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Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710

More Retirements at Year's End

If anyone typifies a career devoted to PSW, **M. Thompson (Tom) Conkle**, who is retiring December 31, is high on the list. Earlier work with the Post Office and the Agricultural Research Service add mere months to his 36 years as Station research geneticist.

After retirement, Tom plans to continue a close association with the Station's Institute of Forest Genetics, at Albany and Placerville. As an emeritus geneticist, he will continue his research and IFG facilities development. And he and his wife Frieda will continue to live in El Cerrito—a short drive from their son's and daughter's families in Rocklin, near Sacramento.

Born in Canton, Ohio, Tom earned his B.S. degree in forestry at Michigan State University, his M.S. degree in forest genetics at North Carolina State University, and his Ph.D. degree in forest genetics at the University of California at Berkeley. He was the IFG's first summer student when he arrived at the Placerville facility in 1962. He became a research geneticist 1966, and has focused on developing molecular markers for forest trees, working at the Station's Berkeley laboratories. And he has collaborated with geneticists at the University of California at Davis in applying gene marker research to trees and tree populations.

Tom became Project Leader—Forest Genetics Research, at Berkeley and later at Albany, in 1990. Last year, in preparation for retirement, he relinquished the post. "I am pleased that Station has decided to fill my research position," says Tom, "and I foresee a wonderful future for PSW's forest genetics research.

For **Stephen S. Sackett**, it may seem that it's been one fire after another. Virtually his entire career has been devoted to the study of prescribed fire. Says Steve: "My 35-plus years of prescribed fire research has been extremely rewarding for me, but not nearly enough time to answer all the questions that keep cropping up."

Steve was born in Madison, Wisc. He elected to go west for his schooling, and earned an associate degree in forestry at Olympic Junior College in Bremerton, Wash., in 1958. Upon returning to his home State, he took his B.S. degree at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1961. And then, after a stint in the U.S. Army Reserve, he returned to the University, where he earned an M.S. degree in forest economics (fire) in 1964.

His FS career as research forester, starting in 1964, has taken him to the Southern Station's Forest Fire Laboratory, at Macon, Ga.; in 1974 to the Rocky Mountain Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory at Tempe, Ariz.; in 1983, to that Station's Forestry

(Continued on page 2)

FS White Fir Adorns State Capitol

Placerville (IFG)—A Forest Service white fir tree from Camino, near the Station's Institute of Forest Genetics at Placerville, Calif., will adorn the State Capitol in Sacramento for the upcoming holiday season. The 33-year-old white fir tree stands 55 feet tall, and was recently cut and transported to the State Capitol as this year's official Christmas Tree. The tree seedling came from the FS Placerville Nursery, and was planted as a border tree to protect other trees planted for genetic testing.

Roger Stutts, resource manager of the IFG facility at Placerville, planted the 2-year old seedling in 1968, and is scheduled to attend the the official tree-lighting ceremony on December 7. The Institute's genetic plantation in Camino is one of four FS planting sites established in California in 1965.

NASA Takes to the Skies Over Sierra Nevada

Fresno (FSL)—A research aircraft from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration flew over Sierra Nevada forests recently to test a new instrument that accurately measures and maps the amount of "biomass" in forests and the amount of vegetation living beneath the trees. FS scientists hope to use these maps to identify mature "old-growth" forests and other habitats associated with sensitive wildlife species. The technology will be extended into space next year, creating the first global mapping of forest vegetation.

Carolyn Hunsaker, research landscape ecologist at the Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory, Fresno, worked closely with NASA scientists in coordinating logistics for the fly-over. The mapping will provide FS resource managers a better tool to view and assess the health of a forest, says Carolyn.

IPIF Advisory Council Meeting Held

Honolulu (IPIF)—The semi-annual Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry Advisory Council Meeting took place November 8-10, in Kauai, Hawaii. The IPIF meeting serves as a tool to develop and review programs in FS Research, State and Private Forestry, and International Forestry. The Council, consisting of the Station Director, PSW; Regional Forester, R5; and Director, International Programs, FS Washington Office, provides guidance on how best to serve the western Pacific Islands by addressing natural resource issues unique to those communities.

Davila to Chair Civil Rights Committee

Antonio Davila has been elected chair of the Station's Civil Rights Committee for Fiscal Year 2000. His term begins in January. As chair, Tony succeeds Mechelle Cochran, who

(Continued on page 2)

(More Retirements-Continued)

Sciences Laboratory at Flagstaff, Ariz.; and in 1987 to the PSW Station's Forest Fire Laboratory, at Riverside, Calif.

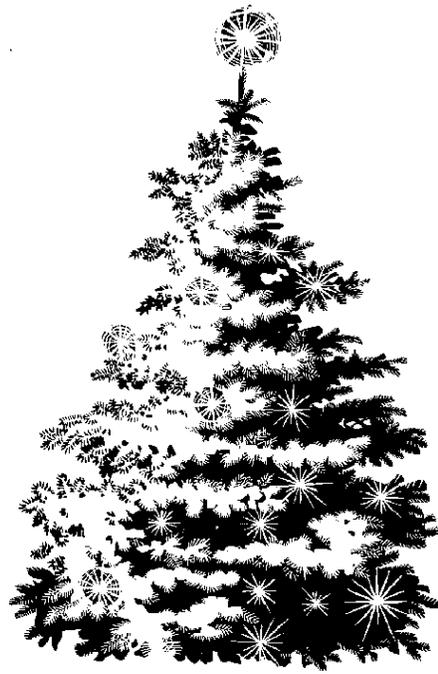
After retirement, on December 31, Steve will continue his work as a FS volunteer, and to live in Moreno Valley. He will, however, spend more time on his collection of some 15 old trucks that are in various stages of restoration. And Steve also plans to work for Counts Unlimited, his wife Barbara's company that collects traffic data for cities, counties, and traffic engineering firms. The company, which started with two or three clients, now has more than 90, says Steve.

Auditors Building Renamed for Sidney Yates

The historic Auditors Building, which houses Forest Service headquarters, was renamed earlier this year as the Sidney R. Yates Federal Building. The name change honors the long-time Congressman from Illinois. The Sidney Yates Building stands at the corner of 14th and Independence Avenue in southwest Washington D.C. A ceremony with Congressman Yates and his family attending was held last spring. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman presided and announced the name change that been in the works for more than a year.

Meetings/Conferences/Seminars

Three members of the Vegetation Management Research and Development Program, Redding, presented papers at the Pacific Northwest Integrated Vegetation Management Association's Forestry & Rights of Way Conference, Nov. 16-17, in Portland. Phil Aune presented a keynote address on "Tools for Vegetation Management in the Next Millennium;" Phil McDonald reported on "An Indirect Strategy for Controlling Undesirable Vegetation in Young Conifer Stands;" and Bob Power talked about "The Garden of Eden Experiment: Assessing the Potential Productivity of Planted Ponderosa Pine."



(Davila -Continued)

recently left the agency. He is a chemist with the Atmospheric Deposition Research Unit at the Forest Fire Laboratory, Riverside. Tony said he will be issuing a letter to all employees requesting their help in developing a plan of action to resolves civil rights issues and accomplish positive goals.

Personnelly Speaking

Awards

- Diane Alexander, Atmospheric Deposition Research Unit, Riverside: "Extra Effort Award for completing extra duties during data processing changes."
- Jennifer Schilling, Wildland Recreation/Urban Cultures Research Unit: Patriotic Service Award for her work as U.S. Bonds representative."

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