequent GPS readings so that I could locate the flume on a map. As I walked the flume, I encountered cabins and evidence of tram locations, skid trails and roads and these I also recorded. I built a database of information on each cabin I located indicating the size, construction method, possible use and any items found around the cabin.

Unfortunately, when I started the work, the military was still in control of the GPS system and the data was intentionally made less accurate. About halfway through the field work they permitted the actual data to be shown so I had to go back and retake many of the original points. Once I had located the flumes, I started to grid the area looking for additional cabins and tracing the trams that were used to move the wood to the flume. This work covered a period from 1996 until about 2004.

During the winter I spent my time reading the newspapers of the time to gain information on the activity associated with the logging. I completed this part of the study in 2005 and at that point I wrote up the information I had gathered and along with maps, developed a report for each management agency with GPS locations and pictures of what I found on the ground. I worked on these reports between 2005 and 2011. It was at that time that I started thinking about writing a book about what I had found. The magnitude of the operation and the impact it had on the lives of so many people was a story that needed to be told. I continued to search for information in the newspapers of the time and what I could find in various archives. This eventually led me to the National Archives in Washington DC. I continued to do some field work to follow up on information I found in the material I read and began writing the book. This part of the study occurred between 2012 and 2017 although at a slower pace. I finally decided I needed to get serious about the book in 2018 and I finished a rough draft in December 2021. I went through 3 more drafts before the book was ready for publishing. It was finally released in February 2023. With its completion I hope to preserve the history of a little-known event in the development of Montana. I guess I walked over 300 miles retracing the flumes and searching for cabins and other structures and spent hundreds of hours searching for information.

Jack Losensky has a background in forest ecology, historic vegetation, and fire history. He graduated from Penn State with a degree in forest management and a masters in forest ecology. He worked at the fire lab in Missoula on the infrared fire detection system studying effects of forest types on fire detection success. He then spent time in western Montana on the Bitterroot. Lolo and Flathead. He was on the Region One Ecosystem Management Task Force and later the Historical Ecologist for the Columbia River Basin Study. Jack retired from that position in 1994 and did consulting for a number of years including developing the vegetative pathways after disturbance for the LANDFIRE model. Jack lives in Hamilton MT.



Jack working on his survey, 1996.

FOREST SERVICE TO LEAVE GRANGEVILLE

A July 31, 2024, article in the Idaho County Free Press details the move out of the Grangeville office to locations at Kamiah, Slate Creek, Elk City and Kooskia. Click here to read the entire article.

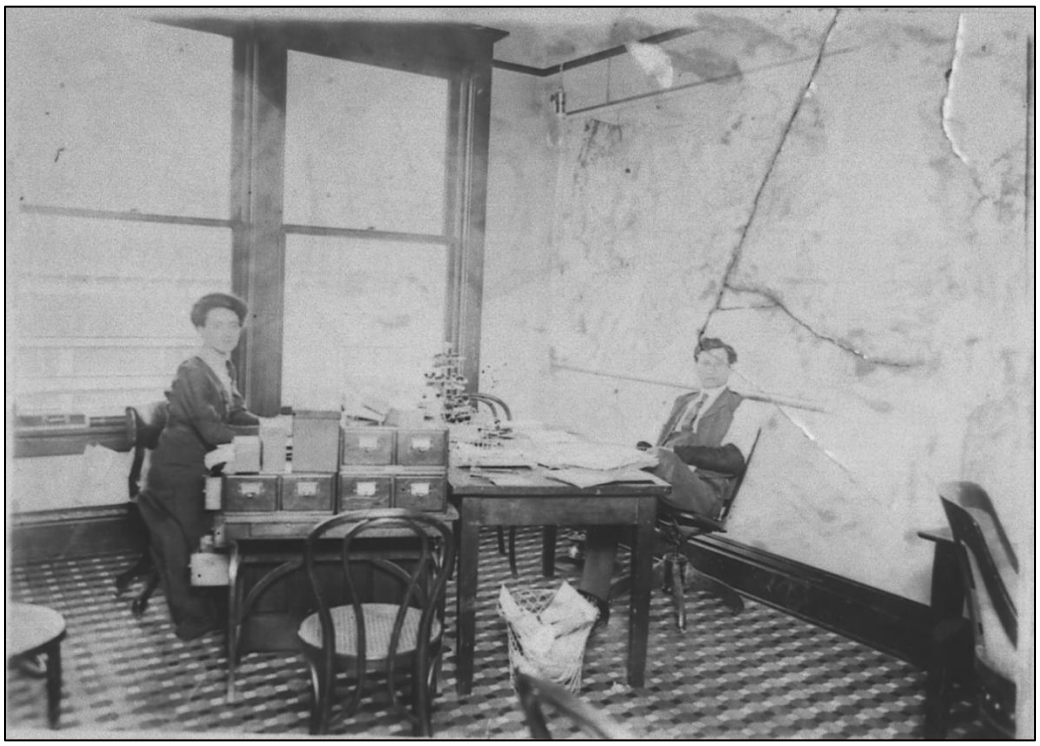
Retired Nez Perce archaeologist Cindy Schacher Bartholf has provided the following history of the Forest Service's 100 plus years in Grangeville.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

SUPERVISOR'S OFFICES IN GRANGEVILLE, IDAHO

The earliest reference to a Forest Service office in Grangeville can be found in George V. Rings 1907 – 1908 journal. Mr. Ring served as the first Forest Supervisor of the Nez Perce National Forest in 1908. In a journal entry dated May 26, 1908, he speaks of visiting Grangeville to search for office space. The first office was located in the Alexander Freidenrich block (presumably in 1908). By 1910 the Forest Supervisor's Office was located in the Kilen-Telcher building. At some point the office was moved to the Imperial Hotel.

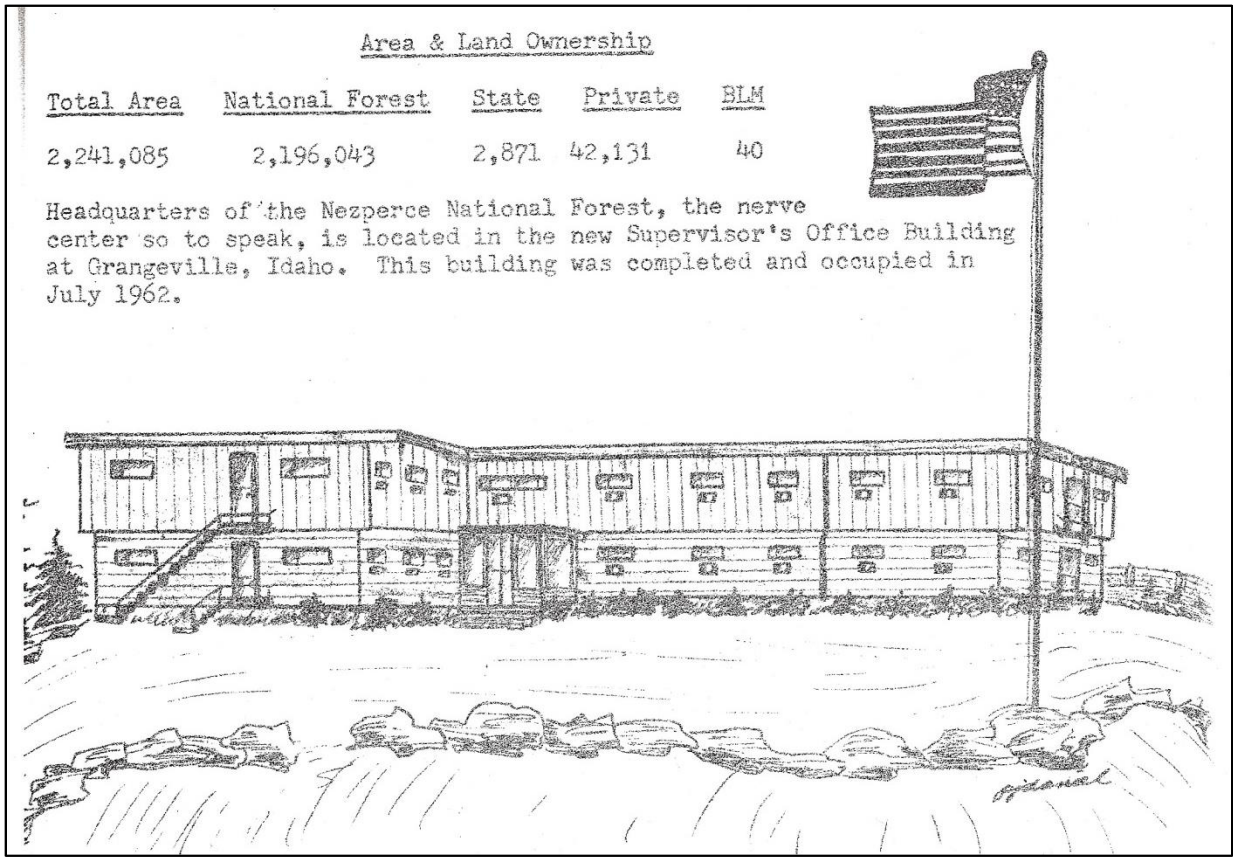
In 1925 the office was located in rooms over the Bank of the Camas Prairie. By 1938 the office was located in the Masonic building. There were nine offices in the Flanigan block from 1938 until they were moved to office space above the Grangeville Post Office.



Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1910-1911.

The Supervisor's Office was moved to above the Post Office where it remained until 1962 when a new building was constructed at 319 East Main Street. Circa 1950 photo from the National Museum of Forest Service History collection.

In 1962 a building was constructed at 319 East Main Street to serve as the Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor's Office. The 9,235 square foot building was leased by the Forest Service. The supervisor's office moved from Main Street of Grangeville to the eastern edge of town on State Highway 13 in 1982. The 12,122 square foot building was leased to the Forest Service. In 2007 the office was moved to a newly constructed and leased building adjacent to the airport on the northern edge of town. In September of 2024 most of this building on 104 Airport Road in Grangeville will be abandoned by the Forest Service. The Interagency Dispatch Center located on the west end of the structure will remain in place for now. The Grangeville Air Center which hosts the Grangeville smokejumpers, helitack crew, and the single engine air tanker base is not impacted by this consolidation. The Grangeville Air Center facilities are in Forest Service owned buildings at the edge of the Idaho County airport.



Supervisor's Office at 319 East Main Street, Grangeville, Idaho.

Friends at the newly re-constructed barn at Morgan-Chase Homestead, Granite County, Lolo National Forest.

THE FRIENDS OF UPPER ROCK CREEK HISTORIC DISTRICT

by C. Milo McLeod Forest Archeologist, Lolo National Forest (Retired)

Upper Rock Creek on the Lolo National Forest, Granite County Montana holds some of the most diverse heritage resources within Region One of the US Forest Service. In 1990 The Missoula Ranger District began rehabilitating the Hogback Homestead for use as a cabin rental and to interpret early homesteading in Western Montana. Missoula Ranger district and *Passport in Time* volunteers worked on the rehabilitation effort, which was completed in 1995. Hogback Homestead quickly became a popular rental within the Region. In 2008 the district completed rehabilitation of the Morgan-Case homestead and included it in its cabin rental program.

Upon retirement in 2008, C. Milo McLeod, Forest Archeologist, Lolo National Forest, organized the *Friends of Upper Rock Creek Historic District*, to assist the district with preservation maintenance at Hogback Homestead, Morgan-Case Homestead, and the Rock Creek Guard Station. The Friends operate under the umbrella of the National Museum of Forest Service History and receive generous financial support from the Harry J Willett Foundation. Friends volunteers come from as far away as South Carolina, Colorado, Arizona, Oregon and Washington to work on the three historic properties. Many worked on the Hogback and Morgan Case homestead rehabilitations as *Passport in Time* volunteers. Others are retired Forest Service employees who have recently joined the Friends. Besides routine maintenance (wood shingle roofing, painting, fence repair, etc.), FOURC volunteers completed an historically accurate reconstruction of the barn at Morgan Case Homestead which had collapsed due to heavy snow in 1997. Recently, the Friends of Upper Rock Creek contracted with Solar Plexus, a solar energy

company in Missoula to install a solar light system at the Hogback homestead. The solar power replaces the former gas system which many cabin renters could not safely operate.

In 2021 Five valleys Land Trust contacted the Friends of Upper Rock Creek to evaluate a historic homestead cabin on their newly acquired property near the confluence of Rock Creek and the Clark Fork River. Friends visited the site and concurred it was worthy of rehabilitation. We began work at Pete's Cabin in 2022 replacing wall logs, rafters, and roofing. Sill logs, windows, and a new floor are planned for the fall of 2024 and the spring of 2025. FVLT plans to use the building to interpret the history of the area, and as a shelter for school groups which visit the confluence property for educational purposes.

Catch up on Museum info, the RO newsletter and the 2025 Reunion on our webpage https://nrmra.org

EXTRA...EXTRA...EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT

As Tom Thompson walked to the front of the crowd gathered on the grounds of the National Museum of Forest Service History on Friday afternoon (September 6, 2024), he was finding it hard to believe that the day had finally come.

Within a few minutes, he and other museum board members and partners would hoist the 12 golden shovels waiting behind him to break ground on the new National Conservation Legacy Center. As more than 200 supporters braved the afternoon

heat, Thompson thanked them for the seven years of support. As the newsletter goes to print construction has started and Anderson Construction plans to work as long as the weather permits this fall.

Click here to read the whole story.

UPDATES FROM THE FRIENDS OF NINE MILE

Rick Hafenfeld, Chair, FON Committee

We were asked by NMFSH if we would be interested in helping the Nine Mile Ranger District host a field trip to the Remount Depot during the Forest Service Reunion planned for September 2025. As we had put on a Dutch Oven Lunch at the RD during the last reunion held in Missoula a few years back, we gladly accepted. So, we added a few more MSO locals for our lunch committee, and together with the Ranger District which will host a tour of the Remount Depot while we plan on serving a Santa Maria Style BBQ/Dutch Oven dessert. This excursion will be participating as one of the several other tours scheduled for the reunion.

As relates to the old Kenworth Mule Hauler the only recent activity was to stabilize deterioration and cover the old beast stored at the RD boneyard. We are contemplating temporarily moving it, as is, to the district office as a static display during the tour and try to promote some level of interest and fund raising for restoration. Figuring we might compete with the fundraising efforts for the NMFSH Museum Building, we have not set up anything to date. We plan to, along with the district, come up with more ideas. FYI the Mule Hauler belongs to NMFSH, the district stores it, and FON has agreed to work on restoration at some point.

Ninemile Ranger Station (undated photo).

Organization Contacts

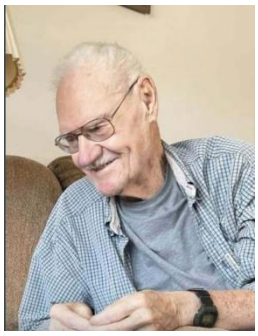
President: Tim Love tglove@charter.net or 406-210-6528

Vice President: Barry Hicks hickswil@gmail.com or 406-531-6912

Treasurer: Mike Cummings cummingsma@aol.com or 703-850-5128

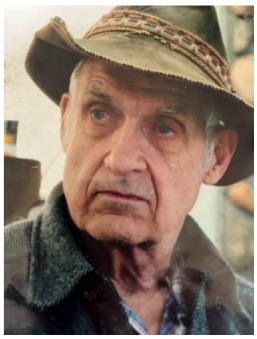
Newsletter Editor: Vicky MacLean agillabs@mcn.net or 406-459-6731

WE REMEMBER



Kenneth Arthur Briggeman – of Hamilton Montana passed away on September 22, 2024. He was born in 1939 in Oakland California to Harold and Pauline Briggeman. Ken got his degree in forestry in 1993 after which he started his career with the Forest Service at the Ukonom Ranger District on the Klamath Forest. He met his wife in Oak Knoll and had three girls while working on the Klamath.

In 1983 Ken transferred to the Kootenai in Libby Montana as the timber management officer. During his career he spent time on various fire crews and was later the logistics chief on a Type 1 team for the Northern Rockies Region. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, woodworking and telling Forest Service stories. Ken was a skilled gardener and a great cook and the author of Briggeman's Roadkill Cookbook. Ken was preceded in death by his wife. He is survived by his three daughters, six grandchildren and one great-grandson.

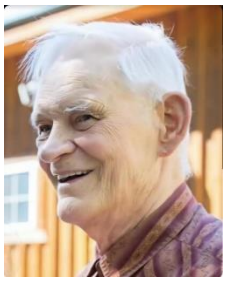


Bruce R. Dreher - of Grangeville Idaho was born in Acton MA in 1931 and passed away July 21, 2024. He attended the University of New Hampshire where he met his wife Nancy and graduated with a forestry degree. Following graduation, he moved west to the Nez Perce Forest with his young bride. Bruce spent his career on the Custer Gallatin, the Little Missouri Grasslands and eventually returned to the Nez Perce where he retired. His primary responsibilities were in range management, but he was always eager to go on fires.

Bruce and his wife raised two children with whom he shared his love for the out of doors, kayaking, canoeing, skiing, mountaineering, spelunking and hunting. After retirement he got interested in old tools and the preservation of historic buildings. His second career became restoration of historical cabins, lookouts, and homes. Bruce is survived by his wife Nancy of Grangeville and son Keith and daughter Karen.

Frank Austin Fowler - age 92 passed away in Dillon Montana May 13, 2024. He was born in Washington DC on May 5, 1932, the youngest of eight children. Frank had a love of anything outdoors; hiking, fishing skiing, picking huckleberries, gathering firewood, and gardening. After high school he headed west where he put himself through U of Montana to study forestry. It was then that he met his future wife Alicejane Carkeek.

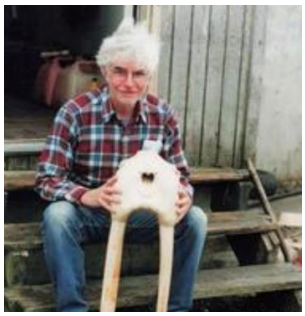
Frank spent his first summer in Montana working for the Forest Service at Fort Keogh where he first learned of the smokejumpers. He jumped for several years (MSO 52) and with letters he had written



home to his mother wrote his book "High Mountain Two Manner". His career was detoured by two years in the army and on his return married Alicejane. Their first Forest Service appointment was at the Sullivan Lake Ranger Station in Washington. Subsequent jobs took the family to Idaho, Montana, and Washington and eventually to Dillon Montana.

In his later years Frank enjoyed researching his family genealogy, singing with a quartet, and enjoying music and his involvement with the Dillon Concert Association. He and his family spent years volunteering at the Historic Lochsa Ranger Station and enjoyed writing for the Smokejumpers magazine. Frank leaves behind son, Chris and daughter, Jody along with four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Charles (Chuck) Frey – was born in Great Falls Montana July 22, 1948, and passed away June 1, 2024. After barely graduating from CM Russell High School, he enlisted in the Navy and served aboard the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk for a tour in Vietnam. Upon return to Montana, he attended Western Montana College in Dillon then the University of Montana where he majored in geology.



Chuck worked for the Forest Service as a geologic assistant on the Bitterroot Forest, the US Geological Survey, in Butte for the Bureau of Land Management then back to the Forest Service as a geologist for the Lewis and Clark Forest and ended his career on the Chugach in Alaska. He returned to Great Falls after retiring and spent the rest of his time traveling to 46 countries. Chuck is survived by his brother, sister, a nephew and two nieces.

Deane A. Hess of Weiser Idaho passed away April 26, 2024. He was born in Laramie on December 9, 1931. He worked for the Nez Perce in Grangeville Idaho for 42 years. He and his wife then went on a mission in the California Riverside Mission and then settled in Weiser.

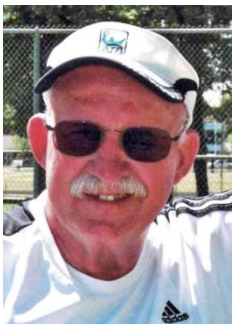
Deane is survived by his wife Donna, a sister, his four children, 12 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

D. Ross Parry – of Utah was born in Payson Utah to Roswell and Fern Iola Elmer on July 26, 1934. He passed away on September 2, 2024. His father died when Ross was 7 and he was raised by his grandparents. Ross lied about his age and started his Forest Service career as a lookout in Idaho when he was 16.

After attending Snow College, Webber College, and BYU he graduated from Utah State University and went on to teach. He trained as a smoke jumper (MSO1958). He decided that teaching was much harder than jumping out of planes, so he settled in Montana where he was a smoke jumper from 1958-1963 (check out the Higgins Ridge Fire on You Tube). In 1963 he transferred to the Region 1 office, then the Region 4 office. Ross then spent time with the Washington Office to coordinate contractors in developing a National USFS payment system. He spent time in Fort Collins as a liaison between the USFS and the USDA center. Lastly, he was a computer group leader at the Intermountain Research Center. Ross retired in 1988. Ross and his wife Marilyn Orr had six wonderful children, numerous grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Wayne George Tlusty – of Rib Lake Wisconsin passed away May 24, 2024. He was born July 24, 1940. After high school graduation he studied Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point and the University of Wisconsin. After a two-year stint in the army, he finished his studies in Planning and Design at Michigan State University. After earning his master's degree at the School of Design at Harvard he began a career that took him to Canada and various locations in the United States. He worked as a landscape architect for the Forest Service on the Kootenai and Tongass National Forests. After his Forest Service career, he, and his wife Sue, settled in Wisconsin where he embarked on a career in academia. After Wayne's retirement he was involved in many community projects such as school and park playgrounds, a lighted lake walkway, the public library, his church, and holiday decorations. Wayne is survived by two sisters and a brother as well as numerous nieces and nephews and several great great nieces and nephews.

Theodore LeRoy West – was born March 14, 1941, in Walla Walla Washington and passed away September 23, 2024, at the age of 83 in Kamiah Idaho. He was the youngest of nine children. He married Janice Hamblen in 1962, and they had three children. Leroy worked for the Forest Service locating roads for the Umatilla Forest and later, on the Fremont-Winema Forest and eventually to the Clearwater Forest. Leroy also worked as an outfitter and guide for rafting and fishing trips. He also did taxidermy and was a talented artist. He was an avid hunter and packing in the mountains. In the 1960s he was a founding member of the Pacific Northwest Trails Association. In addition to his love for the out of doors he was a musician and played an assortment of instruments. Leroy is survived by his wife of 62 years and two daughters and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his son, two sisters, and four brothers.



Donald Lynn Wiley - of Hamilton Montana passed away August 15, 2024. He was born September 22, 1944, in Yorkville Tennessee. One of four brothers, he graduated from Yorkville High and went on to live a colorful life: marrying twice, racing cars and motorcycles and owning an arcade. Eventually he settled in Hamilton Montana where he enjoyed fishing in the back country and worked for the Forest Service for 20 years before retiring. Don was an avid sportsman competing in archery and tennis, coaching high school girls' volleyball. Don is survived by daughter Amber Sparks, a brother and two grandchildren.

Robert (Bob) Wintergerst - passed away on May 27, 2024. He was born in Chicago, Illinois on August 1, 1955. After his high school graduation, he headed west to continue his education at The College of Mineral Science and Technology at Butte Montana. It was there that he met the love of his life Ann. After getting married and graduating they moved south for Bob to work in the oil industry and welcomed daughter Heather to the family. After the collapse of the oil industry, they returned to Montana where Bob started his 35-year career with the Forest Service; first as a hydro tech then as an environmental engineer. He Loved his job and working on restoring rivers, streams, lush vegetation, and wildlife habitat.

Complete obituaries can be found by using Google.

Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association

P.O. Box 3215
Missoula, Montana 59806

[Type the recipient name]
[Type the recipient address]