



National Museum of Forest Service History Newsletter

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HURRICANE KATRINA, 2005 MOST DESTRUCTIVE HURRICANE EVER IN U.S.

By Robert Kitchens

Bobby retired in 1994 from the U. S. Forest Service's Southern Regional Office Timber Staff in Atlanta, GA. Prior to that, he served on three Ranger Districts including nine years as District Ranger in Arkansas, and in the Supervisor's Office on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests in Georgia, and on the Savannah River Forest Station in South Carolina.

Bobby has been on 132 project incident assignments (mostly large wildfires) in 27 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and on numerous smaller fires. He served as Incident Commander of the Southern Area's Type I Incident Management Team from 1986 through 1991. He continues to serve on incident assignments in retirement and was on six fires in 2011. He lives in Andalusia, Alabama.

U. S. Forest Service Assistance

Hurricane Katrina came ashore at 7:10 a. m. on August 29, 2005, and caused tremendous damage and loss of life in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and other Gulf Coast States. It is the costliest hurricane in U. S. history in economic damage estimated at \$81 billion which is triple the damage wrought by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. It is the fifth costliest in loss of lives with at least 1,836 people killed in the actual hurricane or the subsequent flooding. Katrina was quickly followed up by Hurricane Rita which also affected the Gulf Coast. The response by employees of the U. S. Forest Service and other wildland fire agencies to alleviate the human suffering was swift and tremendous. There were people from the fire agencies assisting FEMA for over 4 months in many tasks.

This response was the largest mobilization of wildland personnel to a non-fire disaster, even exceeding the February 1, 2003 Columbia Shuttle disaster response. Interagency Incident Management Teams (IMT), Area Command Teams, Logistics Modules, miscellaneous



**Evacuees Arriving
New Orleans Airport**
September 3, 2005

overhead, and hand crews assisted in the hurricane relief. The National Interagency Coordination Center estimates over 12,000 U. S. Forest Service regular employees, fire crews, and emergency hires (many of them U. S. Forest Service retirees) were dispatched to the hurricanes in 2005 with most of them in response to Katrina and Rita.

The Southern Area Red Team with George Custer as Incident Commander was assigned to support a field hospital at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. The Red Team travelled from Baton Rouge (where they had been staged) early on the morning of Thursday September 1 to the New Orleans airport with caterer and shower units in tow. By 1900 food was served, showers were operational and for the first time in several days medical, airport, and other support personnel ate their first cooked meals and showered.

Upon arrival at the New Orleans Airport on September 1, the scene the Team encountered could best be described as surreal. Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) had hundreds of patients scattered about the main terminal and ticketing area. Over 300 of these were confined to stretchers. Most were the elderly and infirmed, but many

**National Museum of
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Organization	\$100
Lifetime	\$1,000

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Museum News

By Gray Reynolds

The Missoula Support Committee worked hard in 2011 to understand the exhibit design process and the responsibilities of the Museum to develop interesting, motivating and educational interpretive exhibits that appeal to visitors of all ages. The Support Committee is aware of the need for professional historian involvement in interpretive planning to ensure credibility with the public.

Nine exhibit design companies were interviewed. A standard list of questions was provided prior to the conference call. Several examples of key information learned:

- Two basic approaches to exhibit development --- 1) Design Build and 2) Design Bid and Build. We have not decided on the best option at this time.
- Time to design, fabricate and install exhibits is 18 to 24 months.
- Theme-based organization of exhibits is recommended
- Outdoor exhibits are an important part of interpretive planning.

Designing exhibits to interest children is important, since families are key museum guests. The Committee read and discussed "*Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibits*," a book by D. Lynn McRainey and John Russick.

David Guiney, Senior Planner, Interpretive Director of Harpers Ferry, WV, conducted a workshop in June to assist the Museum in planning for interpretive exhibits. During the workshop the Visitor Experience Planning model was adopted to put an emphasis on visitor outcomes, and to give the Museum a more active and collaborative role in the planning. Ten interpretive themes were studied and refined. The themes will be further reviewed by the Panel of Historians and Social Scientists.

The Board of Directors has adopted the "Interpretive Philosophy" to guide the Support Committee's work to describe desired visitors experiences and learning opportunities.

Interpretive Philosophy — Our goal as an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution is to have interpretive exhibits and programs that are motivating, exciting and educational for the family. We will interpret the role of multiple use forest and grassland management supporting the development of America. The exhibits will tell the story of how the Forest Service — Research, State and Private Forestry and the National Forest System — has changed over time because of lessons learned, or changes in societal needs and values and science and technology. The exhibits must be accurate historically, unbiased and nonjudgmental, and tell the complete story. We look forward to working with the recently established Panel of Historians and Social Scientists and our partners to achieve our interpretive goal.

"*The Experience*" is what visitors take from the CENTER and the 36-acre site. Providing opportunities for guests to interact with the CENTER and outdoor exhibits in a manner that is inspiring, educational and safe for visitors - has been termed "visitor experience planning". This is the core of museum planning and development.

Everything that guests do, think, sense, and feel in the CENTER and the 36-acre campus constitutes their museum experience. Interpretive planning describes desired experiences (outcomes) and recommends ways to provide the desired museum experience.

had encountered injuries due to accidents related to the hurricane. Medical personnel were stretched to the breaking point, security was minimal and the evacuation of displaced Americans had begun. Evacuees were arriving by bus and helicopter; many appeared to come from nursing home environments. The well and able were being processed with the sick and all co-mingled with each other despite efforts of separation. On Sept. 2nd the situation grew worse as the evacuation progressed at a speed that did not seem sustainable. Planes did arrive to start the airlift of evacuees to places unknown. Sick were transported on military medical C-130's and C-17's. While this certainly helped it did not gain any ground on the incoming numbers. Peak activity occurred Sept. 3rd thru Sept. 4th. Over 10,000 evacuees were transported on planes leaving the airport on over 60 flights.

Job Corps and other U. S. Forest Service "fire crews" helped load, unload, and move refugees in and around the field hospital. The Incident Management Team provided the operational supervision.

Three night shift division supervisors described their shift this way. "Not long after our shift began, the helicopters began landing in droves, with as many as eight aircraft on the deck at a given time; the northern sky was filled with the lights of inbound helicopters waiting in turn to land and offload their precious cargo. The airships resembled hornets returning to their nest at dusk. The thundering sounds made by the rotor wash made it impossible to communicate with each other.

After the aircraft landed, with the help of a strike team of 12 personnel from Oregon and Washington DMAT Teams, we formed a receiving perimeter from the safe zone to the door of the helicopter to safely remove the evacuees. When we first witnessed the cargo within, our eyes grew wider, our hearts larger, and our emotions difficult to contain.

Evacuees, some seriously sick, injured or dying, poured in by the hundreds. Many had IV's attached with the bags and tubing dripping on the helicopter floor. Many wore clothing stained by blood and other body fluids. Some were soaked from being rescued out of the flooding waters. Personal belongings flew through the air drawn by powerful engines and rotor blades of the helicopters.

People cried out for their loved ones who were not with them on their trip from their city, neighborhood or other point of rescue. It was clear to us that these people were afraid and had never been in a helicopter before this catastrophic event. They carried bags containing all that was left of their life possessions."



Military Medical Aircraft evacuate sick and injured from New Orleans

Another important contribution of the Red Team was in helping to coordinate the response of the different agencies involved at the airport. As George Custer put it, "The IMT established meeting schedules and integrated all agencies and other entities with a presence at the airport. This was crucial for information exchange and development of the Incident Action Plan (IAP). An IAP was issued the second day after arrival with phone numbers, contact names, agency missions, feeding and showering schedules, and other pertinent information. Meetings were conducted to record issues of concern and find solutions to these and other problems. These meetings were also a source of input for gathering numbers of personnel onsite in order to know how many to feed and shower each shift. Personnel on site, especially DMAT units, thought that development of the IAP and meeting schedule had a calming effect in the mass chaos that ensued during the first 5-6 (8/30 thru 9/5) days of the incident."

Other teams had missions throughout the Gulf Coast States. Several teams operated centers to house displaced people. Some of the Teams supported the logistics needs of other responders. Very few agencies can set up a camp situation to serve all the needs of people as well and as fast as the wildland agencies. Wildland firefighters do it all fire season long and have gotten very good at doing so. National caterers were used, national shower units, supplies from fire caches and other methods were used as usually done on fires to provide for responder's needs.

One Team even assisted in caring for the remains of the deceased. Another Team managed the receiving and distribution of temporary house trailers to house hurricane victims. Another Incident Management Team had the assignment of planning for fire contingencies for the State of Mississippi. Other Teams assisted local

governments with needed planning and operational recovery tasks that overwhelmed local jurisdictions.

Then there were the damages to the National Forests that had to be rectified. Huge amounts of trees were blown down on the National Forests in Mississippi. Forest Supervisor Tony Dixon formed an Incident Management Team. The Team organized local forest folks and called in detailers from other forests. They quickly opened roads, performed the sales preparation, awarded the sales, did the sales administration to salvage the timber and get the forest back to normalcy. This provided some of the needed lumber to begin rebuilding the Gulf Coast and returned money to the counties and the U. S. Treasury.

Many of the responders reflected on how proud they were to be working for an organization that could do so much to assist those in need. As one crew boss put it, "I've always been proud to be an American – and a firefighter. I am now even prouder to be a Forest Service Employee because when the call came to help "we" came running and

stayed with the task until the last one was loaded up. This detail will be with me forever. I know that if I am ever in need, some American will be there for me."

Incident Commander George Custer says "I can't read the accounts of our operation at the airport without tearing up and feeling so proud of what we did. I never had a more rewarding assignment."

Responding to hurricane disasters is just another example of the people of the U. S. Forest Service and other wildland agencies of stepping up to the plate with that can-do attitude and helping people in time of need. Hurricane responses show that Forest Service people, using the organizational and operational abilities that have been practiced by the wildland agencies for many decades (Large Fire Organization and now Incident Command System) can quickly make order out of chaos and accomplish great things for the people and the nation.



Forest Service Reunion

September 17-21, 2012
Vail, Colorado

Plans for the 2012 Forest Service Reunion, "Rendezvous in the Rockies", are coming together quite nicely. The reunion will be the week of September 17-21, 2012 in Vail, Colorado at the Vail Mountain Marriott Resort and Spa. Well over half the hotel rooms are already booked. General registration opened on February 1. To ensure you have a room at the low rate of \$109/night, make your reservation by calling the Marriott at 1-877-622-3140 or do it on line by visiting the website for the reunion.

There will be opportunities to sit in on great presentations, take outstanding field trips, be in and around beautiful fall colors, relax and connect with friends, and just enjoy one very special place in the Rocky Mountains. The website at "fsreunion2012.com" has all the information about registration, programs, accommodations, field trips, special events, and other details that you might need.

The National Museum of Forest Service History will directly benefit from this reunion, since all excess proceeds will be given to the museum's "building

fund". The silent auction is one of several opportunities to raise money at the reunion. There will be a wide variety of items up for auction, including lodging in Hawaii, a stay at a cabin in Yellowstone country, a stay at a 10th Mountain Hut (remote lodge) for a large group, and many other items such as quilts, wooden bowls, paintings, etc. If you have an artistic talent and want to offer an item for the silent auction, contact Steve Deitemeyer. His email address is sdeitemeyer@msn.com

If you have an item(s) of historical significance in your basement, attic, or garage and would like to donate it (them), there will be an opportunity to have these on display at the reunion and a chance for these to be bought by a sponsor for donation to the museum. It is a great way to ensure that pieces of history important to the agency are preserved and protected. Items can be brought with you to the reunion or mailed to Steve Deitemeyer in Colorado.



Mt. Baker Ranger District Interpretive Display

Museum volunteer Dale Petersen organized and led a group of Bellingham, Washington area volunteers to plan and produce a large display illustrating the cultural, physical and historical points of interest for the Mt. Baker Ranger District in northwestern Washington State.

The display design includes colorful photographs and information on area history, the Mt. Baker Volcano, area geology and recreational opportunities.

Partners in the project are Mt. Baker Ranger District, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mt. Baker Ski Area, Whatcom Event and the Discover Your Northwest Interpretive Association. The display is currently on view at the Bellingham Public Library and will continue to appear at various public venues including the Whatcom Museum and the Joint Forest Service – Park Service Visitor Center at Sedro Woolley, Washington, throughout 2012.



Volunteers Carving Ranger Statue

The larger than life "Ranger" wood carving is coming to life in the Missoula workshop of Chuck Kaporich with the help of Jerry Covault, Alex McDonald, Steve Weiler and Phil Bain. The volunteer group meets every Thursday. In this photograph the volunteers have wired the carving together to check how the pieces will join and look. We plan for the "Ranger" will be a feature in the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center building.

Museum of Mountain Flying Adds Historic Aircraft

The Museum of Mountain Flying, in Missoula, recently purchased a World War II Navy TBM airplane in New Brunswick, Canada. The TBM arrived in Missoula on October 10, 2011 after the long flight. The airplane was used by the Missoula-based Johnson Flying Service to drop fire retardant on forest fires.

The Museum of Mountain Flying is located one mile from the planned National Conservation and Legacy Center. The Museum of Mountain Flying includes other aircraft important in the history of the Forest Service. The Museum of Mountain Flying is one of several organizations working as a collaborative partner with the National Museum of Forest Service History.



**World War II Navy TBM
Modified to Drop Fire Retardant**

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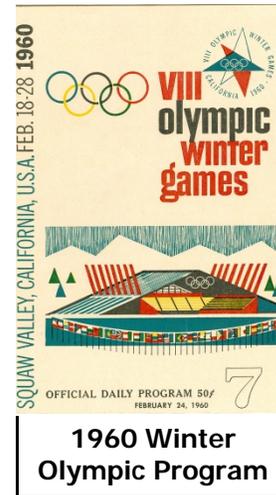
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Recent Donations to the Repository

Almost 25,000 items have been cataloged on a searchable database of an estimated 42,000 historical items in the Museum Collection and the Forest Service Harvey Mack Collection. Members and friends continue to donate important historical items. Historical materials donated include:

Roy Feuchter, Vienna, VA, authored, at our request, a 4,800 word manuscript on the Forest Service involvement in the 1960 Squaw Valley, California, Winter Olympics. In addition Roy donated Olympic brochures, Forest Service photographs and memorandums on the Winter Olympics.



Blister Rust Control Truck
Coeur d'Alene National Forest
1927

Barbara Wardsworth, Harrison, ID, donated Virgil D. Moss's (her father) photographs and documents on the 1930-1960 blister rust control program. This 1927 photograph is of a USDA, Bureau of Plant Industry, Blister Rust Control truck on the Coeur d'Alene National Forest, Idaho.

Donald L. Martinez, Golden, CO, donated a Hewlett Packard 71B log scaling data collector. The 1984 machine was the first digital programmable data collector used by the Forest Service to record log scaling data.



HP 71B Log Scaling Data Collector
1984



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Contributing	\$150 or more		



Green Hornet Fire Engine

Green Hornet Update

Dan Gosnell, project coordinator for the Green Hornet Project, reports the 1951 Ford Fire Engine is housed at the Mill Creek Work Center, San Bernardino National Forest, California. The truck is in running condition. Volunteers last year removed all chrome and brass off truck for sanding and priming. A Forest Service retiree was scheduled to apply a primer coat. However, that work is on hold because lack of money. Dan will meet with Gene Zimmerman to discuss funding and work options. Gene is Executive Director Dave Stack's liaison with the Green Hornet project.