The Past, The Present, and the Future of the National Museum of Forest Service History

Dear Friends,

As friends and supporters of the National Museum of Forest Service History, I think it is safe to say we all agree that sharing America’s conservation story is extremely important. Many Americans value and cherish our public lands but few people understand the vital role the U.S. Forest Service has played in managing these lands responsibly. The public is unaware of how the U.S. Forest Service has been a world leader in science and management practices of both forests and grasslands. The USFS helps other countries by sharing talent and expertise. Did you know that in WWII, the agency helped develop an alternative rubber product using the Guayule plant? Indeed, the story of the USFS and its conservation legacy is a rich and fascinating, and needs to be told.

As you know, the National Museum of Forest Service History is telling this story, and it has been a fulfilling journey to achieve what we have accomplished so far. For several years the Museum has been raising funds to build a world class, Smithsonian affiliate museum in Missoula, Montana. Many of you have contributed generously to this effort and over time are asking: What is being/has been done? Where are we in our progress? When will we see a place that we can visit, learn and bring our children and grandchildren?

This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to sharing our journey, progress, and plans.
Since the inception of the Museum, considerable and extensive effort has been put into “behind the scenes” work that our members may not see or be aware of. For example, the Museum has been collecting, archiving and cataloging important historical artifacts. We have an estimated 50,000 artifacts in our possession and have used museum industry best practices in painstakingly cataloging these objects, photographs, letters, journals, and other documents. These items are made available for researchers, educators, other museums, and are used in virtual and traveling exhibits managed by the Museum. In 2016 we have elevated our collection to an online venue. This major endeavor is a work-in-progress and will allow anyone with internet access to easily view and use the vast information we have to offer.

In addition to managing our collection, the Museum has a long term Special Use Permit of a 36-acre site near the Smokejumpers Center in Missoula, Montana. This campus style museum space allows us room for many stories to be told. The site will have a variety of interactive exhibits and learning opportunities with the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center as a centerpiece.

While not something easily seen, significant planning and infrastructure has been put into the site. Expensive and necessary items such as engineered site plans, underground utilities, water, sewer, electricity, etc. have been installed. A fundraising effort is ongoing to build the centerpiece of our Museum; however, we have interest and excitement to see our museum grow, NOW.

The staff and Board of Directors of the Museum would like to open our Museum site to the public, and start sharing the rich history of the USFS next summer- in 2017.
While fundraising efforts for our centerpiece - the National Conservation legacy and Education Center - are still underway, the Museum would like to start construction of other important exhibits and features.

You might ask, why haven’t we done this earlier? We have a beautifully restored historic Rangers Cabin from the Bungalow Ranger District that was reconstructed on our Museum site along with an L4 Lookout that was used during the Smithsonian Museum’s Folk Life Festival in Washington DC. These exhibits have been opened for limited special events. However, to open as a public exhibit area with regular hours, the Museum must meet requirements for Missoula County such as restroom facilities, paved road ways, parking, and sidewalks. These are all items that need to be completed eventually in the Master Plan, we would be completing this portion now.

Earlier this year, the Board of Directors made the commitment to start development of the site with the goal of opening exhibits in 2017 with several exhibits and to provide a public resource to the citizens of the Region and for travelers from all over the globe. The first step of this project will be to meet the requirements set forth by the local governmental entities. We are working through this process and we hope you will help us by considering a tax deductible financial gift, corporate membership, or an in-kind gift to help us make this goal a reality.

By opening the site to the public, we will be able to expand our reach, build excitement and momentum, and greatly increase our educational programming. In addition to the paved roads and visitor services, the Museum anticipates exhibits and learning space next summer, including:

• Opening our historic Rangers Cabin with regularly scheduled rotating exhibits

• An interpretive trail with beautifully designed signage and interactive exhibits sharing many relevant and interest piquing stories of the USFS

• Five outdoor interpretive exhibits including our historic lookout, pack team corral, fire weather station and more

• Event and educational opportunities for visitors including horse packing demonstrations by Smoke Elser; “Camp Fire Stories” lecture series; special guest appearances such as Smokey the Bear, the 9 Mile Mule String, and Lassie; and education classes for children in collaboration with area schools, agency partners and other like-missioned nonprofits

All good things take time and progress is ongoing. By next year, we hope to be taking a very big step into the future of the Museum. I hope you will help us make that happen. Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm!

Lisa Tate, Executive Director- National Museum of Forest Service History.
Our Educational Mission

After years of collecting the artifacts, memories, projects and photographs from our generous and faithful donors, The National Museum of Forest Service History has reached an exciting fork in the trail where we will begin to share with educators the resources and efforts that have taken so much passion and commitment to gather.

We are thrilled to share our plans with you.

We are currently recruiting top educators throughout Montana and, strategically in several states across the US, to apply to become “Exploration Ambassadors” for the Museum. We will ask those selected Ambassadors to help us begin building the Educational facet of the NMFSH. They will serve as our voice in their K-12 classroom communities and help us build lessons for 21st Century learning that will emphasize conservation and the history of the U.S. Forest Service.

We have been fortunate enough to receive several generous grants from the Library of Congress/Teaching Primary Sources division and Environmental Resource Management Foundation to develop this incredible conservation history cadre that will bring NMFSH to classrooms everywhere.

On May 9-13, 2017, the Museum and its staff will gather those selected 20 plus educators for a three-day retreat at a beautiful ranch in the mountains just north of Yellowstone National Park. As guests of the Arthur Blank Foundation, we will learn from Library of Congress facilitators how to use several data bases to select pertinent primary source documents and artifacts. Then we will build lesson plans in Forest Service history and conservation.

Our plan is to use the Museum’s archival data base, “Past Perfect”, with the Library of Congress monumental data base to help our educators locate primary source documents for the lesson plans they build from one or both data bases. Together, we will spend the workshop days learning to navigate the data bases and building a lesson each of us will design, which will in turn, become the base for NMFSH’s education program.
In addition to our academic work, NMFSH staff will work to form alliances and professional friendships with the incredible group who will be gathered in the name of NMFSH’s educational endeavors. Just a few who will join us will be; Mike Jetty from Office of Public Instruction, Indian Education, Montana, Ellen Baumler, Outreach Historian and author from the Montana Historical Society, Deb Mitchell, Program Specialist of Montana Historical Society and Executive Director of Museums of Montana Association. They will act as advisors for our work both on site that weekend and in the future, they have become our partners. Our facilitator for the workshop will be Michelle Pearson, Teacher of the Year for Colorado, 2013.

We will leave some time for great food, stories and songs around the campfire and even some exploration of trails that wind through the Gallatin Mountains of Paradise Valley along Big Creek. Here, they have built a world class High Ropes Course that our Ambassadors can use, should they wish, with facilitators for the ropes course who come to us as a courtesy of the Arthur Blank Foundation. The Arthur Blank Foundation has been endlessly generous. We believe that the spirit and the setting, the content and the participants, as well as our advisory staff will make this three-day expedition a memorable and incredibly productive one-one that will be monumental in building our educational future. We intend to build long-term relationships with the players in this weekend. Please look forward to Spring and a report on our successes, high on the mountain above Emigrant, Montana.

Stay tuned, friends.

Cheryl Hughes, Educational Director- National Museum of Forest Service History.

RESOSITORY NEWS

The National Museum of Forest Service History is proud to announce our collection is available online!

Through painstaking efforts the extensive collection of the Museum will now be available for anyone to use—researchers, students, historians or anyone with an inquisitive mind!

With over 36,000 items to upload, this will be a work in progress, so keep checking back to see more of our collection!

Check us out at:
http://forestservicemuseumpastperfectonline.com
Gifts That Give Back

Print (unframed)  
23” X 32”  
$30.00

Signed, Limited Edition  
Print (unframed)  
23” X 32”  
$100.00

Montana artist Monte Dolack pay tribute to the protectors of the headwaters of the Missouri with this special poster on behalf of the National Museum of Forest Service History. Monte has been the recipient of a number of prestigious awards in the course of his career, and his work is part of the collection of the Library of Congress and the NMFSH is honored to offer this very special print.

Wake up every morning with these beautiful coffee cups!
High quality 11 oz. ceramic mugs are dishwasher and microwave safe. Specify Tree or Ranger.

$14.95

Magnets
Beautiful, high quality magnets are 2” x 3” - Perfect stocking stuffers! Specify Tree or Ranger.

$3.50

Please also consider a gift of an Annual Museum Membership!

To purchase a gift membership, please use the Member Application Form on the back cover of your newsletter.

Thank You For Your Support!

A Home in the Woods: Montana’s Westside Ranger Stations covers the history of Forest Service ranger stations west of the Continental Divide on the Kootenai, Flathead, Lolo, and Bitterroot N.F.

$20.00

The history of Montana’s ranger stations spans most of the 20th century. This book provides a bit of history about Montana’s ranger stations and the people who lived and worked there.

$20.00

Bibi Gaston’s newest book sharing the narratives of the first class of American Forest Rangers to serve under Theodore Roosevelt and the first Chief of the USFA, Gifford Pinchot.

$22.95

Earl Cooley volunteered for the U.S. Forest Service's first attempts to parachute firefighters and supplies to remote forest fires. Earl retired in 1975 with a total of 38 years with the U.S. Forest Service.

Limited edition signed copy  
$20.00

Featuring recipes by F.S. people in the field for Dutch oven meals, open-fire dishes, and other tasty outdoor specialties used daily in the early days of the F.S. Dozens of recipes, photos, and anecdotes that tell the whole history of these brave and hardy individuals.

$22.95

Folding BuckLite MAX™ - with Museum logo laser engraved with a stainless steel pocket clip Easy handling, lightweight and reliable. The smallest of the series, the 484 has a lockback design, and high clip placement for discreet and comfortable carry. Made in the USA.

$34.00
Order Form

To order, please complete this form and mail with payment to:
NMFSH, P.O. Box 2772, Missoula, MT 59806-2772
Or, email to office@forestservicemuseum.org

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Become a member of the National Museum of Forest Service History and help us preserve America’s conservation legacy. To become a member, complete and mail this form, along with payment to:

NMFSH, P.O. Box 2772, Missoula, MT 59806-2772

☐ YES- SEND THE NEWSLETTER TO MY EMAIL  ☐ NEW  ☐ RENEWAL  ☐ GIFT

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