



The Rendezvous

The Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Forest Service Association

ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS
Rocky Mountain Forest Service Association

Volume 13 — Number 3

A Grand Debut



Two visitors at the National Conservation Museum in Missoula enjoying a large screen video of the Shasta Trinity National Forest at night.



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

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The Region 2 attendees came from far and wide for the Grand Opening.

Front Row, L-R: xxxxx, Richard Stem, Bill Wood, Dan Nolan

Middle Row, L-R: Jane Leche, xxxxxxxxxx, Dave Steinke, Paul Peck, Sharon Kyle.

Back Row, L-R: Bill Disbrow, Jack Troyer, Dick Smith, Charlie Richmond, Laura Disbrow, Phil Hoefer

“TRULY HERCULEAN!” is how President Andy Mason described what Lisa Tate and her dedicated staff – and so many volunteers – have done these past months to finish the opening exhibition and prepare for our grand opening. Past President Tom Thompson said, as he did at the ground breaking, **“IT’S ALMOST SURREAL”** that we are opening the National Conservation Legacy Center. Indeed, it was a “pinch me is it real” moment!

The Museum was first established as a nonprofit organization in 1988. This beautiful Center has been the dream of so many for decades. We celebrated with many rounds of applause, thanking all our donors, volunteers, supporters, and Hexion, our grand opening platinum sponsor. We thought about those who could not be with us today and we felt the spirits of those no longer with us who were surely smiling and shouting **HIP HIP HORRAY!** We remember them, including:

- Gary Brown, our primary founder and former Montana State Forester
- Gray Reynolds, past Museum president and former USFS Deputy Chief
- Major donors Bill Cannon, George Gibbs, Arnold Swanberg, and so many others!

The Museum is forever thankful to all our generous donors! We cannot thank you enough for your investments. Because of you, we are now able to share with many thousands of visitors America’s unique conservation journey – through stories of its amazing forests, grasslands, natural resources, people, the U.S. Forest Service, and its many, many partners.

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(Continued from Page 2)

The Museum has a strong business plan for Center operations and anticipate 80,000 to 100,000 visitors annually. The Center truly is a stellar national destination, a one-of-a-kind place to learn about America's conservation history.

In addition to admission fees and the gift shop, we will generate revenue by hosting events and meetings. Lisa has already booked events at the Center. Building on our history of successful fundraising, we will continue to rely on philanthropic donations from individuals, planned giving, and grants. We have a modest endowment now and will soon initiate a campaign to significantly grow it.

For more information contact our R-2 and RMRS Representative, Dan Nolan, dnolan829@gmail.com, (720) 937-8058.



As you enter the Tom and Kitty Thompson Exhibition Hall, President Theodore Roosevelt (reenacted by Joe Wiegand): eloquently waxes about conservation (above a beautiful replica of Gifford Pinchot's desk).



The Rings of Change Interactive Exhibit allows you to search for more conservation stories across the decades. Each tree ring talks about a different decade through time. Maybe your story is told here.



Hundreds of conservation stories are told in the hall. The wall-to-wall, ceiling-high screen on the left (largest screen in MT) continuously shows images of your treasured national forests and grasslands. It's a real scene stealer!

Entrance Pavers

The Rocky Mountain Region showed up big time in the paver program. Lots of memories of R-2 folks and programs and people who spent time in our five states.

Here's just a small sampling of the pavers that were installed and on display the day the Museum opened.

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



Five Fun Videos About The Grand Opening



The **Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting and Tour** through the museum from the fine folks at MCAT, Missoula's Community Media resource.

<https://youtu.be/J7QCVRhUNo?si=ZgIVvSCeJlaKOCBO>



A 14 minute walk through the museum - with no narration - from **Media Magik Entertainment Company**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfO0fNb1BT0>



Freres Engineered Wood Company's 7 minute video showcases what wood can do, from the folded roof to the exterior decks and staircase treads.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cv53W6gld-U>



A Place for Their Story, a 6 minute look at the Conservation Museum from the story tellers at USDA Forest Service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JETCmuPsFM>



Gifford Pinchot, (reenacted by Gary Hines) hoped to say a few words at the ribbon cutting ceremonies for the National Conservation Legacy Center. He was unable to attend but planned to say the following...

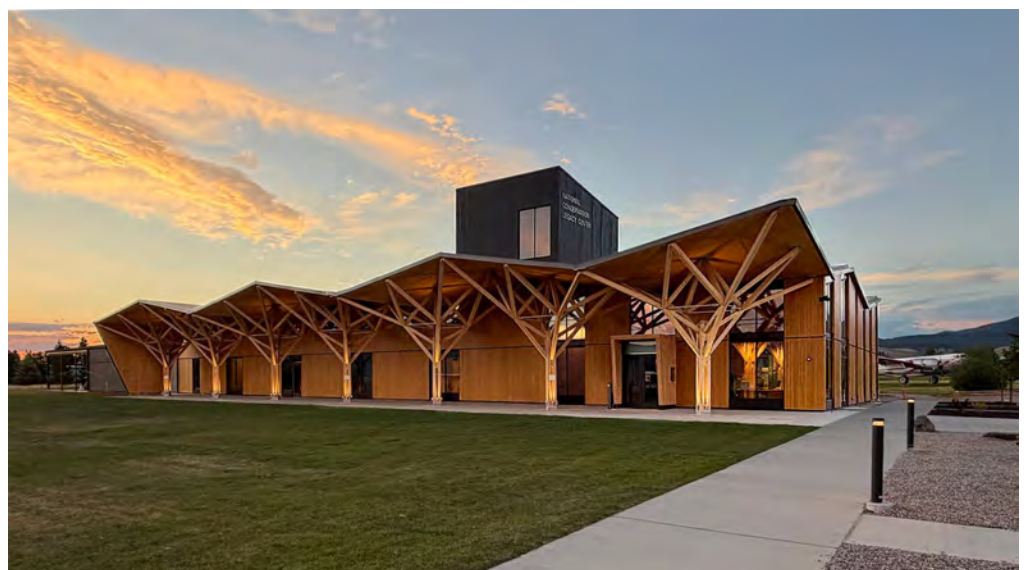
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EzZzgKblKs>

"The cultural venue—located in the wilderness-ringed city of Missoula, Montana - represents a literal convergence of medium and message, telling the United States Forest Service's century-plus-old story, and much more, through its most prized material."

– Metropolis Magazine



Executive Director Dave Stack stands on the future site of the museum. April 2, 2015.



The **Aspen Acres Fire** was first reported on **June 29th** at approximately 6:00am. The fire originated 10 miles northwest of Rye, Colorado in the area of the San Isabel National Forest.

The fire experienced explosive growth due to record-low fuel moisture levels and persistent red flag conditions during the week preceding and the days following ignition. It initially impacted the community of Beulah, Colorado, and later affected additional communities.

Update on September 21 - 102,004 acres and is 82% contained.

<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/copsf-aspen-acres-fire>



Your Area Representatives

Denver Area Representative
Jim Thinnies, Littleton, CO

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

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

Western Colorado Area Representative
Martha Moran, Carbondale, CO

Wyoming Area Representative
Bill Bass, Sheridan, WY

South Dakota/Nebraska
Craig Bobzien, Custer, SD

NAFSR Representative
Frank Beum, Denver, CO

NMFSH Representative
Tom Thompson, Littleton, CO

Liaison for Region 2
Trey Schillie

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

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

A message from the Chair



(My family, Pikes Peak 2018, #54 for me, #1 for granddaughter Acadia w/ red pack)

Greetings Rocky Mountaineers. This summer has flown by, and we are now in the fall color season. A few nuggets from this summer.

The grand opening of the National Museum of Forest Service History at the Conservation

Legacy Center in Missoula, MT. This was a well attended and great event. It was a pleasure to connect again with coworkers from the past and catch up on their career journeys and families. I am deeply grateful to the many people, businesses, and organizations that worked so hard and persevered over so many years to bring this dream to fruition. This outstanding museum is a "must-see site", and you should plan to spend several hours enjoying it. And, if you are not a member of NMFSH, I strongly encourage you to join.

The future of the Rocky Mountaineers. We are fortunate to have good leaders and people who stepped forward to make our organization what it is today. Dave Steinke is the best newsletter editor of any retiree group. Johnny and Ellen Hodges are the front line of our organization and always there to take registration, arrange Zoom calls and handle the budget. Bill Disbrow keeps our web page current and up to date. The committee chairs for Memorial Grove, Scholarships, Grants, and Travel spend many hours making sure those programs are successful. The Board members and Area Representatives contribute many hours to the continued success of our association. And you, just under 500 members, continue to support the cause by attending events, plus contributing your time, money and talents. Thanks to all of you.

As stated in the last newsletter, the Rocky Mountaineers will continue with our mission statement and our R2 geographic alignment. As

the FS reorganization unfolds, we will stay flexible for any needed changes. We will pursue ways to increase our outreach to current employees as we encourage and support them. As current board members and committee chairs transition out of their positions, they will recruit and mentor replacements for a smooth transition, with a goal of having a younger group of leaders to carry the organization forward.

You can help! Stay involved and connected with retirees in your area, plus take advantage of events that the Mountaineers provide throughout the year. Consider a tax-deductible donation to the Mountaineer's scholarship, grant, and Memorial Grove funds, as the end of 2026 approaches.

Please consider serving in one of the Board or committee positions, especially if you have skills in one of the key technical positions listed above. If you are interested, send an email to: rmountaineers@gmail.com, indicating what you may be interested in. If you would like information about the positions, send an email. It is a great group to work with.

Parting thoughts. The future of the Forest Service seems to be tenuous and uncertain. This troubles me greatly. And it is extremely stressful for the current employees. I know that many of us share a deep sense of pride in our USFS careers, and in the USFS legacy as stewards of the forests and natural resources that are such a treasure for the American people. Our Mission is to enrich and add value to the lives of Forest Service retirees who care greatly about the agency and the Rocky Mountain Region. As we put that into action with fellow retirees, we also need to share our pride in, and caring about, the USFS with our friends and neighbors. I don't think many of them really know what is at stake.

And last, get to know your local USFS employees to encourage and support them. Enrich and add value to their lives and work. Let them know that you (we) care,

Have a beautiful fall.

Paul Peck
2026 Chair

Membership and Finance

September, 2026

By Ellen Hodges
&
Johnny Hodges

Membership Update

Our membership continues to hover just under **500 members**. We do have several members that have not paid their 2026 annual dues. Their membership will be suspended at the end of September if they have not paid their \$25 annual dues for by then.

If you have trouble getting your annual dues paid each year, you should consider purchasing a Lifetime Membership. At \$250 it is a bargain and you will break even after only 10 years (and that's assuming we don't raise our dues at some point). We currently have **188 Lifetime Members**. Maybe they know a good deal when they see it!

Financial Update

We want to thank all of you that have made donations to the Rocky Mountaineers so far this year in either our Scholarship, Memorial Grove, or General Funds. Our donations now total over \$8,000. Thank you so much. We couldn't do it without you!

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

We are recognizing donors in the categories of Friend, Patron, and Sponsor. If we missed anyone, please let us know.

Some donations were made in the memory of someone. We have included the name of the honoree.

Friend (\$1 - \$49)

Robert and Marsha Aiken, Lakewood, CO

John and Diane Almy, Delta, CO

Terry and Joy Armbruster, Lakewood, CO

John and Mary Ellen Barber, Loveland, CO

Glen and Vicki Bartter, Keenesburg, CO

Terry and Anne Baxter, Ft. Collins, CO

Patty and Dean Beyer, Marquette, MI

Dan and Maggie Bishop, Dolores, CO

Carl and Maryann Chambers, Ft. Collins, CO

Janice Chapman and Edward Mauch, Gunnison, CO

Dick and Judy Coose, Ketchikan, AK

Steve Coupal, Kalispell, MT

Martha Delporte, Lakewood, CO

Linda and Rick Duell, Laramie, WY

Bill and Laura Disbrow, Rhineland, WI

Ed and Jeannie Fischer, Custer, SD

Norma Fischer, Meridian, ID

Marvin Froistad and Shelley Amicone, Loveland, CO

Bob and Shelley Frye, Colorado Springs, CO

Janice Harbach, Custer, SD

Dave and Sally Hessel, Loveland, CO

John Hinz and Emily Garber, Phoenix, AZ

Jo and Wayne Ives, Carbondale, CO

Bob and Lorna Joslin, Lander, WY

Monica and Jevon Klingler, Collbran, CO

Mark Lambert and Mika Inouye, Durango, CO

Paul and Robin Langowski, Ft. Collins, CO

In Memory of Fred Winkler

Gayle and Rick Laurent, Sheridan, WY

David Loomis, Littleton, CO

Susan Luthye, St. Paul, MN

Pat and Patty Lynch, Encampment, WY

Liane Mattson and Neil Schweiterman, Paonia, CO

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Friend (\$1 - \$49)

Jan Powdrell, Albuquerque, NM
John and Margie Quenoy, Dolores, CO
John Rawinski, Montrose, CO
Matthew and Maria Riederer, Ranchester, WY
Dale and Margie Robertson, Broomfield, CO
Arlene and Fred Rolla, Poncha Springs, CO
Gary and Janie Roper, Pueblo West, CO
Sandy Rounds and Andrew Sanchez, Clifton, CO
Kirby and Pamela Self, Monte Vista, CO
Dave Steinke and Sue Robinson, Littleton, CO
Dave and Jan Thom, Custer, SD
Larry and Nancy Thoney, Sheridan, WY
Jack and Kathy Walton, Missoula, MT
Craig and Lynn Whittekiend, Lakewood, CO
Irma and Sonny Wolf, Evergreen, CO

Patron (\$50 - \$199)

Linda and Russ Aumiller, Pueblo, CO
John and Patricia Ayer, Yachats, OR
Bev Baker, Lafayette, CO
Bill and Lois Bass, Sheridan, WY
Lee and Dottie Carr, Cedaredge, CO
Mike and Marjorie Clinton, Evergreen, CO
Kevin Colby, Ft. Collins, CO
Cindy Correll, Sedona, AZ
Phil and LeAnn Cruz, Washougal, WA
Bob Dettman and Chris Buckman, Durango, CO
Mary Lu Eilers, Golden, CO
Mike and Marla Foley, Ft. Collins, CO
Tim Garvey and Liz Mauch, Montrose, CO
Dyce Gayton and Jan Bergman, Ft. Collins, CO

Nick and Judy Greear, Cedaredge, CO
Joe and Lindy Hartman, Nevada, MO
Cindy Hockelberg, Missoula, MT
Bruce Holmlund, Delta, CO
Carol and Russ Howe, Montrose, CO
Robert Huthman and Kelley Liston, Delta, CO
Tommy John, Lakewood, CO
Steve and Michele Johnson, Ft. Collins, CO

In Memory of Fred Winkler

John and Sally Korb, Lakewood, CO
Lyle and Pam Laverty, Arvada, CO
Cristie Lee, Ft. Collins, CO
Dan Nolan and Merilyn Hunter, Hot Sulphur Springs, CO
Colleen and Rob Oquist, La Junta, CO
Bradley and Marilyn Orr, Ft. Collins, CO
Richard and Karen Stem, Alder, MT
Art and Sharon Tiedemann, Greeley, CO
Dave and Margaret Wolf, Lakewood, CO

Non-Member Donations

Janet Lee, Bedford, IN
In Memory of Edward Douglas Day

Diane Haihara, Steamboat Springs, CO
In Memory of Linda Austin

Lina Wagner
Bonnie Jones

(Continued on page 10)

Sponsor (\$200+)

Kerry and Laura Burns, Pringle, SD

Jim and Barbara Ficke, Steamboat Springs, CO

David Griffin, Castle Rock, CO

Johnny and Ellen Hodges, Ft. Collins, CO

In Memory of Steve Vest

Deb Jensen, East Wenatchee, WA

Sharon Kyhl, Wenatchee, WA

In Memory of Clint Kyhl

Tom and Georgena Rennick, Cortez, CO

Greg Thompson and Shirley McCabe, Monte Vista, CO

Denise Tomlin, Lakewood, CO

In Memory of Doug Wagner

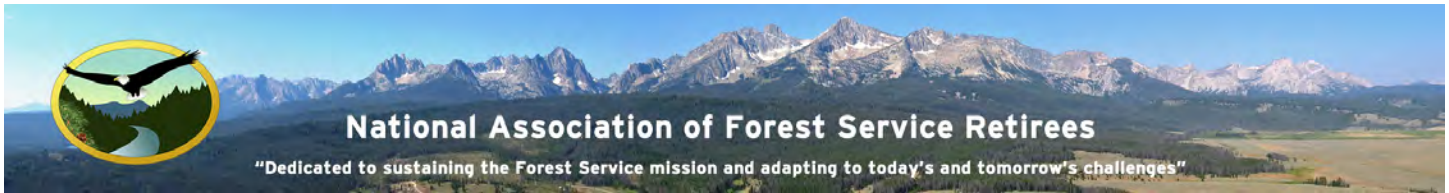


Save The Date
Join us for the Fall celebration.

2028 USFS
REUNITE . REMINISCE . RELAX
IN WISCONSIN
MADISON, WISCONSIN
RETIREE REUNION

**2028 U.S. Forest Service
Retiree Reunion**
Madison, Wisconsin
September 25-29, 2028

2028.usfsretireereunions.org



NAFSR Notes

September, 2026

Knowledge Transfer Program

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) and the USDA Forest Service have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, executed by Chief Tom Schultz and NAFSR Chair Bill Avey. It formalizes what retirees have long done informally: passing institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and lessons learned to current employees. The agency has lost experienced staff at an unprecedented rate over the past 18 months, so the MOU creates a structured way for retirees to stay connected and mentor both remaining and new employees. That support covers wildfire, forest health, recreation access, leadership, and supervision, all with fewer resources than in recent years.

The first step is a new Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) pilot, developed by NAFSR's Employee Care Team and the Forest Service Workforce Development Team. It pairs retired supervisors with new supervisors attending the Fall 2026 New Supervisor Training, so volunteers can share their experience, lessons learned, and practical insights as their mentees take on a new role. The commitment is about 2–4 hours per month for six months (October 2026–April 2027). Meetings are scheduled around the volunteer's availability and generally take place by phone or MS Teams, with suggested topics and discussion guides for each session. It's a chance to give back, stay connected to the Forest Service, and make a difference early in someone's supervisory career.

Volunteers must be NAFSR members, and non-members are welcome to join; the first year of membership is free. Applications are due **September 30, 2026** through volunteer.gov, and a

[step-by-step application guide](#) is available. If the application system is hard to navigate, don't be discouraged: NAFSR will soon announce a webinar on the program and the application process. Questions about the program can go to NAFSRInformation@gmail.com, and questions about the Volunteer.gov application to paula.Swingley@usda.gov.

Advocacy

NAFSR recently commented on the [Travel Management Proposal](#) and the [Roadless Rule Recession Proposal](#).

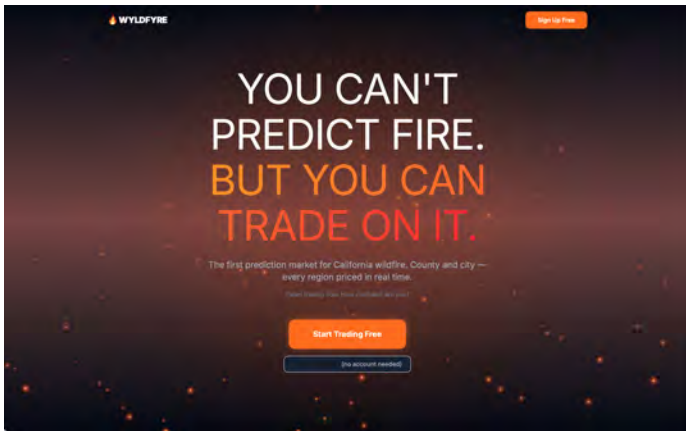


New from **Etsy**... Sticker/Car Magnet, Political Sticker, Statement Sticker, National Park Decal

Betting on Fires?

Prediction Markets Let You Bet on Whether a Wildfire Will Burn Down Your Town

By High Country News



Sylvie Andrews and her partner didn't just lose the new house they'd helped build when the Eaton Fire ripped through Altadena, California, in January 2025. They lost an entire decade's worth of sacrifices they'd made to put down roots in their hometown, and the community they'd created. "We put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into it," Andrews said. "That's what we lost in the fire."

That fire, along with the Palisades Fire to the west, destroyed over 16,000 structures and killed 31 people. But while Andrews and thousands of Angelinos were racing to evacuate, other people saw a financial opportunity. Using Polymarket, the world's largest prediction market platform, they made bets on the fires

— how they would grow, how long they would last and how much they would destroy.

Prediction markets are essentially gambling websites where people bet on the outcome of events, including elections, sports, the weather and more. Anything is fair game, from oil prices and the spread of infectious diseases to international incidents. Markets usually frame questions in a "yes" or "no" fashion, with the price of a "contract" fluctuating between \$0 and \$1. A price of 50 cents on a "yes" contract means that the people doing the betting collectively believe the event has a 50% chance of happening. Market hosts make money by charging a fee on wagers.

In January 2025, Polymarket listed almost 20 questions, created by the platform's "markets team," related to the wildfires burning up Southern California. How many acres will the Palisades Fire burn by Friday, three days after it ignited on a Tuesday? Will the Palisades Fire reach Santa Monica by Sunday? When will the Palisades fire be 50% contained? Will the Palisades and Eaton fires be contained before February?

People spent \$1.2 million betting on these queries, according to Aeon Magazine. "Wow," Andrews said repeatedly when she learned the figure. "My first take is that it's morally reprehensible," she said. "The fact that someone would feel OK doing that flabbergasts me."

"The prediction markets are just the wild, wild West," said Susan Sherman, who grew up in the Pacific Palisades. She lost her childhood home in the Palisades Fire; her late parents had owned it since 1963, and now, it was gone. She sold the empty lot a few months ago. "I look at (betting on the fires) as just being very crass and heartless."

As prediction markets boom and a new wildfire season begins, fire survivors and ethicists say that the betting encourages and rewards callous thinking — and dangerous behavior, too.

ONE MAJOR CONCERN stemming from wildfire prediction markets is arson. "That's what has me nervous," Sherman said. Theoretically, making a bet could give someone the perverse incentive to start a fire, or help one grow. Unlike other disasters, such as hurricanes, flooding or extreme heat, a fire can be manipulated in minutes by just one person. "Systems that tie financial gain to wildfire outcomes risk encouraging misuse, including arson, and are not compatible with our mission," a spokesperson for the U.S. Forest Service said.

HCN Editor note: The California-specific wildfire betting market, **Wyldfyre**, took its website offline following the publication of this story.

Read the whole story here:

<https://www.hcn.org/articles/people-are-betting-on-wildfires-should-they/>

The "Stokey the Bear" Mystery

Stokey the Bear and Dudley Do-Right

"Stokey the Bear" was a controversial 1961 cartoon segment from *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show* featuring a bear who intentionally started forest fires under hypnosis. The U.S. Forest Service strongly objected to the parody of Smokey Bear, leading Jay Ward Productions to pull the episode from syndication, effectively banning it from television broadcasts for over 40 years.

The Plot: Stokey was a parody character in a Dudley Do-Right segment who was hypnotized by Snidely Whiplash to set forests on fire. It's then up to Dudley to warn the fire department of this environmental crisis.

The Objection: The U.S. Forest Service viewed the bit as insensitive and a trademark infringement or threat to the serious public service message of Smokey Bear ("Only you can prevent forest fires").

The Ban: Following official protests, the segment was removed from all future show prints, remaining largely unseen until its official home video release in 2005.

Link to a discussion of the Stokey Episode on the ReRun Zone on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZmgj-NpTdE&t=166s>

Here is the full episode of Dudley Do-Right's First Season. Episode 2 was **Stokey the Bear**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hn2KDisoo5w>

Here is the rare intro to the syndicated version of The Dudley Do Right Show. This show features Dudley Do Right segments as well as Commander McBragg, The King and Odie, and The Hunter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkxvfekK1Is>



Dudley Do-Right is a dim-witted, but conscientious and cheerful Canadian Mountie who works for Inspector Fenwick. Do-Right is always trying to catch his nemesis, Snidely Whiplash, and rescue Inspector Fenwick's daughter, damsel-in-distress Nell Fenwick, with whom Do-Right is deeply infatuated. He usually succeeds only by pure luck or through the actions of his horse, named "Horse".

A running gag throughout the series is Nell Fenwick's disinterest in Do-Right; instead, she appears to be infatuated with his horse. She is shown to kiss the horse rather than Do-Right, and when Do-Right leaves the Mounties, she is only upset about the horse leaving. In Do-Right's first appearance, the narrator states,

Dudley loved Nell. Unfortunately, she loved his horse.

In the standard intro, Do-Right jumps on Horse and furiously rides him backwards as titles appear. Musical accompaniment is a c. 1900 style virtuoso trumpet rendition loosely resembling the William Tell Overture, played by Uan Rasey. While riding, he comes across Whiplash tying Nell Fenwick to a railroad track, accompanied by musical bridge by low trombones. The trumpet fanfare returns as Do-Right reappears; he tips his hat to the two, before realizing what is going on and righting himself in time to save the day.

Just Thirty Years Ago



May 1996

Issue No. 2

MORE THAN JUST A PLACE TO SHOW UP

For the past four years, a Denver Public Schools teacher has had a very different work environment. Pattyanne Corsentino's emigration from the classroom at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School to the Rocky Mountain Regional Office began when she received the national Conservation Teacher of the Year award in 1991. Under an Intergovernmental Personnel Act placement from the EPA, Pattyanne began a one year program of developing Tree Trunks, teaching workshops for teachers and Forest Service employees, and working with National Resource Conservation Education coordinators.

A one year agreement with Denver Public Schools became four years of creativity in implementing an active environmental education package. As she goes back to the classroom, Pattyanne took a few minutes to look with satisfaction at some of her many accomplishments. The trunk repertoire expanded from Tree Trunks to Sod Boxes, Rain Forest Trunks, Rock Boxes, and Recycling Kits. Among her favorite activities have been teacher workshops all over the United States, speaking at nationwide conferences, and Animal Inn/Treeture activities with scout groups and school kids in classrooms.

A key project has been the development of a multi-million dollar environmental education center at Bluff Lake, on the old Stapleton Airport property. A web of non-traditional partners has brought the vision

of Bluff Lake's potential to reality. New partners join the effort, ensuring that the program can be sustained.



The phone rings constantly at Pattyanne's desk. Though many of the calls are requests for speakers and trunks, more often than not the caller wants a copy of "Ecosystem Matters". An activity and resource guide for environmental educators, the book has become a word-of-mouth sensation among teachers nationwide. Pattyanne and a small army of writers, editors, illustrators, teacher/consultants and contributors built "Ecosystem Matters" from scratch.

Teachers didn't think of the Regional Office as a spot to bring students on a field trip until the development of the Environmental Ed resource room. Filled with bright colors and "touchy-feely stuff", the room is fun for students to visit and an inspiration to teachers attending workshops there. A proposed program of revolving teacher internships in the Regional Office would be an avenue for further exchange of creative energy.

When asked what she liked best about her assignment with the Forest Service, Pattyanne automatically responded, "It's the people". She said that Forest Service people were new friends, not faceless bureaucrats. Some experiences which made her smile involved partnerships like Celebrating Wildflowers campaign, for which the Garden Club ladies made a quilt as a fundraiser.

Pattyanne characterized her one regret as not "doing the green truck thing". She had hoped to go to the woods, watching outhouses being pumped, seeing a real forest fire, and measuring trees. While working directly with professional wildlife biologists and foresters was a treat, going to the field as a non-teacher would have been even neater.

"I got to do things that most classroom teachers never dream of. I went to Mexico and taught teachers and kids environmental education for two weeks. I travelled all over the United States, and I met people I will remember for the rest of my life. It's more than just a job, and the Forest Service is more than just a place to show up to work," she added.

When asked about what she likes best about her assignment with the Forest Service, Pattyanne automatically responded, "It's the people." She said that Forest Service people were new friends, not faceless bureaucrats....her one regret was not "doing the green truck thing." She had hoped to go to the woods, watching outhouses being pumped, seeing a real forest fire and measuring trees.

Headlines in this Issue

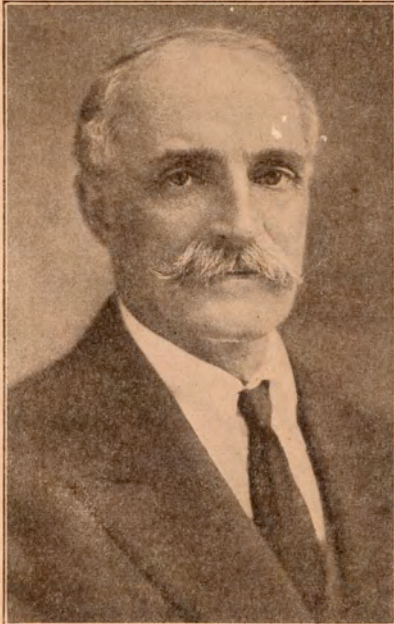
- Regional Forester's Annual Special Achievement Awards are given out
- River Cleanup a National Priority
- Noxious Weeds: A Biological Wildfire
- Med Bow Folks Walk when the Moon is Full
- Wildflower Hotline Makes Perennial Debut
- Researchers use new weapons in war on Larkspur Poisoning
- Downsizing Info Available on the DG
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce honors Grasslands Ranger, Dave Pieper
- Retiree Dave Davies volunteers in RO
- What's the Memorial Grove?
- Partners Overhaul Maroon Bells
- OldTimers to Host National Forest Service Reunion in Park City in 1996
- Scientist Linda Joyce receives the USDA Distinguished Scientist Award
- Lynn Young in Public Affairs reminded folks of a couple of openings in the training course - **S y s t e m a t i c Development of Informed Consent.**

Gifford Pinchot

August 11, 1865 - October 4, 1946

A couple of fun items from the Tom Thompson collection on its way to the Forest Service Museum in Missoula.

EVERYBODY KNOWS



GIFFORD PINCHOT

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

WILL MAKE THE BEST GOVERNOR

Issued by Pinchet for Governor Campaign Committee

Real Estate Trust Bldg. Philadelphia, Penna.

Pinchot campaign card when he ran for Governor of Pennsylvania and a button when he ran for the Senate.



GIFFORD PINCHOT

A vigorous, capable, steady, reasonable, experienced man of fifty-six.

Forester, farmer, hunter, fisherman, organizer, good neighbor, good friend. Works well and gets on well with other people.

A great public servant and for thirty years a fearless fighter for the rights of the people. Roosevelt's friend, adviser, and right-hand man.

Volunteered and was accepted by Theodore Roosevelt for his division in the World War.

Known and respected throughout the nation and the world as a forester and father of the movement to develop and protect the natural resources for all the people.

Fought and defeated Ballinger's attempt to turn Alaska over to the Guggenheim interests.

Organized the United States Forest Service, and made it admittedly the best managed and most efficient organization in the United States Government.

In two years put Pennsylvania at the head of all the States in Forestry.

Has done for the Department of Forestry exactly what needs to be done for the whole State Government.

Has had a wider experience in Government work than any other man in Pennsylvania.

Beyond all question the best man in the State to straighten out the muddle at Harrisburg.

Was for Woman Suffrage and against the liquor traffic when it was politically dangerous to be so.

Knows Pennsylvania as few men do, and is known in every corner of the State.

Everybody concedes his strength with the women, the farmers, the working people, the soldiers, the sportsmen, and all Republicans who control their own votes.

HE CAN WIN NEXT FALL

Re-founding National Public Lands

The Future of Place-Based Conservation of National Forests

Edgar Brannon retired in 2005 as director of Grey Towers National Historic Site, Milford, Pennsylvania, after a 40-year career with the USDA Forest Service.

By Edgar Brannon



introduction

Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of the interior, Harold Ickes, was charged with reorganizing the nation's natural resource agencies into a single department in 1935. He hoped to persuade Forest Service Chief Ferdinand Silcox, a progressive Republican, to lead it under the secretary of the interior. The



Ferdinand Silcox, the fifth Chief of the U.S. Forest Service.

Forest Service was viewed as the model, and Ickes wanted to wrap the other agencies into the Forest Service as a new, more effective Department of Natural Resources. Silcox balked and instead recruited the Forest Service's founding chief, Gifford Pinchot, to oppose the plan. Decades later, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan all tried versions of the same idea, but those efforts pale beside the Trump administration's actions.

Can Humpty Dumpty be put back together? Can the Forest Service be built back on the existing legal foundation and mission? If not, who decides? What would happen to the century of laws tying the Forest Service specifically to the Department of Agriculture?

My response to re-founding is rooted in my experience as a forest supervisor and line officer - someone who worked in the trenches for 40 years. I dealt firsthand with the daunting challenges of coping with external and internal demands, and at times, dysfunction in the Forest Service. The agency had, and still has, things that work, and others that do not, which is not unusual for a federal agency. The administration has decided to approach the government's reorganization with a chainsaw. The United States Forest Service is in crisis as a result. It is looking to me like a major rebuild will be needed. My questions: What matters? What should be brought forward, what needs to change, how should it be done, and who should do this?

To Begin: Marsh's Influence

Shortly after arriving as director of Grey Towers National Historic Site, and its associated Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies, I found myself alone in the library.

I lifted from the shelf Pinchot's copy of George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature; or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*. First published in 1865, Marsh's work is regarded by historians as "the fountainhead of conservation." Pinchot took Marsh's observations and further defined conservation, in part by situating forestry at its center. Through skillful public relations, Pinchot placed Conservation, with a capital C, into the public lexicon.

Marsh described conservation's central challenges: overcoming ignorance and overcoming greed. His work resonated deeply with Pinchot, who often referred to *Man and Nature* in his early lectures. Pinchot added a third warning, a moral and ethical imperative: confronting the evils of concentrated wealth. He grew up in the Gilded Age. To him, the federal government's work was not just scientific or administrative; it was ethical and moral. Modern forestry rests on a belief system. That belief system gives the profession its motivation and, I believe, its esprit de corps. I believe that spirit remains in place—damaged and dinged up, perhaps, but still there.

My approach is to ensure that decisions, to the extent possible, be grounded in science, scholarship, and experience and be substantiated by data whenever possible. We must use the best science and scholarship available. The process must be transparent, open to review, and amenable to change. These are public lands, and the public must have a role in deciding how they are managed. Career civil servants - not political appointees - should lead the agency. We learned this lesson more than a century ago. The administration sets direction and priorities; Congress appropriates funds, writes laws, and provides oversight; and, in the end, courts adjudicate disputes.

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Observations from the Inside

My experience tells me that the conservation of national forests, grasslands, monuments, and historic sites depends on how it is carried out and who carries it out. As important as organizational models are, the credibility of outcomes is not determined by organization structure. Countless officials have focused on organization charts as if they were the determining factor. The culture of an institution has more impact than its structure. In the end, it is the people who do the work and form relationships with the public and partners that make the most difference.

A few observations from my experience

1. Over the past 30 years, the agency assumed that consolidating national forests and ranger districts would save money and allow needed staff specialist positions to be filled. Money was a problem, and often the driver. However, there was a non-monetary cost. An unintended consequence of ranger district and national forest consolidation was, in my opinion, the loss of one-on-one connections with many communities. The agency moved out of small towns across the country. This needs to be fixed in the present and future Forest Service. The public is more supportive when they understand the reasons for actions.



2. We live in an increasingly interconnected world. Every land manager knows forest ecosystems are the lungs of the planet, and in more ways than I can define, provide for the quality of human existence. What we do in North America affects the Earth's ecosystems, and what happens elsewhere affects

the United States. We are isolated only by limited thinking. We must remain active participants in the worldwide forest management community. The Forest Service role in land stewardship is extensive - so much more than the national forests - and includes 138 million acres of urban forests whereby most of our "lungs" live.

3. Forest research is a long-term, not short-term, commitment. Knowledge matters. Our research advances and complements what others are learning. It shapes decisions at all levels. Moving scientists a thousand miles away to a "centralized" location "to be more efficient" undermines the quality and usefulness of research for scientists and resource managers alike. The notion that small units are costly is false.

4. Supporting state foresters and private forest landowners is not "nice to have"; it is essential. Teamwork has made a profound difference. A few states have strong forestry organizations and capable staffs, but many operate with skeleton crews. I hosted many meetings and workshops with state foresters, and I witnessed the benefits of their interacting with their counterparts and federal officials. Without the Forest Service leading and convening, it would not have happened. The proposed elimination of the state and private forestry component of the Forest Service mission will prove to have serious negative consequences to forestland stewardship.

Nuts and Bolts

If an almost complete rebuild is needed, what changes make sense? Here is my short list—not a blueprint etched in stone, but a starting point for rebuilding an agency whose strength has always depended on professional judgment, public trust, and durable connection to place. The goal should not be to rearrange boxes on an organizational chart to appear bold. It should be to restore capacity where it matters, clarify accountability, reduce unnecessary layers, and protect the work from day-to-day political interference that thwarts the greater good.

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- Political oversight belongs in the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) secretary's office, not inside the agency's chain of command. The Forest Service chief's relationships with elected officials, non-governmental organizations, other agency heads, and the secretary's staff are essential. Success is based on trust relationships, built personally over time.

- If the Forest Service is put under another department, such as Interior, then almost every law for the past 125 years needs to be re-written. Nice idea, but a political non-starter in my opinion.



The Sidney R. Yates Federal Building - headquarters for the U.S. Forest Service.

The agency's mission reaches far beyond timber production, though timber remains important in some places.

- Its work sits at the intersection of water, fire, climate, biodiversity, rural economies,

recreation, Tribal relations, and community safety. A Department of Natural Resources could make sense, but only if it strengthens professional independence rather than creating another political perch.

- The National Forest System has four line-officer levels: chief, regional forester, forest supervisor, and district ranger. The Trump administration is moving to close Regional Offices, but the key question is how their essential functions would be replaced. Regional Offices are costly, and many forest supervisors and district rangers would welcome a smaller regional layer—or none at all. But if regional foresters are eliminated, their responsibilities do not simply disappear. Budget coordination, litigation support, fire and aviation coordination, engineering, human resources, civil rights, grants, quality control, and technical review must be preserved in a form that serves the field units and adds consistency as well as efficiency.
- Local support is earned over time through action, not pronouncements. District rangers and forest supervisors therefore determine much of the

agency's success. In his autobiography, Pinchot noted that field leadership depended less on technical knowledge and more on personal character: "Thenceforth, the success or failure of Forest Reserve administration would be almost entirely in the hands of the Supervisor and his Rangers, where it properly belonged. It was radical, but it was right, and it worked." He added, "the first condition of success in any job is not brains but character. Over and over again I have seen men of moderate intelligence come to the front because they had courage, integrity, self-respect, steadiness. Rather than pulling decisions upward to headquarters, the agency's historic bias was to push them down to the lowest competent level.

- Every national forest has a role in State and Private Forestry, the Forest Service's extension arm. Every national forest can support cooperative forestry, fire assistance, watershed work, urban forestry, forest health, and support for private landowners. The Forest Service has made major contributions to urban forests—Central Park in New York City, Chicago Wilderness, and World Trade Center memorial plaza tree planting are contemporary examples of an expanded role. These are not side assignments; they are connective tissue between federal lands and the larger landscape. It is the State and Private Forestry programs that have linked up all firefighting agencies. The coordination efforts have evolved, and the mechanisms are tested and proven. The focus has always been competence, fairness, justice, equality, and I would add, compromise.
- Research positions should be, as they have been, primarily co-located within universities and tied closely to experimental forests and working landscapes. Forestry research requires a long view. Short-term studies matter, but the most valuable knowledge often comes from decades of observation: fire behavior, watershed response, silviculture, regeneration, insects and disease, carbon sequestration, recreation impacts, and climate change. Once dismantled, that capacity cannot be rebuilt easily or quickly. The importance of keeping Forest Service researchers connected to independent scholarship, graduate education, field application, and the next generation of conservation professionals cannot be overestimated.

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- I served on a ranger district that had fewer than six full-time employees and a dozen seasonal workers. That district was later consolidated with two others and its headquarters moved. Now these communities no longer personally know the district ranger—or any employee. As forest supervisor, I solved more public issues at Rotary Club than in formal meetings. Forest supervisors and district rangers need protection from political pressures and special interests, not the public.
- Lastly, the administration's actions to stand up a new federal agency that would be responsible for all firefighting is a huge mistake. The problem is not, and has never been in my opinion, the organization.

forest management now fill a book four inches thick in tiny type face. I do not know enough about the law to prescribe every answer, but as a field manager I know where the problems live. Field officers must be trusted, and they can and should be held accountable. That balance - trust with accountability - is exactly what a serious re-founding effort must restore.

We must guard against political and economic interests that seek to turn the mission away from the common good and justice for all. We assumed protections were in place; we were wrong. In a matter of months, the Trump administration has ignited a crown fire that is burning through century-old policies and norms. A line scratched in the dirt is not enough.



The American public, in my opinion, does not realize what an outstanding civil service it has at present. Most are unaware of the work done, how it benefits them, how much effort goes into every decision, how dedicated so many of the civil servants are, how they protect us, and maybe as important, how they protect our world for future generations. Does anyone know we have 138 million acres of urban forests and that the Forest Service has a role in Central Park and the 9/11 Memorial? How about the urban wood waste program in Baltimore or a huge role in the Chesapeake Bay?

Prior to the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883, every new administration was staffed based on patronage and political loyalty. Corruption

was the norm, and public service was at best a secondary consideration.

Do we really want to go back? Assertion of a manipulative un-elected deep state is, frankly, a myth. There is no such thing. To claim otherwise mischaracterizes the work of professional civil servants.

• WHO WILL DO IT, AND HOW WILL IT BE DONE?

The task of re-founding the Forest Service is too large and complex to be done by the agency itself, the current administration, or a congressional committee working through ordinary partisan machinery. Maybe what is needed is a 9/11-style bipartisan commission with the credibility, independence, and patience to do the hard work. There may be no perfect answers, but there are better answers, and the country should insist on finding them. The principal laws affecting national

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We live in a country with more than 300 million people. We have a non-military federal civil service workforce of 2 million employees.⁵ Treating our public workforce as expendable chattel will only discourage our most talented and capable individuals from choosing challenging careers in public service where their skills are most needed. Nowhere is this more critical than in the Forest Service and other agencies that sustainably

manage the nation's natural resources for essential goods and services, for this and future generations.

America has always risen to meet difficult challenges, and we can do so again. But we must be measured and thoughtful. This current haphazard approach will haunt us for decades to come.

Edgar Brannon, known to all as Eddie, retired as Director of Grey Towers in 2005, but has remained active in forest conservation work. He is a Senior Fellow of the Forest History Society at Duke University, Senior Fellow of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, and Senior Faculty Fellow at Yale School of the Environment. He is most known for his lead in the restoration of Grey Towers National Historic Site, his work mentoring leaders in natural resource conservation, and his lectures on Gifford Pinchot and the evolution of forest conservation in the United States. He now lives with his wife of near 60 years in Northern California.



Read Eddie's blog....**The U. S. Forest Service Way**

<https://theusfsway.com/>

Disclaimer: My blog in no way represents the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Dalai Lama, or any living or dead retiree. This is one person's view... Mine.

Smokey the Bear Bike

Rob Aiken's Got One

By Rob Aiken

MY "NEW" BIKE

Sometime in the Eighties, our Region 10 Transportation Planner returned with news from a National Roads Program meeting held in R6 (they were thoroughly modern down there). There was talk that people were riding bicycles on National Forest System Roads. The 1988 brochure "Roads in the National Forests" even included a picture of cyclists on skinny-tired bikes struggling up one of our roads.

I was not sold. "No one is ever going to want to do that" was my confident prediction.

Fast forward about 40 years and I was in the market to buy a "gravel bike" so I could efficiently ride on Forest Service (and even BLM) roads. You see, my mountain bike was wasting forward propulsion energy with each flex of its technologically marvelous suspension system (the lockout was not working perfectly), and the fat knobby tires were causing too much rolling resistance. I desperately needed skinnier tires and a sturdy, rigid frame: AKA, a gravel bike.

In this state of mind, during a ride with a friend I mentioned that I had a certain budget for a new bike. He replied, "What would you say if, for a fraction of that price, we could build one up from parts I have in my garage?"

I said "Sold"!

Now to build a bike up from scratch it was essential (at least for me) to work with someone who had extensive experience in the cycling industry (the aforementioned friend) and was as enthusiastic as I was about the project. It might

have even helped clear out his garage a little.



So, to get started he set me to sanding down an old mountain bike frame, being especially thorough in removing that "SPECIALIZED" logo. I would need my own personalized brand, along with a new paint color.



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Knowing I am very proud of the USFS, he suggested "how about Forest Service green?"

Again, I was sold!

Turns out you don't just go to any big box store and pick out that color. Fortunately, our local Industrial Supply outlet was able to

provide that familiar, nostalgic hue that apparently goes by the official name of

"OSHA Safety Green."

The new logo would of course have to be brown and cream using a cursive font as close as possible to that on signs proudly proclaiming, "Entering National Forest Land". It would also have to represent what I was trying to accomplish: a bike strong, sturdy, and reliable enough for long distances on "unimproved" roads.

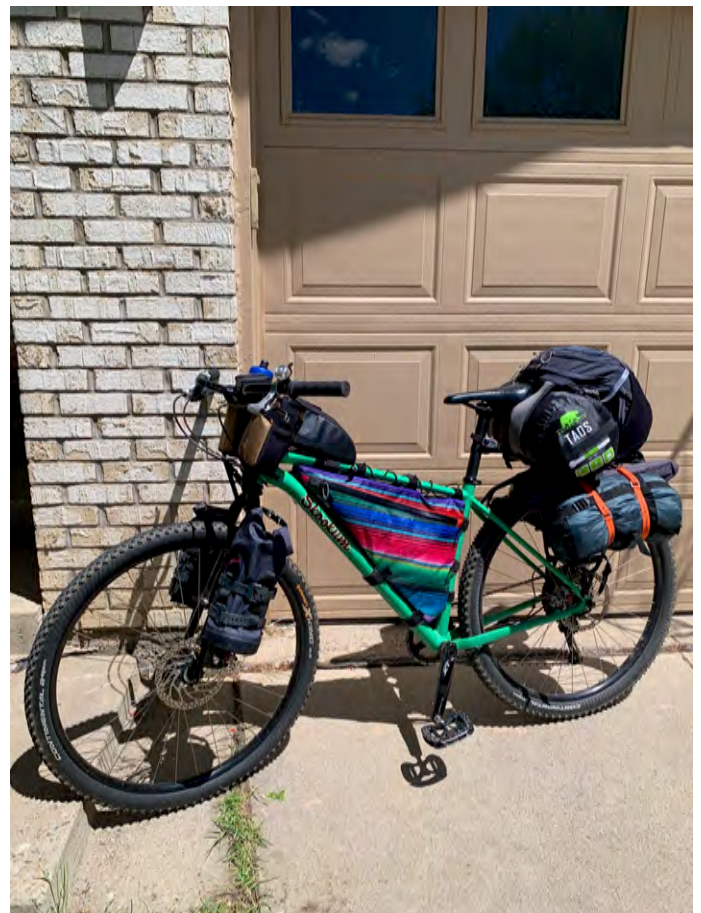


After a little pondering, the Pacific NW Native American term "Skookum" came to mind. It signifies all those characteristics, and as a bonus even invokes Sasquatch, as well as reminding me of 90-foot logging towers of the same brand.

Staying true to brand guided many decisions. Hydraulic or mechanical brakes? Mechanical, more skookum (besides being the type already available in the used parts bin). Those super-sized pedals? Perfect for Bigfoot.

When all was said and done, the only brand-new ordered part on the bike was the crankset that the Bigfoot pedals attached to. After about a month of tinkering and learning terms like top tube, head tube, seat tube, down tube, etc.

"Skookum" was ready to roll. The experience will always embody for me camaraderie, pride in new skills, and a spirit of adventure: all favorite parts of my Forest Service career.



"Skookum" packed and ready to roll.

Madam Secretary

Formal Announcements



"Under President Trump, the Forest Service is focused on delivering meaningful results that directly benefit the American people and our natural resources, rather than remaining a rigid organization that cannot adapt to changing situations. Like any reorganization and restructuring, the Forest Service is bringing in new talent to support the mission, and channeling resources to where they are needed most, not just where they historically went."

"We've run over 1,000 simulations. It can cost around \$3.00 a meal for a piece of chicken, a piece of broccoli, corn tortilla, and one other thing. So there is a way to do this that actually will save the average American consumer money."



This picture comes as a big surprise to the editors of this newsletter. It appears to be authentic, but it might not be real.



The Rendezvous was not invited to this press conference.

Passing the Pulaski

Fighting wildfire from one generation to the next

*This story was first published in **Outside Bozeman**. (Fall 2023)*

By Traute Parrie

Fall is - well, used to be, fall was fire season. The fires this year have me reminiscing about my own time on the fire line, 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 twenty-one day fire assignment. I started with the U.S. 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 fire line – 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 fire line, either hand line 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 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 fire line.

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 forests, 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 trains. 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 U.S. Forest Service career and my sons have spent time on the fire line 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.



Me with my crew, in a duece-and-a-half at the end of shift (likely 1987, Oregon). I am in the upper left, in back.

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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.

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.

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.



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

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 at the South Canyon Fire, 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 awareness, I am more anxious about their departure to a fire assignment than I ever was about my own.

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 check-point 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.



Zach Parrie and me, on the same division of a Bitterroot fire, circa 2003.

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 a 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.

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View of the Robertson Draw fire from our house in Red Lodge, June 2021.

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 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.



Son Chris Carroll, on the Cameron Peak Fire, 2020.

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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 fire line 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. This style of respectful engagement is of immense value to my kids. I see them seeking and doing the work to maintain it throughout all aspects of their own lives, and we will always have each others' backs, on or off the line.



Traute and Don on the porch of the Marshall House, Savannah, GA, 2025.



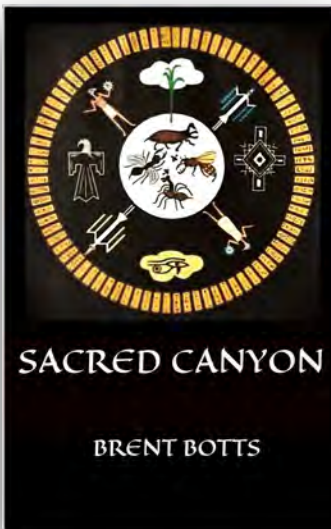
Traute, Don, Zach and Chris. 2019.



"Born and raised in Wyoming on rope-tows and horseback, Traute Parrie continued her outdoor-oriented trajectory through a 31-year career with the Forest Service. As co-editor of **Voices of Yellowstone Capstone: A Narrative Atlas of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness**, Traute recruited a band of fellow wilderness tramps to share their hard-earned knowledge. Nowadays, she stays engaged in the backcountry by skiing in the northeast corner of Yellowstone, bikepacking in the mountains, and volunteering on fire lookout tower restoration projects. She enjoys being outside with her kids, grandgirls, and husband."

Brent Botts Debuts His Second Novel

By Brent Botts



I promised that if I ever finished my sequel to **Gila Prophecy**, I would write another article for the newsletter. That was back in 2024. Here it is 2026 and a promise kept. It's a good thing I never tried to make a living by writing. Two novels in twenty-one years would hardly have made a living. Yes, the first one took eight years and the second one only three, but that's hardly an improvement considering

how fast authors churn out books these days.

When I started my first novel, I had no intention of writing another, much less a sequel. My motivation for writing my first novel was that I survived an arduous trip down the Gila River with a half-dozen scouts and was asked to recount the story many times. It was sure to be a bestseller if I just added hidden treasure and an antagonist to the story.

It never became a bestseller, but those who read it enjoyed the story and encouraged me to write another. I have always been a good storyteller: working for the National Park Service as an Interpreter, giving hikes on the Buffalo National River in Arkansas, conducting evening campfire programs, working most of my Forest Service career in recreation, and spending greater than fifty years in Scouting. It didn't take long to forget all the hardships of editing, rewriting, and publishing that go with writing a novel; so I began.

I had learned a great deal from writing *Gila Prophecy*, and I quickly applied those skills to *Sacred Canyon*. The writing became easier, and there were fewer writer's blocks and obstacles to overcome. However, writing a sequel had its own challenges: making sure the characters stayed the same, remembering who said what to whom, keeping the continuity from book to book, and writing it so a reader can read the sequel without having read the first novel. I have acquired a new respect for those authors who write a series of books and keep everything straight.

Sacred Canyon takes place a few months after *Gila Prophecy*, but the setting is Lake Powell. Having spent years on the lake as an owner of the houseboat *Dreamy Days*, it was easy to incorporate many of the places and events that happened over the years. Writing about the storms, the beauty, and the hidden canyons with their petroglyphs came easily.

In *Sacred Canyon*, the primary characters from *Gila Prophecy* remain: Jason Beyer, the Director of Recreation from the Southwest Region, his sidekick Carl Crawford, and the evil Cappri Zanotto along with his lackey, Russo. This time Jason and Carl include their family along on what was to be a relaxing trip—only to find they must now rescue their children from the sinister clutches of Zanotto, who is still intent on determining where the source of the treasure originates.

As in the first book, I combine my true adventures on Lake Powell within the story. Readers often ask me what parts are true and what parts are fiction. Most of the time, I leave it up to them to figure that out.

I couldn't have written either novel without having worked for the Forest Service and experienced these remarkable locations. I couldn't have developed my characters without having worked with the wonderful people I have met over the years. I often combine the most interesting traits of my characters after my work colleagues. It helps me determine how they would react in certain situations. So, if you see a little of yourself in one of my characters, it just might be that you are a part of the story.

Gila Prophecy and *Sacred Canyon* are available on Amazon Kindle in paperback, hardback, and electronic format. I have just finished working with a producer to have *Gila Prophecy* narrated, and it should be available for download on Audible, Amazon, and iTunes by the time this newsletter reaches you. I hope to have *Sacred Canyon* narrated by the end of the year. If you read or listen to either, I hope to hear from you. I might even tell you which parts are real.

Buy it here!

https://www.amazon.com/stores/Brent-Botts/author/B00CZVE5ZS?ref=ap_rdr&shoppingPortalEnabled=true?



Where in the World is Jim Thinnes?

The Rocky Mountaineers Traveling to New Heights

By Cindy Dean and Jim Thinnes —
The Rendezvous International Travel Writers



The Rocky Mountaineers in Český Krumlov.

Fourteen Rocky Mountaineer travelers planned a Danube River cruise in July. The tour company notified us a week before our departure that low water levels made sailing impossible. They offered us a land-based tour with some added perks or a refund. Ten of us (Jim Thinnies, Cindy Dean, Pam and Jon Skeels, Randy Franci, Susan Gray, Kelley Liston, Bob Huthman, Pam and Jon Skeels, Michele O'Connell, and Jim Schwartz) chose to proceed with the trip, despite the change in plans.

Our trip began in Budapest, where we stayed at the Hilton Royal Castle on the Buda side of the Danube. From our accommodations on Castle Hill, we enjoyed picturesque views of the Hungarian capital and convenient shuttle service to the city center. Over the next two days, we explored landmarks including the Parliament Building, St. Stephen's Basilica, and the Chain Bridge.

From Budapest, we traveled by bus to Bratislava, Slovakia's capital. There, we learned about their Velvet Divorce—the peaceful 1992 decision to divide Czechoslovakia into Czechia and Slovakia. With about 500,000 residents, Bratislava was the smallest capital city we visited. Its medieval Saint Michael's Gate offers a dramatic entrance to the charming Old Town.



Budapest and the Danube River.

We continued to Vienna, Austria, the former residence of the Habsburgs, who ruled the Austro-Hungarian Empire. We had four days to explore the historic heart of Vienna, which is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, art, music, and architecture. We visited St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna State Opera, the Hofburg Imperial Apartments, Schönbrunn Palace (Habsburg's summer residence), and much more. We even caught a classical music performance of Strauss and Mozart compositions.



The Wachau Valley.

Continuing along the Danube, we stopped in the Wachau Valley to visit an apricot farm and the Baroque Melk Abbey. In Linz, now an economic hub, we learned how the city's industrial complex supported the Nazi war effort during World War II. We visited nearby Mauthausen, the site of the Nazi's first large concentration camp and the last to be liberated by the Allies. Our tour of the complex was sobering in this place where over 90,000 died.



Prague's Old Town Square.

Leaving the Danube behind, we entered Czechia and stopped in the medieval town of Český Krumlov, set along the Vltava River in southern Bohemia. From there, we continued to Prague. The Czech capital has a rich mix of Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture. We spent our final three days exploring its highlights, including the famous Charles Bridge and Prague Castle.

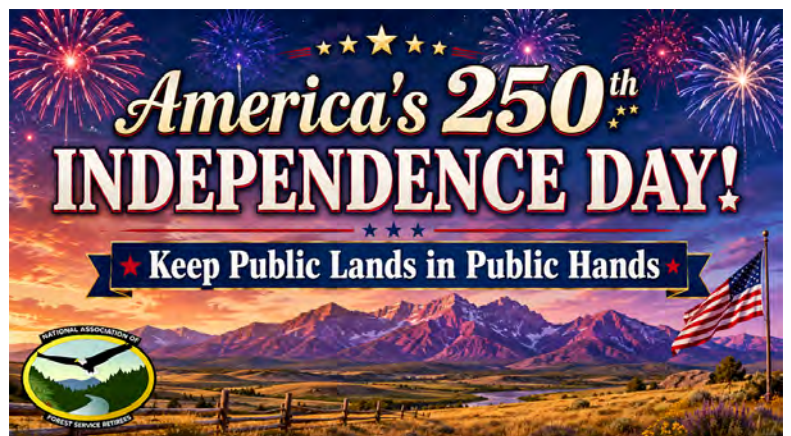
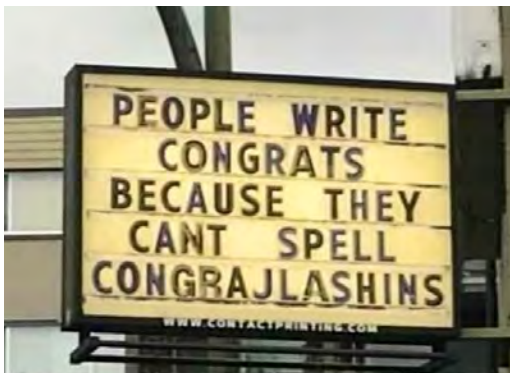
Everyone enjoyed our trip despite missing the opportunity to experience the Danube River on a riverboat.

The Rocky Mountaineers next travel adventure is Egypt and the Nile River this November.

Space is still available for our small ship adventure in the Aegean Islands October 8-24, 2027 (see the Rocky Mountaineers website or send an email to JimThinnes2@gmail.com for more details).

“Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign”

originally written by Les Emmerson and released by the Canadian rock group
Five Man Electrical Band in 1971.



Cocktail Party Quotes



Aldo Leopold, 1949

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

From the foreword to A Sand County Almanac, published in 1949, the year after Leopold died. Leopold gave us the land ethic, the idea that we belong to the land and not the other way around. Every grazing fight and every drilling lease comes back to which half of that sentence we choose.



Gaylord Nelson, 1961

"The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, not the other way around."

Nelson founded Earth Day, served as a Democratic senator from Wisconsin, and built his career bringing business to the table instead of writing it off. He had no patience for the false choice between paychecks and public land. Healthy country, healthy economy, in that order.



Theodore Roosevelt, 1903

"Leave it as it is. You cannot improve on it; not a bit. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it."

He said it on the rim of the Grand Canyon, talking a crowd of Arizonans out of building hotels on the edge. The first great conservation president was a Republican, and his instinct was simple. Hold the line for the people who come after you.



Remembrances



Cassandra Carol (Cass) Carroll

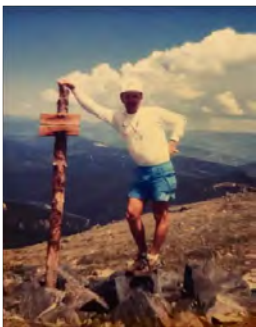
Cass Carroll passed away on August 5, 2026. Cassandra was born in Germany on September 16, 1955. Cass spent her childhood years in Michigan, lived in California and landed in Idaho Springs.

Cass started with the Forest Service in 1988 and retired in 2021. She continued to work at the Idaho Springs/Forest Service visitor center after her retirement. Cass was the pillar of strength for her

family. She always offered a helping hand to her family and friends.

She was quick with a joke and always had a twinkle in her eye to match her beautiful smile. Cass was a talented artist; her creations of silver jewelry are a highlight of her artistry.

Cass is survived by her three grandchildren, Jaden Ferguson, wife Ashley, Johannathan Scott, Athena Scott, great grandson Sebastian ReyFern, sister and nephew Stephanie and Zack Richards and grand nephews.



William Ray Franks

Ray Franks, 91, passed away peacefully July 27, 2026 at Pathways Inpatient Care Center in Fort Collins after suffering a heart attack. His family was by his side. Ray was the 2nd of 4 children born to Raymond and Mina Franks of Macon, Missouri. Ray

attended William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri where he was then drafted by the Army and was stationed at Ft. Leonardwood, Missouri. Upon his discharge, he attended Oregon State University, working summers for the US Forest Service and was studying Forestry which became his career. This led to living in many locations, including Montana, Idaho, Washington State, with the majority of that time being in Montana, prior to transferring to Denver to finish his career.

Once he retired, he kept himself busier than ever. He loved his family, and was the biggest cheerleader for the grands and great grands with all of their activities, attending as many in person as possible. Ray loved football, in particular the Denver Broncos rarely missing a game on TV. He loved the outdoors, especially the National Parks, and often could be found skiing, riding his bike including a trip to Iowa to ride RAGBRAI as well as many Ride the Rockies, mountain climbing,

participating in the Senior Olympics, he was a certified official for USA Track and Field officiating college meets, and he also ran many marathons, including Boston. He once raced at Bandimere Speedway Drag Strip, and received a trophy, though most of the family would attest he was not the best driver.

Ray loved to take pictures, especially of the grandkids, and often had his camera in his hand. He loved for family to visit, and always had a pie baked often with pie filling sent from his daughter's garden in Iowa. He made homemade rolls (Papa rolls), and homemade bread often. He loved a good western, especially John Wayne, loved chocolates, ice cream and BBQ.

Remaining to remember him include his wife Joyce Franks, his daughter Linda Ford (Andy), a stepson Peter Samuelstuen (Mary), step daughter Gigi Chatman (Jeremy), his brother Bruce Franks (Meg) and sister Jean Roebuck (Donald), Grandchildren Courtney Roll (Taylor), Christopher Grim (Tyree), Marte Aboagye (Kobby), Emily Samuelstuen, Jasmine Soto (Zach), Juliana Parrish (Griffin) and Johnna Chatman, Great Grandchildren Peyton, Lyla and Gemma Roll, Kwame Aboagye, and Holland Parrish as well as many nieces and nephews.

(Continued on page 35)



Remembrances



Shirley Lorraine Hendry

Shirley Hendry passed away in her sleep on the afternoon of 14 August, 2026, at the age of 99 Years 8 Months.

Shirley was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota on November 27, 1926 to parents Ben and Laura

Pinochi. She had one older brother, Don.

Shirley grew up in St. Paul where she enjoyed music, art and ice skating. During her teen years she worked various jobs including department store clerk and working in a factory making cigarette lighters. During the World War II she worked in a factory assembling rocket heads. Another job was working in the County Agents office typing expense accounts. Office work was not her forte and knew she did not want a career in business. She studied Interior Design at the University of Minnesota. Shirley spent college summers working in Minnesota's Itasca State Park and in Glacier National Park.

She married Leslie Hendry on Jan. 15, 1949 and moved to the Black Hills in South Dakota where Les was working as a forest ranger with the National Forest Service. Their first son, Gregg, was born while they were living in Custer. Soon the young family moved to a ranger station in Keystone, near Mt. Rushmore. While living in Keystone their second son, Jeffery, was born.

In a year, the family moved to a beautiful, but isolated ranger station (20 miles from town and 4 miles from their nearest neighbor) along Little Spearfish Creek in the northern Black Hills. Shirley learned how pioneer women lived because the station didn't have electricity or a refrigerator for quite awhile, but she did refuse to cook on wood again as she had done in Custer. Again they moved, this time to Deadwood, for three years, then back to Custer for 2 more years.

In 1960, the Forest Service transferred Les to Colorado Springs to work on the Pike National Forest. Their third son, John, was born there in 1960. After 6 years Les was again transferred and

the family moved to Lakewood, Colorado. After settling in Lakewood, Shirley became active with the Sweet Adeline's choral group.

In 1978, she started her own interior design business, Interior Motifs, and enjoyed this work for 25 years.

Les retired in 1980 and they bought a motor home. They enjoyed traveling in it through 48 states, including Alaska and in Canada. Between driving trips, they traveled internationally to Great Britain, Italy, Greece, New Zealand, Egypt, Africa, Thailand, and China.

Between trips, Shirley thoroughly enjoyed playing golf, playing bridge, and was very active in their church. All of her life Shirley often was engaged with various arts and craft activities. She started painting and was active with the Mountainside Art Guild and completed numerous water colors and oils.

After Les passed in 2014, Shirley remained in Lakewood for several more years and then moved to Alta Vita Assisted Living in Longmont, Colorado.

Shirley is survived by 2 of her sons, Gregg (Billie) and John (Linda); 5 grandsons Adam (Suzanne), Scott (Dallas), Jake (Hannah), Ben, Zach (Helda) and 3 great grandchildren Emsley, Delilah and Miles.

Shirley was an inspiration for all who knew her. She influenced many in countless positive ways.

In her recent words:

"I have lived a wonderful life"

A celebration of Shirley's life will be held on Friday, 2 October 2026 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at AltaVita Assisted Living, 1001 AltaVita Court, Longmont.

Donations in Shirley's memory may be made to TRU Community Care or to the Rocky Mountaineers Forest Service Memorial Grove.

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Remembrances



Robert (Bob) Jacob

Bob Jacob of Lander, WY, passed away March 26, 2024, at his home surrounded by family. He was born on May 20, 1942, to Robert William Sr. and Pearl (Lee) Jacob in Hailey, Idaho.

Bob attended school in Flagstaff, Arizona, and graduated from Northern Arizona University with a BS in Forestry on May 25, 1964. After college, Bob moved to Meeteetse, WY where he was an assistant forest ranger and in charge of tagging elk. He and his family then moved to Lander, WY where he worked for the US Forest Service. After a few years, he resigned and had various jobs, including working as a rancher at the Double A Ranch in Lander. He went on to pursue his love of hunting where he and Howard Killebrew started an outfitting/guide business. His final career was going back to work for the US government, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Bob was a lifetime member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. He was a true horseman, avid hunter, and flyfisher. If you wanted to know about hunting areas, your go-to guy was Bob. From the Red Desert to the Dunoirs and in between, he had a wealth of knowledge regarding all of the hunting areas, his honey holes, names of creeks, rivers, trails, wildflowers, and all of the habitats. Bob

was truly the happiest when he was on his horse in the mountains. If Bob wasn't in the mountains, he and his wife Gayle could be found at the Elks Club enjoying a Keystone (before Keystone was cool) with their friends. He loved the Denver Broncos, was a country music fan of George Jones, Tammy Wynette and Dolly Parton. For over 20 years Bob and his wife, along with friends traveled to the NFR in Las Vegas- sometimes coming home with more money than they left with! Bob touched many lives throughout his life and will forever be loved and missed by his family and long-time friends.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, wife Gayle, sister Suzanne Kennedy, his two favorite mules, Star and Whiskey and beloved horse, Cedarbuck.

He is survived by his son, Dale Jacob (Wendy), daughter, Sheri Cox (Brian Mehrer), stepchildren, Pat Abeyta- Smith, Paula Abeyta and Hope Abeyta. Grandchildren: Kelsey (Christopher) Warren, Holly (Zac) Grusendorf, Chloe (David) Bridges, Baylee Smith, Chartess Arroyo, Joaquin Arroyo, Job Abeyta, Jessica (Chad) Hopkins, Jacob Eppler, Jude Eppler as well as 14 great-grandchildren-including his namesake great-grandson, Ira Jacob Warren. Nieces, Robbi (Michael) Wyatt, Dori (Roy) Nelson, and Buffi (Bruce) Robinson.

(Continued on page 37)



Vinh Le

Vinh Le, at the age of 58, passed away peaceably on July 1, 2026, in his home after a 3-year battle with prostate cancer. Vinh was born in 1968 in the city of Saigon, Vietnam.

Following the Fall of Saigon, he and his sister, Kimhue left the country in 1982. From the refugee camp, with the aid of family and a Catholic aid organization, they were able to settle in Colorado, USA.

At the age of 16, Vinh began working for the United States Forest Service. From there, his love for the Forest Service would grow and Vinh would spend the next 41 years in service, medically retiring in 2025. During this time, he filled various roles, from working in the field loading air tankers to web page management. He received an award in recognition of his efforts for the Forest Service in 2000.

Vinh was such a helpful, wonderful person whose smile and willingness to step forward and get things done left a lasting impression on so many. He, even in tough times, was able to touch people with his kindness, his caring personality, and his skill and expertise. He seemed to always be thinking of others and how he could help.

Vinh was genuine, kind and generous. He lived an extraordinary life emphasized by courage and honor from beginning to end.

At the time of his passing, he survived by his wife, Phuong, of 6 years.

There are a host of pictures and tributes to Vinh from his family and colleagues including a video of the Forest Service Memorial at the Jeffco Airtanker Base on July 23rd. 2026. Follow the link below.

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/thornton-co/vinh-quy-le-12955551>



Remembrances



Tracey Diane Parrish

Tracey Parrish, 62, passed away peacefully on September 12, 2026 at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, CO. Born in Denver Tracey called Fort Collins home since 1995 after spending time living in Wyoming. As a true Forest Service brat, she grew up

moving from place to place, experiencing different communities and landscapes along the way. That life helped shape the person she became—strong, caring, adaptable, and deeply connected to the people and places around her. Tracey dedicated her career to the U.S. Forest Service, where she worked as a budget officer until her retirement in 2024. But her greatest work in life was caring for the people she loved. Tracey loved her people fiercely and unconditionally. She was the person who made sure everyone was okay, who showed up when she was needed, and who cared for others even when she had little left to give herself. And then there were her dogs. Tracey loved her dogs more than anyone could truly understand.

They were her family, her companions, and a huge part of her heart. Anyone who knew Tracey knew just how much they meant to her. Her heart was genuine, and her intentions were always pure. She had a remarkable way of putting others before herself and taking care of the people—and animals—she loved. She continued doing what came naturally to her, caring for everyone around her, right up until her last breath. Tracey leaves behind a legacy of love, kindness, loyalty, and a life spent taking care of others. She will be deeply missed by all who were fortunate enough to know and love her, and her memory will live on in the hearts of her people, in the lives she touched, and in the unconditional love she gave so freely.

Tracey is survived by her father and stepmother Keith & Lorraine Parrish of Sun City West, AZ, Sister Kelly Parrish Ippolito of Fort Collins, CO, nephew Carter Ippolito of Powell, OH, and beloved pups LuLu, CoCo and Raina.

At peace at last, Tracey. You took care of everyone for so long. It's time for you to rest.

(Continued on page 39)

(Continued from page 36)

Herb John Pavlisick

Herb Pavlisick passed to Heaven May 24, 2026, following a battle with dementia. Herb was born Oct. 30, 1940 (10/30/40 like a quart of oil) to Adolph "Otto" Pavlisick and Mary (Delost) Pavlisick in Paonia,

Colo. The family lived in Bowie, Colo., before moving to Paonia permanently. Herb graduated from Paonia High School in 1958. He married the love of his life, Carol Lynn Bieber, in 1961. Together they raised their children, Denise and Michael.

Herb began his career with the federal government in 1960, starting with the Bureau of Reclamation and later transferring to the National Forest Service. During his career the family lived in Rifle, Pueblo and Monte Vista, Colo., and Custer, S.D. He held many positions with the Forest Service, but his favorite was fighting fires, either building line by hand or with a bulldozer.

During his career he also did many side jobs because he just couldn't sit still, he had to be working or he felt he was wasting time. He retired from the Forest Service in 1994 and he and Carol returned to Grand Junction, Colo., to "enjoy retirement." He began working as a truck driver with a local company and then moved to shuttling cars

from airport to airport across Colorado. He enjoyed visiting with the folks he delivered freight to and his coworkers.

Herb was proud to be a lifetime member of the Hotchkiss Elks Club. He was also a member of Eastern Star, Masonic Lodge and served with the Custer County Volunteer Fire Department. He was active with Rainbow and was a Boy Scout Troop Leader.

In his spare time, Herb enjoyed hunting, fishing, golfing, motorcycle riding and snowmobiling. Herb and Carol took several motorcycle tours with friends and loved to recall their adventures.

Herb spent his life working hard, playing hard and loving deeply. He will be remembered by family and friends as a kind and generous soul.

Herb is preceded in death by his parents; many aunts and uncles; a sister-in-law; a son-in-law; and numerous cousins.

He leaves behind his wife, Carol; his children, Denise Wilson and Michael (Bridgett) Pavlisick; sister, Patty (Bill) Bradshaw; sisters-in-law, Julie (Terry) Brown and LeeAnn (Ron) Unfred; grandsons, Patrick Scot and Stephen Michael; as well as seven step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and many extended family members.

(Continued on page 40)

(Continued from page 39)



James (Jim) Shafer

Jim Shafer passed away on May 12, 2025, and was born on May 19, 1946, in Benton Harbor, Michigan, to Kellogg and Irene Shafer. He attended grade school and high school in Benton Harbor and graduated

from Michigan State University with a BS in Forestry. After college he joined the U. S. Coast Guard, serving with International Ice Patrol for 4 years. He was based on Governor's Island in New York. There he met and married Barb. They had two daughters, Kelly and Carol. After his discharge from the military, he began his career with the Forest Service.

It began in Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado (where he worked as a seasonal employee during summer

breaks in College. Then he transferred to Eagle, Colorado, then, Spearfish, South Dakota. and finally to Durango, Colorado. There he worked in Timber on the District and later transferred to the Supervisor's Office, where he retired after 30+ years.

Jim and Barb bought property in Cortez, and built their dream home to live out their retirement dream. Jim could pursue his hobbies of woodworking, silversmithing, bicycling, and landscaping their new five acre home.

Jim and Barb enjoyed 53 wonderful years of marriage together. He will be sorely missed and is survived by his wife Barb and his two daughters, Carol and Kelly, and other family members.

(Continued on page 41)



Darrell Emery Smith

Darrell Smith passed away on July 1, 2024, at age 87 in Middleton, ID. He was born on January 4, 1937, in Gooding, Idaho to Emery and Estelle Smith. He was the foundation and instrumental in forming

interagency Fire coordination and cooperation in the Rocky Mountain Area. A true legacy that continues today

Darrell had several Fire jobs in his career. He started out on a Fire Hand Crew, worked as Airtanker Base Manager at Twin Falls, ID, Lead Dispatcher/Operations at Twin Falls, and then became Assistant National Fire Coordinator at National Interagency Fire Center, Boise ID. (NIFC). Probably started his Forest Service career around 1964. Region 2 had a large and complex fire season in 1980, with multiple fires on the Black Hills, White River, and Gunnison NF's and Darrell was detailed in to assist with the mobilization and coordination of resources.

Darrell was hired in Region 2 in 1981 as Regional Fire Dispatcher. He brought with him a wide range of experience that would serve the Region and Interagency Cooperators for many years. He was promoted to Regional Fire Coordinator within a year of his assignment in R-2. Together with a progressive new Fire Director Jerry Mauk, they began building the foundation and promoting an "Interagency" Dispatch Center Program. This was one of the first in the nation to have all Federal and State Land Management Agencies, their resources,

blended into one coordination and dispatch center program. The program changed some over the years, but the basic concept is still alive and thriving today. He made his legacy.

As a part of the new interagency dispatch/mobilization program, Jeffco Aviation and Fire Center was born in 1983 at the Jefferson County Airport, Colorado. The center consolidated, Interagency Rocky Mountain Area and Arapaho/Roosevelt NF Dispatching, Lead Plane, Airtanker, Helicopter, Fire Cache and Radio Communication operations, were all housed in one location.

Darrell played a major role in the national transition from the Forest Service "Large Fire Organization" to the "Incident Command System" (ICS) that is used by all local, State, and National agencies today.

Darrell was promoted to Regional Fire Operation Manager prior to his retirement in 1994. He worked and supported R-2 for 13 years. He worked for and supported a multitude of Regional Directors, including: Jerry Mauk, Lloyd Todd, Tom Quinn, Ray Evans and Jim Lawrence.

Perhaps his greatest legacy was in support of his people. Many folks went on with their Forest Service careers to become professionals in a multitude of disciplines. He played pitcher on the Forest Service softball team for many years. He also loved to grow and care for roses. He was a mentor and hero to many.

Darrell is survived by his wife Georgia and daughter Barbara.

(Continued from page 41)

Wayne Ernest Wilkins

Wayne Wilkins passed away on April 10, 2026, in Lakewood, Colorado, after a courageous battle with Pancreatic cancer.

Wayne was born in Fountain, Colorado, July 11, 1932, to Clyde Emerson Wilkins and Mildred Shapley Wilkins. Wayne was the oldest of four siblings and grew up in the Colorado Springs area. Wayne graduated from Palmer High School in Colorado Springs. After graduation, Wayne enrolled in the Civil Engineering program at the University of Colorado, graduating in 1960. He married Ruth Janice Klingensmith on January 13, 1956. Wayne and Ruth raised two children, Ken and Linda.

Wayne began a 30-year career with the US Forest Service as a Civil Engineer on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison National Forests, 1961-62 and the Black Hills National Forest, 1963. In 1964, Wayne moved to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, on the Routt NF, where he was the Forest Engineer. In 1967, Wayne transferred to the Regional Office in Lakewood, Colorado, where he was the Regional Transportation Engineer. Wayne retired in 1991.

Wayne was a highly regarded engineer in the US Forest Service to the point that he was asked to write speeches for the Regional Forester, Governor of Wyoming, and Chief of the Forest Service at the convention of outdoor recreationists, and oil and gas companies. Wayne was an excellent golfer and upon retirement, he hired on as a groundskeeper for a local golf course. One thing Wayne was known for was his insistence of "No Smoking" in the office where he worked and getting his view point followed long before it became an accepted practice.

Wayne will be remembered for his engineering skills, his gentlemanly willingness to go out of his way to assist Forest and Regional Staff in their tasks, and his love of classical music. He is remembered for his engineering and people skills and his confidence in respectfully searching out difficult situations when he was asked. Wayne won't be forgotten and is a terrific example for his family and friends and for that reason he will be missed.



The Last Word

We did it, it is open!

By Tom L. Thompson

On July 17, 2026, in Missoula, MT, the National Conservation Legacy Center's doors were opened. The cutting of the ribbon at 11 am on this Friday morning, marked the end of many years of very intense hard work to build a place where the history of the Forest Service and so many partners could be remembered and appreciated.

I remember when I first learned of the effort of Gary Brown, State Forester in Montana, back in 1988 and how he so much believed that this was a worthy cause. I watched the idea grow slowly...and after celebrating the Centennial of the Forest Service and retiring in 2005, I wanted to do all I could to help this effort and joined the Board that very year. Over the last 20+ years there have been frustrations, setbacks, days of joy, and ultimately with patience, persistence, and growing passion to get this dream accomplished by a dedicated group of retirees and a small but amazing staff...the dream has been realized. The story of the Forest Service and the idea of conservation is a remarkable testament to thinking ahead and being responsible for what we do.

We are so fortunate that there have been visionaries, leaders, and boots on the ground who believed in the idea of conservation as a basic principle of responsible taking care of what we have. Most of you are among those who have been dedicated to this cause as a huge part of your life's work. We are also very, very fortunate that there have been so many of you who believed in the National Museum of Forest Service History in ways both large and small and helped make this happen. All of us know that in life there are things that you are involved with over the years that make you particularly proud and there are also the setbacks, disappointments, and unfulfilled expectations, but for me this building and the exhibits within have far exceeded even my expectations and I know all who have been inside this building feel very much the same...we are simply ecstatic about how it has turned out.



The ribbon cutting ended our quest to complete this building, but it also marked the beginning of the important work ahead of us to tell the story of successes, the challenges, the people, and the partners that frame up nearly a century and a half of America's conservation history. This will be the true mark of our success...not just the building but how it is used and what impact it has on improving the appreciation and understanding of the importance of the public lands and the people who manage those lands. With all that is happening to dismantle the history and structure of the Forest Service, it is indeed a very important time for this Center to provide a place where we can anchor our proud history with hopes that

it will instill not only pride but also incentive to not let go of an organization that has led conservation in America for over a century.

This building is a special building. It is special because the people who worked so hard to make it happen were special. It is the vision, the dedication, the commitment, the persistence, and the unwavering passion to make it happen that have raised the walls and woven the stories together that are so important to remember. As I said at the groundbreaking in the fall of 2024 in Missoula, it is almost surreal that we have done what set out to do. The building is completed, the exhibits are in place, and our amazing collection of almost 60,000 artifacts is now stored and protected. It is time to savor this milestone and offer our thanks to so many who helped bring us this amazing place and continue on with our work as a Museum.

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The celebration of this building is about our commitment to remember...it is about not forgetting...it is about ensuring that we always think about the long run and always remember not to take for granted what we have and what we are responsible for.

This National Conservation Legacy Center is more than just a building!

- It will be a beacon to remember how the Forest Service outfit and its people responded to a noble calling.
- It brings our Museum mission to life: "Sharing the rich history and story of America's conservation legacy."
- It fulfills the dream of so many who have been a part of the Museum from the very beginning years and some who are no longer with us.

A heartfelt and huge thank you to the amazing and powerful staff led by Executive Director Lisa Tate, the Board members of today and yesterday, and all who believed in our mission and gave of themselves to help us fulfill it. Thanks also to so many others who volunteered, who contributed, or who just supported us on this journey. When we asked for help, it came with willingness and sincerity from retirees, from friends, and from partners.

There are so many special folks to thank...our Regional Director cadre with people like Dan Nolan who represents all of us in the Rocky Mountain Region; amazing people like our own Dave Steinke who over twenty-years ago was one of the creators of the Greatest Good and who has worked with us tirelessly to use his magic with film and sound to enrich our exhibition; people like Brian Leisz whose hands sculpted so much of the beauty found in the thirteen tree columns and the adjoining fire tower; and people like Tom Chung who designed this creation and of course all those whose labor have built what we envisioned. There are also so many folks behind the scenes, spouses, family who have supported and believed in what we were doing and were patient as so much of our lives were devoted to making this happen.

This beautiful Center with its exhibits and stories about America's conservation journey, HAVE SOLIDIFIED the National Museum of Forest Service History as an institution that will TRULY BENEFIT MANY FUTURE GENERATIONS and be an important part of the Forest Service's legacy.

For all who have helped in whatever way to help us get this done – and for those who worked over the years and no longer with us...thank you's to all...WE DID IT, IT IS OPEN! Hopefully, each of you can find a way to make it to Missoula to see what a wonderful place this is.

My hope is that the Forest Service endures the changes that it is facing today. My hope is that the outfit never forgets its history, never forgets the people upon whose shoulders we stand today, and never again lets politics replace our commitment to **"Caring for the Land and Serving People"** as envisioned by Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt.

