



# SUCCESS STORIES

REPORTING EXAMPLES OF OUR PROGRESS IN CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE



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## Veneman Visits Allegheny for Earth Day



*Secretary Ann Veneman (second from right) presented a check to the Forestry Sciences Lab for continued research.*

Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman was “thrilled” by her Earth Day visit to the Allegheny National Forest on April 22. The tour highlighted two main areas: utilization of the Limited Timber Harvest Categorical Exclusion, and use of the Healthy Forests on the Kane Experimental Forest.

“I’m high on the Forest, and high on the [Eastern] Region,” Veneman said.

The five-hour visit included stops at the Timberline salvage sale, several reforestation projects along Forest Road 185 within the East Side project area, and learning about potential research at the Kane Experimental Forest.

The trip concluded with a tour of Kane Hardwood—a state-of-the-art hardwood mill that uses wood from the Allegheny NF—where Veneman presented a check to the Forestry Sciences Lab at Irvine for additional

research under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

Congressman John Peterson (R-PA) accompanied the Secretary. Joel Holtrop, Forest Service Deputy Chief of State and Private Forestry, represented Chief Dale Bosworth, and Regional Forester Randy Moore represented the Eastern Region. Several conservation organizations participated, including the Ruffed Grouse Society, Pheasants Forever, Allegheny Forest Alliance, and the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group.

At 10:00 a.m., Veneman arrived at Bradford Regional Airport. A convoy of eight Forest Service vehicles whisked the Secretary and guests to the Timberline ATV trailhead, site of a recently completed six-acre salvage harvest of timber downed in a July 2003 windstorm.

Carol Burd, an Allegheny Recreation and Administrative Services, explained how forest employees conducted the environmental analysis using a new categorical exclusion under the new Limited Timber Harvest regulations.

The convoy headed next to Forest Road 185, within the East Side Project area. A series of six stops provided ample evidence of tree mortality, recent blowdown, completed salvage sales, and successful tree regeneration. A reader in each vehicle explained the significance of each stop, as well as the recent ruling by U.S. District Judge Standish in favor of the Forest Service on nine of ten counts.

Around noon, the group broke for a hearty lunch at the Kane Experimental Forest headquarters. After which, Dr. Susan Stout, project leader of KEF and the Forestry Sciences Lab at Irvine, gave a presentation about the challenges to forest health. Dr. Stout also discussed the range of research done at the KEF and how it affects management on the ANF, and private and state lands.

On the road again, the convoy rolled into the Kane Hardwood Mill. Connie Grenz, mill manager, led the Secretary and guests on a tour of the state-of-the-art facility.

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*For more information contact Steve Miller at (814) 723-5150*



## Rock Slide Prompts Emergency Action

A large “cap” of limestone rock collapsed near the top of a cliff on the west side of the Shawnee National Forest April 4 or 5, 2004. Rock, soil and trees slid from the cliff face and top.

As the debris landed at the base of the cliff, even more matter was dislodged, gouging out a trench and causing a slide of debris down slope approximately 150 feet from the base of the cliff. The slide completely blocked the Scatters Road in extreme southern Jackson County, Illinois. Some rubble extended into an adjacent farmer’s field.

Limestone rock is worn down by the physical abrasion of water, sediment and chemical decomposition. The decomposition forms cracks that are widened when tree roots snake into them and grow. These cracks are further widened when water gets into them and freezes. Eventually enough supporting material is worn away to cause a collapse like this one.

An emergency service contract was awarded to Mott Excavating, Inc., located in Vienna, Illinois, on April 12. Removal of the rock and debris commenced on April 14 and was completed April 20.

Due to the potential erosion of the exposed earthen slope and projected thunderstorms, an amendment to the original was made. This amendment was for the contractor to add ground protection by seeding, mulching, placing an erosion blanket on the exposed slope, and placing a cross-slope straw bale check dam midway up the slope.

Thanks to the efforts of the contractor, Mott Excavating, Inc., and Forest employees Scott Crist, Rick Standerford and Pat Walker, the work was completed on schedule. This emergency situation was corrected and the road is open to the public.



*An erosion blanket covers the rocky debris.*

*For more information contact Tony Kirby at (618) 253-1056*

## Forest Provides Backdrop for Military Training



*Marines improve their land navigation skills on courses set up on the Wayne National Forest.*

If you’re hiking through the Wayne National Forest and happen upon a group of Marines in battle dress uniforms carrying rifles, don’t be alarmed... we have not been invaded. Company L, 3rd Battalion 25th Marines is training their marines in orienteering on a course set up on Forest land in an area known as the Bowl.

The Marine unit, part of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, set up a temporary course to train and test their soldiers in land navigation. They also use this area to train squad-level tactical maneuvering. The units learn how to use a compass and find their way in the Forest relying on minimal equipment and basic orienteering skills.

Other military units that train on the Wayne include Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 145TH RTI (OCS) an Ohio National Guard officer training unit, and units of the Ohio University Army Reserve Officer Training Command.

Requests for using each area come into the Forest a few times each year and are carefully screened to insure that the type of training to be conducted will not have a negative impact on the Forest. Training such as orienteering and light squad training have an almost negligible effect on the forest floor. Units are restricted from using heavy equipment or motorized vehicles except on established roads. Popular areas for the training include the Bowl area and Utah Ridge.

*For more information contact Gary Miller at (740) 753-0862*



# Annual Spring Raptor Migration



*Immature eagles dominate the skies above northern Wisconsin each year in March and April.*

The month of March heralded the beginning of the spring raptor migration in northern Wisconsin, and the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center's 55-foot observation tower offered an excellent vantage point for witnessing this semi-annual event.

Raptors, or birds of prey, are reluctant to cross the vast waters of Lake Superior. Consequently, many follow the lake's southern shoreline and pass directly over the Center.

As an added bonus, hawk counters stationed in the tower are helping visitors spot and identify vultures, hawks, eagles and falcons. Binoculars can be checked out from the Center's front desk staff. The best days to observe migrating raptors at the Center are partly to mostly sunny days from mid-March through mid-May. Ten a.m. to 2 p.m. is the best time of day to see raptors.

The return of different raptor species follows a predictable timing pattern. Early March brings the first bald and golden eagles as well as northern goshawks and rough-legged hawks. Late March and the first half of April are

dominated by red-tailed hawks. Small falcons, such as American kestrels and merlins, and accipiters, including sharp-shinned hawks, also begin showing up in early to mid-April. Hundreds of broad-winged hawks can often be seen in late April and throughout much of May.

The Chequamegon Bay Raptor Migration Survey was initiated in 1999, and has tallied nearly 23,000 migrating raptors in its first five years. Annual counts of migrants provide an excellent tool for monitoring populations of vultures, hawks, eagles, and falcons.

*For more information contact Jeryl Perenich at (715) 362-1328*

## Grey Towers Hosts Key Fire Training

A team of Forest Service evaluators recently spent two days at Grey Towers National Historic Landmark assessing the skills of Forest Service Incident Commanders Type 3 (ICT3) from National Forests in the northeastern U.S.

Grey Towers is one of five Forest Service Incident Commanders Type 3 Evaluation sites in the Eastern Region. Each individual site will host scheduled simulation exercises intended to test, evaluate and certify current ICT3s. The objective is for all ICT3s to perform at expected professional safety and operational standards under stress.

The team of evaluators at Grey Towers used two tools to evaluate incident command leaders from throughout the northeast region. The first, a sand table, is similar to military style field training.

Using a 4x8 plywood set-up, evaluators created a mock forest with typical terrain features and simulated a forest fire using real, national fire emergency scenarios. Through role playing, participants were required to react to such things as the fire "blowing up," personnel issues, medical emergencies and more.

"The issues and problems they encounter are typical of wildland fire situations," said Bill Reynolds, the Eastern Region Fire Safety, Training and Prevention Officer. "These evaluations are designed to ensure that each ICT3 is able to meet position responsibilities under stress with firefighter and public safety as their number one objective."

The other tool used in the evaluation is a computer simulation, using similar scenarios as the low-tech, sand table.

"We mix them up," explained Reynolds. "The candidates never know which one we are going to be using."

The evaluation is very effective. "The responses we have received show that each candidate felt stressed, felt that they were pushed," said Reynolds. "It's a fair simulation and assessment tool. It's real time; we don't stop the clock."

The evaluators said they felt a special uniqueness at Grey Towers. "Grey Towers is a significant pillar of the Forest Service legacy," Reynolds said.

*For more information contact Bill Reynolds at (715) 477-0828*



# Wayne Hosts Wheelin' Sportsmen

The Ironton Ranger District of the Wayne National Forest hosted the first "Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Day" on April 9, 2004. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) partnered with the Wayne to host a fishing event that was designed to introduce the public to the new accessible boardwalk at Lake Vesuvius.

County Commissioners proclaimed this to be "Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Day" in Lawrence County, Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife stocked the lake with approximately 1,300 Rainbow and Golden Trout from the Kincaid State Fish Hatchery. Seeing hundreds of fish slide down the stocking tube and into the water fascinated the children and adults as well.

Miranda Cremeans, a local teenager actively involved with the Lake Vesuvius project since the beginning stages, was given the honor of releasing the first fish. Fishing was excellent throughout the day with young and old reeling in 10 to 13 inch trout.

For many this was their first time fishing; others were "old hands." The Wild Turkey Federation's South Hills Longbeard Chapter, along with members of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Wayne National Forest Employees, Ohio University Southern Campus Nature Center, and others provided volunteers to aid the newcomers and anyone else needing assistance.

Many brought family and friends to cheer them on or to just enjoy the beautiful day outdoors. Smokey Bear visited, greeting young and old alike, and reminding everybody about the importance of fire prevention. Once the fish were released, the actual fishing began.

Many fish were caught within the first hours. Several folks, assisted by the many volunteers, were there learning to fish. Some came just to enjoy the outdoors.

As part of the opening ceremonies, Howie Damron, spokesperson for the "Wheelin' Sportsmen" program, sang his new song titled for the group, Wheelin' Sportsmen. The National Wild Turkey Federation furnished food and the Ohio University Southern Nature Center furnished drinks for participants. In all, almost 400 people came to the event, the first formal event since completion of the dam renovation and construction of the new boardwalk.

The "Wheelin' Sportsmen" group is an outreach program established by the 500,000-strong National Wild Turkey Federation intended to provide physically challenged individuals opportunities to participate in outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, bird watching, and other sports.

According to Robert Burcham, Vice President of the South Hills Chapter, "There are a lot of people who would like to fish, but haven't been able to do so for many years because age or disabilities have kept them from getting out and enjoying the lake."

"Now," Burcham went on to add, "all of that has changed since the boardwalk has been built."

The boardwalk stretches over 1,400 feet from the boat ramp to the dam and has wide access and railings for safety, providing perfect access for wheelchairs and persons with severe physical impediments. The renovation of the dam and the construction of the boardwalk kept Lake Vesuvius drained and the recreation area closed for more than three years.

Although this was the first fishing event since completion, the Grand Re-opening Ceremony will be held May 24, 2004.

Originally planned to be a one-time event, the day turned out to be so successful that it is now being considered to continue as an annual "Wheelin' Sportsmen" event.



*Miranda Cremeans released the first fish caught since Lake Vesuvius reopened.*

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



# White Mountain Shares hikeSafe Information With Boy Scout Leaders

Hiker safety and protection of natural resources were the topics presented to over 200 national Boy Scout leaders on April 3. Phyllis Bellavance and Jennifer Walker presented information about two programs that will help the leaders as they plan programs and trips to the White Mountain National Forest.

Bellavance—a district Conservation Education and information assistant—and Walker—a Backcountry Wilderness Ranger from the Pemigewasset/Ammonoosuc Ranger District—shared their expertise in the hikeSafe and Leave No Trace programs at a three-day event at Camp Resolute, the E. Paul Robsham Jr. Scout Reservation in Boulton, Massachusetts.

Leave No Trace Skills and Ethics for the Northeast publications and hikeSafe brochures were distributed. Lengthy discussion was followed by an invitation to attend next years' event.

In partnership with New Hampshire Fish & Game Department, the hikeSafe program is designed to educate hikers about mountain safety. As more and more people are visiting the White Mountains—in both summer and winter—even experienced hikers are getting into trouble that requires assistance. The idea behind the educational initiative was, “Let’s give them the information they need to be prepared, and let’s show them that they play a vital role in their own safety.”

The Leave No Trace program promotes and inspires responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. Leave No Trace is a nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness program to reduce impacts on the environment and on the experiences of others.



*Scores of Boy Scout leaders attended the White Mountain’s hikeSafe presentation.*



The Boy Scouts of America was established in 1910 and chartered by Congress in 1916. First Chief Scout Ernest Thompson Seton, a naturalist, artist, author and adventurer of the Wilderness, established the youth organization that is known today as the Boy Scouts of America.

With a membership of 110 million youths, young adults and leaders, the organization’s purpose is to provide education, build character, partnerships, citizenship, and develop personal fitness and responsibility for boys and young adults.

“As an organization whose mission is ‘Caring for the Land and Serving People’ we have made a mile-marker in our relationship with the BSA,” Bellavance said. “Our message will reach 150,000 youths through their voices.”

*For more information contact Colleen Mainville at (603) 528-8796*





## Saubier Retires Following 41 Year Career



*Regional Forester Randy Moore (right) toasts Jim Saubier on the Engineering Director's final day in the Regional Office.*

Following more than 41 years with the Forest Service, the Eastern Region's Engineering Director Jim Saubier is retiring from federal service.

Saubier began his career with the Forest Service in May 1963 on the Naches Ranger District of the Squalmie National Forest as an Assistant District Engineer. His love of the outdoors was one of the reasons he joined the Forest Service.

His early career was spent mostly on different forests and ranger districts in Region 6, serving in various engineering positions. Later, he took a position in Region 1's Regional Office in Montana as the Transportation Program Manager. Saubier then moved to the R9 RO where he has served as Director of Engineering for the past three-and-a-half years.

In addition to his engineering-related duties, "Jim did a great job of leading and managing the Commitment Board," said Don Meyer, R9's Deputy Regional Forester. "As he moves into retirement, he has

obviously earned a very bright green light for his contributions over his many years with the Forest Service."

Saubier's favorite positions during his long-reaching career have been Forest Engineer and Director of Engineering. He said both of these positions allowed him to make valuable contributions to the management of the forests.

Saubier said he had a lot of mentors in the Forest Service throughout his career who provided him with support and career guidance. Among those he mentioned were: Tom Pittigrew, Burl Johnson, Dave Trask, Phil Hirl, Gary Freese, and Bill McCleese.

One of his most memorable Forest Service memories is when he applied for the R9 Director of Engineering position. The support he was shown by R1 really affected him and left a big impression. Another memorable experience was his first morning briefing in the R9 RO. He was struck by the positive attitude of his new colleagues in the Region, and their immediate acceptance of him.

"I felt like part of the team and I'd only just gotten there," Saubier said.

He recalled an important saying that stuck with him from Bob Jacobs, R9's Regional Forester from 1995-2001. Jacobs' philosophy was simple: "The most important thing is relationships, and treating everyone with dignity and respect."

"I think that is the backbone of R9, and I think it is very important," Saubier said.

Saubier and his wife Connie plan to move back to Stevensville, Montana, in early June, where they will be closer to their children and grandchildren who reside in Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

He said that his plans for retirement are to "hunt, fish, and hike." Saubier has contributed much to the Forest Service's Engineering program, and his friendly personality and great sense of humor will be missed by all.

When asked what he would miss the most, he replied simply "the people"—quite fitting for a man known around the Regional Office as one of the "nicest" guys with which to work.

*For more information contact Leah Alexander at (414) 297-1154*





## Hoosier Employee Recognized For Contributions to Wildlife Habitat

Ron Overshiner, Forestry Technician on the Hoosier National Forest, recently received the Carl Eisfelder Award from the Indiana Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation. This award is given annually to someone who made significant contributions to wildlife habitat.

Overshiner, known to his friends as “Bear,” has worked on the Hoosier for 32 years maintaining and improving wildlife habitat. He was born and raised on the Forest, and has spent his life working to make it better. As an avid hunter and wildlife enthusiast, he not only spends his work week on the Forest, he spends his free time there as well.

Overshiner has worked closely with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Fish and Wildlife, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Unlimited, and Ducks Unlimited to improve habitat on the Forest. The maintenance of forest openings to benefit wildlife has been a program Overshiner has played a key role in for three decades. Each year he works with contractors, the Division of Wildlife, volunteers from the Wild Turkey Federation and other groups to maintain these openings to benefit turkey and other species.

Overshiner has also been involved in maintaining and restoring ponds and wetlands on the Forest in partnership with these groups. He also works in the fire program to put in fire lines and prescribe burn areas to maintain and enhance native grasses and fire-dependent tree and shrub species. These water sources and habitat areas benefit many wildlife species.

During the early days of trapping and releasing turkey in south-central Indiana, Overshiner was often in the midst of the action, helping to get turkey established and later to conduct annual census counts.

For all Ron Overshiner has done to benefit turkey and other wildlife in Indiana, he was an obvious choice for the Wild Turkey Federation’s prestigious award.



*Ron Overshiner harvests native seeds to be planted in forest openings.*

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

## Forest Donates Surplus Computers to Local Schools



*Excess computer equipment was donated to area schools.*

Three area schools were the benefactors of Computers for Learning Program Executive Order 12999. Executive Order 12999 was the authority the Jonesboro/Murphysboro Ranger District used to donate surplus computer equipment to area schools.

The purpose of the Executive Order is to provide educational technology to children. Schools receiving surplus computer equipment from federal agencies help ensure that opportunities are available for all children. It is one way to prepare the youth of today for the world of tomorrow.

Donated computers are to be used strictly for educational purposes. These purposes include technical education, scientific education and research activities. In all, the Jonesboro/Murphysboro Ranger District donated 19 personal computers, 18 monitors, 13 keyboards, 16 mouse attachments and one Think Pad.

Special consideration was given to schools in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. Schools receiving the surplus equipment were Century Elementary, Egyptian Community Unit School and Emerson Elementary. All of the schools needed computer equipment, and expressed gratitude for the donation.

*For more information contact Marion Bunch at (618) 253-7114*



# Chippewa NF Takes Action Using Tools From Healthy Forest Initiative

In August 2002, at the height of one of the worst fire seasons the nation had ever experienced, President Bush introduced his Healthy Forests Initiative. This initiative set forth precursory guidance in June 2003 which eventually led to the passing of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act in November of last year.

This initiative includes categorical exclusion tools which allow for hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire and mechanical methods under predetermined guidelines. In passing the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, Congress made a strong bipartisan commitment to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire to communities and restore our nation's forest and rangelands.

In following national direction, the Blackduck Ranger District fire management program on the Chippewa National Forest conducted a thorough review of proposed projects not yet completed.

On April 16, Blackduck District Ranger Tracy Beck made the decision to implement the "Healthy Forest Fuels Treatment Project," the Forest's first project using one of the categorical exclusion tools provided through the initiative.

This project covered 865 acres of fuels treatment including: 624 acres of large-scale prescribed burning; 217 acres of mechanical treatment; and burning slash piles created from timber activities on 24 acres.



*New guidelines created under the Healthy Forest Initiative enabled the Chippewa NF to undertake decisive action against hazardous fuel buildup.*

*For more information contact Melissa Rickers at (218) 335-8600*



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