



SUCCESS STORIES

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Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2004

Mountain Men Rendezvous on the Hoosier

In January the Hoosier was host to a group of “American Mountain Men” who recreated a nostalgic time in our country’s history in a remote area of the Hoosier National Forest. A dozen men—clad in leather and furs, known as the Beaver Track Party—practice skills used in this area 250 years ago. They are part of a national group of about 700 mountain men throughout the United States.

The mountain men have regular outdoor gatherings to practice woodcraft, marksmanship, horsemanship, hunting, and trapping skills and learn to live off the land. All of their equipment, clothing, and food is from the period 1800-1840. The men speak of preserving a way of life that has all but disappeared from the American culture.

Bruce Plowman, a fur biologist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, was initially contacted by the group looking for a place to trap beaver. Bruce suggested the Hoosier and specific areas along the Lost River where he knew of some beaver dens. He referred them to Pat Merchant, Soil Scientist on the Hoosier.

Merchant suggested the restored Roland Wetland area for their camp. The men were pleased with the setting which offered wetlands, open area, and forests. Parker Moore, whose title is Party Chief of the Beaver Track Party, coordinated the site with Merchant.



‘Mountain Men’ Paul Mitchell and Mark Jones explain their muzzle-loading rifles in front of their camp at Roland Wetland on the Hoosier National Forest.

The first morning, when Merchant and Public Affairs Officer Frank Lewis visited them, two were already busy scouting out the beaver den area. “I don’t think they really cared if they caught a beaver, it was just about the experience of using the traps and learning the skill,” Lewis said.

The weekend was bitterly cold with sleet and rain, and while Merchant and Lewis shivered and took pictures, the mountain men gamely showed them how to set a trap and demonstrated their weapons. Their venison stew was a frozen block of ice next to the fire, but the men were just happy to be in the outdoors and comfortable in their beaver hats and furs.

Moore had invited an expert mountain man from New England to spend the weekend with them honing their beaver trapping skills. They were excited to be able to learn more about how to trap beaver using the techniques and traps of the 1800 -1840 period.

The men provided Merchant with a packet of information including a list of their medical resources. For a fever, the men would brew a tea from the inner bark of dogwood or willow. A tea made from dandelions was said to cure heartburn, boiled blackberry root or tea from the inner bark of white oak was said to cure diarrhea.

The men explained that within their organization, they receive status based on their competencies. Beginners are required to have an authentic set of clothing (pre-1840), a weapon, and all “necessary possibles.” A sponsor works with them to teach them skills. Later, as they advance through the ranks they’re required to demonstrate more advanced skills such as tracking, making and setting their own traps, tanning hides, and knowing at least 50 words in Indian sign language.

Their four days on the Hoosier provided a premier environment to allow the men to work on their skills. The group is expected to return in future years.

For more information contact Teena Ligman at (812) 277-3579

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Partners Clear Ski Trail on Allegheny

Members of the Allegheny Outdoor Club, long-time partner of the Allegheny National Forest, cleared a two-mile section of the Morrison-Rimrock cross-country ski trail in a recent winter outing.

Primarily using hand tools, the nine-member crew started at the popular Morrison trailhead on Route 59 east of the Kinzua Dam and made its way along the blue and gray-blazed trail until its intersection with the Morrison Trail, an 11-mile circuitous trail which guides backpackers to the Allegheny Reservoir.

Few blow downs were encountered, but the AOC crew kept busy clearing small twigs and branches from the trail, while also cutting back laurel which is encroaching upon the ski and hike pathway.

The ski trail, often covered with sufficient snow since it sits on top of a ridge, follows the Morrison trail for a distance of three-quarters of a mile, before it veers sharply westward and downhill toward the entrance road to the Rimrock Overlook of the Allegheny Reservoir. This portion of the trail is heavily bordered by laurel, and it was necessary to dig branches out of the snow to make the trail skiable.

The Forest Service closes the the Rimrock Overlook road in winter and occasionally grooms the road for cross-country skiing, laying down a dual set of tracks in the snow. The total length one can ski on the Morrison/Rimrock ski trail is 4.1 miles, including 2.1 miles on the road. The Allegheny NF lists several cross-country ski trails, totaling more than 50 miles.

Taking advantage of the clear, cold and sunny December day to work were club members Merle Caldwell, John Young, Tom and Patty Morelli, Gene Cornelius, Don Lind, Bill and Mary Massa and Allegheny Forester and club member Stan Kobielski. The effort was arranged so that the trail would be in good condition once sufficient snow had fallen to create favorable skiing conditions. And, as a result of the work, the club scheduled an outing for all of its skiing and snow-shoeing members in February 2004.

For more information contact Bill Massa at (814) 723-5150



The Outdoor Club poses for a group photo after helping to clear portions of the ski trail on the Allegheny NF.

Job Corps Assists Forest With Dead Tree Removal



The Golconda Jobs Corps Urban Forestry Team poses for a group photo following the removal of a dead tree from a popular trail.

In January, the Shawnee National Forest became aware of a dead tree obstructing a portion of a popular trail on the Forest. The tree was along an observation trail at the Garden of the Gods recreation site located in Pope County, Illinois.

The Forest's recreation team evaluated the situation and determined the Golconda Job Corp Center could handle the task. After consulting with Center Director David Floyd to gauge his interest in having the Center's urban forestry students take on the task, Floyd agreed to lend the Center's support to remove the dead tree.

On January 22-23, the Center's team—headed by urban forestry instructor Brian Morris—worked together to down the large tree and cut it into manageable sections. Once the tree was cut up, the pieces were carried along a difficult path to the nearby Garden of the Gods' Pharaoh Campground.

The students did a great job of downing the tree and removing the logs from the trail, making the pathway safe for hikers traversing this popular recreation trail.

The Shawnee National Forest Recreation Team will continue to request assistance from the Golconda Job Corps Center Urban Forestry Team in the future.

For more information contact Rebecca Lampert at (812) 287-2201



Corps of Discovery ‘Arrived at Massac’

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of their historic expedition, Captain Meriwether Lewis and his men of the Corps of Discovery once again floated down what the French explorers called “La Belle Riviere—the beautiful River,” the Ohio River and landed at Fort Massac, Illinois.

The Shawnee National Forest, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Corps of Engineer employees, plus volunteer re-enactors and several hundred school children, waited anxiously along the shore, waving and cheering.

“Arrived at Massac” was hosted by Fort Massac State Park and was the first Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration to take place in Illinois. Over a four-day period the stories, trials and activities of the Lewis and Clark expedition came alive for visitors on the grounds of this historic site.

The newly restored Fort Massac not only provided living quarters for the members of Corps II during their short stay but was a place for participants to meet and converse with these special guests in historical surroundings.

The event featured several educational programs and presentations from lectures, displays, and documentary videos about Lewis and Clark in Illinois, to historical portrayals of George Drouillard and Toussaint Charbonneau and a children’s play. Fur traders and era artisans were also on hand, to complete the scene.

Many Shawnee National Forest employees participated in the four-day festival at two education stations. One station called “Hunting with George Drouillard” focused on what native animals Drouillard would have hunted in the Shawnee Hills in 1803.

Through interesting stories the children learned about why George Drouillard was such an essential member of the expedition. Then participants practiced their animal tracking skills doing ‘tracks in the sand’ and ‘track flashcard’ activities. Like all good explorers they recorded their animal findings in their take-home journals.

To make it even more fun this station featured a variety of animal furs, military accoutrements and trade goods carried on the expedition.

The second station focused on how and why Lewis and Clark collected and recorded botanical specimens. The students made their own plant press much like Lewis and Clark used during their westward journey.

The botany station was complete with props such as, pressed plant specimens, a field satchel for collecting, take-home journals and quill and ink. The fun and hands-on portion of this station was when kids had an opportunity to try tree identification or writing in their journals with quill and ink.

The children will surely have fond memories of the lessons and activities they participated in during the four-day Corps of Discovery stop. Many of the children were heard saying, “You mean I can keep the journal I made?” and “This beaver pelt is so soft.”

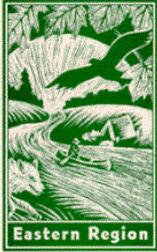
We would like to recognize and thank the following employees for contributing their time and expertise during the Shawnee’s participation in “Arrived at Massac”: Mary McCorvie, Sue Hirsch, Marlene Rivero, Linda Hauser, Roy Street, Dave Huggins, Steve Lampert, Carol Dammerman, Pat York, Barb Ridley, Kay Bushno, Cathy Slover, Donna Rann, Lynda Schutt, Mike Spanel, Mike Welker and Kara Kleinschmidt.



Participants in period costume recreate the arrival of the Corps of Discovery at the LC Landing at Fort Massac, Illinois.

For more information contact Suzanne Hirsch at (618) 833-8576





Water Returns to Wayne's Lake Vesuvius

The valve for Lake Vesuvius was closed on December 15, 2003, and the lake began to fill. As of January 28, 2004, the lake had totally refilled, and water was coming over the spillway.

On the day the valve was closed, a small group of employees and a few local residents were in attendance to watch the valve close along with newspaper and television reporters. Tom Eaches, Forest Recreation Technician opened the valve to drain the lake in January 2001 so Eaches (pictured at left) was asked to do the honors of closing the valve and finishing the job he had started.

The closing of the valve after the lake had been drained for three years was the culmination of an extensive effort to rehabilitate the aging dam at Lake Vesuvius. National dam safety standards were tightened in the 1980s after several large dams failed in the west.

During the time Lake Vesuvius was drained, much of the 143-acre recreation area of the Wayne was also closed to allow for improvements to the dam and boat ramp that included constructing a boardwalk and fishing pier. The \$4.1 million dam and spillway renovation project and the \$1 million boardwalk project is essentially complete.

"This is the culmination of three years' work," said Ironton District Ranger Gloria Chrismer. She said its one of the high points for the District in recent years. As nature takes its course and the lake has re-filled, Vesuvius will once again take on the *deja-vu* quality of how it had looked for as long as most people can remember.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will be stocking fish in the spring, including bluegill, bass, catfish and crappie. Volunteers worked to develop fish habitat structures in the dry lakebed last fall. An official reopening ceremony is planned for late May or June.

For more information contact Teena Ligman at (812) 277-3579



Forest Technician Tom Eaches closes the valve as Lake Vesuvius again fills with water.

Lake Vesuvius Stocked With Old Christmas Trees



The Christmas tree drop-off sites were marked with easy-to-read signs on the Ironton District.

The Ironton Ranger District on the Wayne National Forest set up seven sites for collecting discarded Christmas trees between December 26 and January 15. Some 500 trees were collected during this time that might otherwise have ended up in the trash or landfill.

Becky Ewing organized the project, and Eddie Park was the contact person on the Ironton District. Signs that read "Christmas Tree Drop Site" were located at Proctorville, Wheelersburg, Ironton, Coal Grove, Hanging Rock, South Point and Pedro, Ohio.

Several employees joined in the effort to collect trees from the drop off sites including our Senior Community Service Employment Program crew. The trees will be turned into fish habitat in Lake Vesuvius, a 143-acre lake near Ironton, Ohio.

A group of two or three trees will be tied together and a cement block added for weight. The tree cluster will then be placed into the lake at pre-planned sites. This process will further the habitat project that began in the summer of 2003 when the lake bed was still dry due to repairs on the spillway and the construction of a new boardwalk.

The trees will provide habitat for the 14,300 Bass and 42,900 Bluegill that will be stocked by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in late March 2004.

For more information contact Tamara James at (740) 534-6548



Low Maintenance Systems Cleaning Wayne NF's Acid Mine Runoff



A tank constructed for pyrolucite system is being used to clean acid runoff from long-closed mines on the Wayne National Forest.

A legacy of past mining on the Wayne National Forest is hundreds of seeps and subsidences draining acid water into our watersheds. Technology is limited in addressing this problem and treatment systems are expensive. With all current systems, there is not only an initial expense of installation, but the ongoing operation and maintenance costs can be overwhelming.

As a result, the Wayne is always looking for low maintenance systems to tackle the problem.

With a system called pyrolucite bio-remediation technology, they may have found just that. Installation of this system is about 25 percent of the cost of traditional systems and the maintenance costs promise to be very low.

The system runs the acidic water through a lined tank filled with limestone and water. The water percolates through baffles in the tank. The limestone is populated with microbes which colonize limestone. These microbes use the iron and manganese in the runoff, with the limestone to create ferric-oxide.

Ferric-oxide is a granular form of iron and consolidates the pyrites which cause the acidity in the water into a small volume of crystalline granules. These granules then settle to the bottom of the tank and are periodically flushed from the system.

A positive aspect is that the granules may have a commercial use as paint pigmentation so selling the by-product may offset the maintenance cost. The system is still in the trial stage.

A similar system in Maryland, without a system to flush the limestone failed. A system set up in West Virginia successfully removed the manganese, but at that site, iron wasn't a problem.

On the Wayne, one of the worst is Kimble Mine, with higher levels of iron in the runoff than any other site on the Forest. The acid drainage is leaching out halfway up a hillside. The bottom is in private ownership so the Forest had only a narrow bench to work with.

A tank constructed on the hillside to verify that the system works treats two gallons per minute (about 1/10th of the runoff at Kimble). Scientists with the Northeastern Research Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory at Delaware, Ohio, are monitoring the system. By the end of summer the Forest hopes to have a full-size system installed to treat all of the acidic runoff at the Kimble Mine.

The system was developed by a college professor and is marketed by a small company called Allegheny Mineral Abatement. The professor is excited about the opportunity to further evaluate his system on the Wayne. The State of Ohio is putting a similar pyrolucite system to work on state lands.

For more information contact Teena Ligman at (812) 277-3579





Vesuvius' New Boardwalk Built to Last



The new boardwalk at Lake Vesuvius is made from a unique, durable Brazilian wood and is expected to last for many years to come.

The wood used in the decking of the Wayne National Forest's new 1,400-foot boardwalk at Lake Vesuvius is called "ipe" (Tabebuia spp., lapacho group). It was harvested and processed in Brazil by Cikel Brasil Verde, one of the largest logging companies in Brazil.

The wood of the two species of ipé exported from Brazil is known for its density (green SP .92) and durability. It is considerably stronger than white oak or teak, and very hard. These qualities coupled with its natural beauty were the reason it was selected for the Lake Vesuvius Boardwalk.

No preservatives will be used as the wood has a natural resistance to decay and insect infestation. Other species with high natural durability were not readily available in the volumes and dimensions required for this project. This species is reported to be distributed widely from Colombia to Bolivia, the Guyanas and the Amazon region of Brazil.

Other products were also considered for the decking. However, various factors resulted in their elimination.

Preservative treated pine was considered, but the estimates of design life provided to us were less than those provided for the Ipe. The most commonly used wood preservative, chromated copper arsenate (CCA), has been withdrawn from applications such as boardwalk decking because of voluntary changes to EPA labeling. There are alternatives to CCA, but they contain higher levels of copper, which can be a concern in aquatic environments.

Plastic composite products were also considered, but those investigated did not appear to have adequate stiffness for the design of this particular construction project.

The wood used in the boardwalk has been certified by Scientific Certification Systems from California, one of the several entities authorized by the internationally recognized, non-profit Forest Stewardship Council to certify that wood has been produced under a strict set of principles and criteria for forest management.

For certification to be obtained, a company, such as Cikel, must first meet certain requirements regarding sustainable forest management that includes reduced impact harvests, social responsibility and economic viability. The main objective of "reduced impact logging" (RIL) is to reduce damage and wood waste through careful planning of the harvest (i.e., 100 percent inventory) and training of the forest operation workers.

During the mid and late 1990s, Cikel worked to employ sustainable forest management practices with assistance from the Forest Service through direct technical training activities and cost-benefit studies, as well as through the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the USFS-financed efforts of the Tropical Forest Foundation (TFF).

An agreement established between TFF, its Brazilian subsidiary (FFT) and Cikel allowed a training area to be set aside where all Cikel forest crews were trained in RIL. Since 2000, crews have been retrained annually, and forest activities are audited by the local non-governmental organization.

A Demonstration forest as well as research plots have been established in the forest where the training took place and where the ipé for the Lake Vesuvius Boardwalk was harvested. The Brazilian name for the forest is Fazenda Rio Capim.

Thanks to the advanced level of development and the availability of data and information in this forest area, researchers and academics working for their Master's and PhD degrees in the areas of forestry, environmental and social sciences often consult both FFT and Cikel.

Generally speaking, all research work, either ongoing or completed, is directly applied to the improvement of sustainable forest management activities.

For more information contact Teena Ligman at (812) 277-3579



Hiawatha's Munising District Honors Vols

On January 14, 22 volunteers and their guests attended a reception at Valley Spur Day Lodge hosted by the Hiawatha National Forest's Munising Ranger District staff. During the evening, the Hiawatha staff described the recent contributions of over 100 volunteers.

"All of us who work at the District recognize the importance of community involvement in the successful management of the National Forest," said Munising District Ranger Teresa Chase. "Volunteers do critical work and help us connect with the communities that lie within the Forest."

Individuals and groups were recognized in nine categories. Those recognized in the Recreation category included: Grand Island trail rangers (Randy Ryan and Jane Ryan) and the Au Train Boat Launch group (Rex Cole, etc.). In the Motorized Trails category, awards went to the Alger Snoriders (Larry LeVeque and Kay Leveque) and to Dave Nelson.

In the Nonmotorized Trails category, recipients included: North Country Trail (Ben Travis); Bruno's Run Trail/National Trails Day (Kirk Harger, Alma Oatley, Kristina Rahfeldt, Joel Rossetti, and Joel Zak); and the Northcoast Riding Club (represented by Karin Perry, Bill Rantz and Diane Rantz).

Retired Forester Dave Worel presented awards to Friends of Valley Spur volunteers (Karen Bahrman, Jim Blichmann, Jodi Blichmann, Dan Bronson, Roxy Bronson, Carol Colwell, Charles Colwell, Nancy Ford-Cihak, Jeff Gennick, Jonathan Gennick, Carl Hansen, Norma Harger, Scott Hickman, Jude Holloway, Terry Kureth, Laurie Lata, Alma Oatley, Vicki Paquette, Gene Ritter, Brock Robinson, Charlie Simons, Cathy Sowa, president Larry Truel, Mary Vaisanen, Linda Wappner, Leslie Williams, Tony Williams, and Ami Wright).

Recreation Planner Janel Crooks presented awards in the Interpretation and Education category. Awards were given to Birding By the Bay Festival volunteers (Nancy Ford-Cihak and Jude Holloway); Hiawatha Interpretive Association (Lynn Emerick, Jean Kinnear, Lora Loope, Joanna Mitchell, Marty Pokela, Mary Snitgen, and Jen Wycoff-McDonough); Hiawatha Artist in Residence Program (James Armstrong, Ray Hassard, and Fritz Seegers); Visitor Center volunteers (Youngsook Stibitz); Summer Programs (Lon Emerick and Lynn Emerick); and Photography project volunteers (Nancy Ford-Cihak, Norma Harger, Jan Jeffcot, Jean Kinnear, Alma Oatley, Laura Pederson, and Mary Snitgen).

In the Stewardship category, awards went to Adopt-a-Road/Forest Program participants (Rod Desjardins, Henry Feldhusen, Jude Holloway, Tom Hyde, Ed Lasich, Juanita Lennon, Harry Lindquist, Terry McLaren, Rene Nelson, and Ruthann Pokela) and Trash Pick-up Event participants (Jack George, Susan George, Art Krellwitz, Wendy Kuehn (The Link), Carol Cabanaw and Dale Bowen (Mather Middle School).)

Among the other winners were (Botany category) Native Gardens Volunteers Eileen Erickson, Andi Hales, Jan Jeffcot, Marilyn Lindberg, Nancy Mersnick, Judy Ruttan, and Michalene Wojcik; Native plant seed collection volunteers Carole Buttery, Eileen Erickson, Marilyn Lindberg, Judy Slingsby, Rex Slingsby, Elinor Taylor, and Milton Taylor. Nature Conservancy volunteers included Bob Kahl, Richard Posey, George Rinkel, Heather Rinkel, Janet Seeds, Cynthia Spomer, Gary Zeiman, and Norma Zeiman.

"We're excited to have such strong community involvement and hope the enthusiasm continues to grow," Chase said. "In the coming year, we hope to further expand volunteerism on the District. We invite interested community members to contact us."

For more information contact Janel Crooks at (906) 387-2512 ext. 25

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