



# National Museum of Forest Service History Newsletter

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## Confessions of an Incurable Romantic or Life in a Glass House

By Joan Gibson Sweitzer

*This article is from the Robert Gibson Collection. It was written in 1995 by Joan when she was living in Wellborn, Florida. Joan is the sister of Robert Gibson, a past member of the NMFSSH Board of Directors.*

The summer of 1953, in addition to being long ago and far away, has a place in my memory because that was the summer of a honeymoon spent in a glass house on the top of a "mountain" in the Clearwater National Forest. In those days, people with limited skill and less sense, believed that nothing could be finer than to commune with nature and BE PAID. Myth let us know that we could simultaneously help Smokey protect our National Forests and exist in a Rousseau-like place of innocence. Ah yes, a newly married couple could be ALONE together for hours, days, weeks on end and BE PAID.

In full possession of the myth, my new husband and I approached Bud Moore, ranger for the Powell District. Yes, he did have some possible openings. Yes, he did prefer to have couples man the more remote lookout sites. Yes, we completed the paper work - in those days 57s, and we would hear from him soon. With light hearts we returned to our work sites, he in a warehouse and I in a classroom. Since both of us were planning to return to the University of Montana in the fall. The prospect of three months of bucolic bliss was just great.

In a short time we found a serious job offer had been made and we were to be 60-day appointees in USFS corps of scanners. In those days there was some awful kind of discrimination because he was a GS 3 and I was a GS 2. But in those days no one raised much question as to the rationale for that practice. Soon we had a report date and with great enthusiasm arrived at Powell Ranger Station. Somehow, I did not fit into the bunkhouse arrangement, so quick adjustments were made to house us at a charming facility a mile or so from the station. I say charming because it had none of the usual amenities - lights, water, toilet, etc. When



**Lookout Looking for Smokes**

Mt Hood National Forest, 1951

Forest Service Photograph

you are young, in love, and dumb, little things like that don't mean much. We were taken with the place especially since we were to eat with the regular crew in the cook house.

There was just a tad of consternation the first work day because good old assumption had reared its ugly head. Seems that in those days, if you were a woman, you just knew how to do office stuff. Unfortunately, I was an English major and nothing practical had ever occurred to me. After some high level conferring, it was determined that I would make an excellent flunky's helper, aka dishwasher. My husband, on the other hand had the Big John quality of a strong back and a weak ... and was dispatched to brush clearing and trail construction. Bud must have had his antenna working because by the end of the first week he said deploying us to our lookout was a GOOD IDEA.

And then we were driven to our home-to-be for the next eight weeks. Rocky Point was strategically positioned in a kind of indentation that actually allowed a sweeping view of several drainages. It was only twelve or so feet off the

**National Museum of Forest Service History**

A Nonprofit Corporation

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The *Newsletter* is published quarterly for the members and supporters of the National Museum of Forest Service History, a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the history of the Forest Service and conservation.

**Membership Dues**

Student	\$15
Individual	\$30
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Organization	\$100
Lifetime	\$1,000

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# Museum News

We welcome Ellie Hill, Lyle Laverty and Jim Marsh to the board of directors. With their strong combination of experience in the public and nonprofit sectors, the board is well-positioned to carry out its plans for the construction of the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center in Missoula, Montana.

“These individuals are highly respected in their fields, ranging from policy to natural resource management to nonprofit management,” said Gray Reynolds, NMFSH president. “Their enthusiasm for the mission of the National Museum of Forest Service History and their outstanding professional leadership will contribute to our success in building the Center and ensuring that future generations carry on our nation’s conservation legacy.”

**Ellie Hill** is a lifelong Rocky Mountain Westerner, Montana State legislator, and sister of a Smokejumper. Most recently, Ellie served as the Executive Director of one of Western Montana’s best known and beloved nonprofit organizations, advocating for veterans issues, the homeless, and the impoverished. In November 2010, Ellie was elected from Missoula to the Montana House of Representatives and named by Time Magazine as one of the nation’s “40 Under 40 Political Rising Stars.”

**Lyle Laverty**, a natural resource consultant, Arvada, Colorado, served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish Wildlife and Parks, under President George W. Bush. In this capacity, he had direct administrative responsibility for the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Before joining the Bush Administration, Lyle served as the Director of Colorado State Parks from 2001 to 2007. Prior to becoming Director of Colorado State Parks, Lyle served as Associate Deputy Chief of the US Forest Service, responsible for the leadership and implementation of the National Fire Plan. During his long Forest Service career, he served in many positions.

**Jim Marsh** is President of e-PEAK Inc., Dennis, Texas, a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business engaged in energy and environmental solutions for civilian and military markets. Jim provides technical and program management assistance in environmental and waste management, advanced power systems and advanced oil, gas, and oil shale programs, development of energy surety and environmental sustainability program option analysis. From 1968 to 1986 Jim was employed by the Forest Service as forest and regional hydrologist, district ranger and staff officer on the Six Rivers National Forest. In 1986 Jim moved to the Department of Energy and then to the Department of Defense, retiring from Federal service in 2000.

See NEWS, page 7

## Stories Needed for Museum Exhibits

Consider recording one or more of your stories about an incident, a person or management issue during the Vail 2012 Forest Service Reunion, September 17-21, 2012, Vail Colorado. Some of these stories will be used in museum exhibits and all the stories will be preserved in the Museum's repository. The Reunion Committee is working with Chief Forest Service Historian Lincoln Bramwell and Colorado State University to plan the collection of stories at the Reunion.

How would short stories be used in museum exhibits? Take the Bungalow Cabin as an example. The cabin will be an exhibit to interpret family life at a ranger station. The exhibit needs stories about the unwritten roles of the wives and children, contact with the public, fire dispatching etc. Personal stories will connect museum visitors with real people, with real life experiences.

ground (rock). But it was standard issue glass, catwalk, azimuth board -dead center, two thin cots, a fold down table, and wood stove. The "facilities" were down the hill about fifty yards, just past the twelve-foot snow bank. Water was two large milk cans some antique collector would kill for. The crank phone was cozy with the azimuth board.

We were escorted to the lookout, supplied with a book of instructions, and told that a state- of-the-art piece of technology was also a part of our equipment package. Since we were "college students" we surely could operate the shortwave radio and would be a backup for the ranger station in case there should be some "trouble." Someone would be out from the station to check on us in a couple days. If we needed anything, just call the ranger station and let the dispatcher or whoever answered know. And just to really earn our money, one of us would have to spend twenty minutes out of every daylight hour patrolling each of the four sides of the lookout to peer for smokes. We were given some cursory introduction to the azimuth board and told we'd be checked out later in the week. And with a cloud of dust and a BIG smile, our friendly assistant ranger left.

Our idyllic life had begun. But the idea of idyllic sessions (in those days we romantics always knew the sessions were idyllic) began to fade as we looked around. Practicality set in when we realized we were both hungry and there was no beckoning cook house. Peanut butter tastes good for a meal or two but soon becomes a real bore. There was always the dilemma of lighting a fire to get something hot and heat up the place or just settle for cold ??? and become Pavlov's pooch in thinking of the wonders of REAL FOOD. Beans and Dinty Moore stew got old real soooooon.

Night in the high country is **cold** and WWI surplus blankets don't help too much. And then there is light or the lack of it. Lighting primitive Coleman lanterns was a challenge and hardly seemed worth the effort after some slight success with at least one mantle. There was the problem of normal bodily functions. True, we had a two holer. But the darn thing was way down the hill and there was a lot of bumping about in the night and if we both went, the modesty would be missing and on and on. There was also the problem of water. If we washed with it, we obviously couldn't drink it or cook with it or much of anything. Somehow, water became a whole new commodity and very precious.

With the resiliency of youth, we adjusted. Someone had put together a book of simple recipes and off I took. My numerous failures were of no consequence; gophers and chipmunks soon learned that handouts were there for the munching. The snow bank made it possible to have fresh stuff in nature's own refrigerated conditions, and a

spring of superb clear water was only a quarter of a mile away. My new husband was pliable to soulful sighs and a whispered yearnings for some **cold** water, He would get the canvas pack and head off, to return in a half hour or so all wet with a shrunken pack of that marvelous water. Truly the gods never had it so good!

A serious glitch soon developed. Seems the varmints or ??? had played havoc with the phone lines and the only contact that some of the outlying lookouts had with the station was the shortwave radio. The problem was that the ranger station was down in a hollow and most of the time the equipment didn't function as it should so that those lookouts and the station were unable to contact each other. BIG PROBLEMS seemed to be looming as the fire season actually got underway. Ah, the solution was at hand. Rocky Point had both a functioning phone and radio. Suddenly we became a critical link in the communication chain. All those other lookouts had to do was to call in fire calls, requests, or whatever to Rocky Point and we would relay the message via phone to the station.

Probably the most memorable week was the one when the storms seemed to be all centered above our lookout. We had finally figured out that there was an affinity between lightning and rocks and a place named Rocky Point was a real magnet. In the evening, one of the storms moved in and the flashing was terrific. We had bear grass all around the lookout and one clump after another either took a direct hit or the sparks from an earlier hit ignited a second and a third. To add to the interest, we had no water available since the snow drift had long ago melted and not even a truck to make a craven escape. We did the most practical thing - panicked in calling the station. We were told that a crew from Missoula would be there soon with a water truck and would help hubby put out the fires. Meanwhile, I was to stay in the lookout and take calls from the other lookouts. As long as I live, I will remember the brownies I baked by the light of the fires burning around us.

It took a couple days to get the situation under control and guess who was the cook for the crew? It did make sense to let the little woman do her thing at that magnificent stove. There were no meals on wheels then and the fire pack rations were not a gourmet delight. By the time that stint ended, I do not think any of us gave a damn. We were too tired to care.

All of this came to an end as things do in the Idaho mountains when snow fell about the twentieth of August. The phones were all working by then and the season was basically over so it was time to leave. The last thing I learned about my summer at Rocky Point was that a survey crew for the railroad had been wandering about all those weeks we'd been there. Their instruments were powerful and I'll bet they got their eyes full a time or two.

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# Exhibit Planning Moves Ahead

This summer David Guiney, Interpretive Direction LLC of Harpers Ferry, WV, was hired to conduct a workshop to assist the Museum in planning the interpretive exhibits. Lynn Sprague, Lynn Biddison, Dick Bacon, John Drake, Beryl Johnson, Keith Thurlkill and Dave Stack attended the workshop.

We adopted the Visitor Experience (VE) Planning model for development of museum and traveling exhibits. Ten INTERPRETIVE THEMES were developed. The THEMES listed below were reviewed by the Board of Directors. The THEMES will be further refined by the Panel of Historians and Social Scientists and during the VE Planning. At this time the Missoula Support Committee is searching for stories to illustrate the THEMES.

THEMES are used to communicate interpretive objectives and ideas to the Board and Panel of Historians and Social Scientists and finally to exhibit designers. It is an iterative process. Exhibit designers will develop exhibit ideas to communicate the central messages of our themes. Themes will be used to develop story lines for the exhibits, traveling exhibits, virtual museum, brochures etc.

## **Interpretive Objective:**

The history of forest and grassland conservation in the United States through telling of the story of the U.S. Forest Service and its partners and cooperators

## **Interpretive THEMES**

### **1 Evolution of the Forest Service**

Congress created the Forest Service in response to the growing concern at the turn of the last Century that the sustainability of our nation's natural resources was at risk unless conservation practices were adopted, and the agency's evolution in response to changing public needs and values.

### **2 America's Forests and Grasslands**

The Forest Service manages resources that are rich, diverse, beautiful, and vast in scope and scale across the nation, and are vital to the well being of all our people.

### **3 Striving for the Greatest Good**

There are many different demands placed on National Forest System lands and resources and the Forest Service strives to reconcile these sometimes conflicting interests

for the greatest good of all—today and for the future.

### **4 Changing the Course of History**

The Forest Service's conservation efforts helped the nation succeed in war, overcome economic setbacks, and restore health to important ecosystems.

### **5 The Forest Service Family**

The dedicated men and women of the U.S. Forest Service provide conservation leadership for America by managing and preserving the nation's forests and grasslands, often under challenging and dangerous conditions.

### **6 How We Manage Forests**

The Forest Service uses a wide range of processes, equipment, specialized skills and science in managing the National Forests.

### **7 Wildland Fire**

Fire is a natural force in America's ecosystems. The Forest Service has always taken a leading role in increasing our understanding of fire, protecting lives and property, and managing fires to meet resource objectives.

### **8 Two-Way Communications**

The Forest Service has worked to communicate information on resource conservation to the public. The opinions and evolving values of the public have and will continue to influence Forest Service policy.

### **9 Research and Technology**

The Forest Service has one of the most comprehensive research, development and technology organizations in the world, and the results of that work and extensive partnerships have shaped conservation policy and provided countless benefits to the nation and the world.

### **10 Partnerships**

From the beginning, the Forest Service has cooperated with and been assisted by many different State (State Foresters, Fish & Game, etc.) and Federal agencies (Fish & Wildlife Service, Federal Highway Administration, BLM, etc.), organizations, universities, and other partners in fulfilling its diverse responsibilities. State Foresters provide a critical link with private forest land owners.

## AUGUST NEWSLETTER CORRECTION

Page 3 "Stanislaus Summer" article by H. William Gabriel, Ph.D.

The Pickering Lumber Company's railroad logging operations were on Stanislaus National Forest lands and not on private industrial forest lands as stated in the article.



## Limited Edition Ornament Recognizes Fire and Aviation Partnership

From stories of the Big Burn in 1910 to this year's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Smokey Bear, the conservation legacy of the Forest Service has been shaped by fire fighters. In honor of the Museum's fire and aviation partners, the Board of Directors selected firefighting as the first theme of our Limited Edition Holiday Ornament Program.

The 2011 brass ornament commemorates the first use of a helicopter on a forest fire. In the summer of 1947, the U.S. Forest Service ordered a helicopter from Bell to fly on the Bryant Fire in Big Tujunga Canyon of the Angeles National Forest in southern California. The ship, a Bell 47-B model, was flown alternately by Knute Flint and Fred Bowen. Fred went on to fly contract Bell helicopters on fires for many years and became a true legend. He was known as "Mr. Helicopter" to the fire fighters.

Even though the helicopter of that time could only carry the pilot and one fire fighter, its first use in fighting fires was so successful that it became a standard operation for forest fire control. Today's Bell helicopters are capable of carrying an entire Helitack Crew for rapid initial attack on a new forest fire.

This holiday season, the Museum welcomes Bell Helicopter as a Larch Society member of the capital campaign. Bell Helicopter's \$30,000 multi-year pledge supports the construction of the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center, Traveling Exhibit Program and Virtual Museum.

In honor of this new partnership and in tribute to this shared history, the Museum's program committee selected the Bell 47-B model as the image for the 2011 commemorative ornament. New and renewing members of the Museum, at the Family level and above in 2011, will receive a complimentary ornament. For those who would like to purchase the \$15.00 ornament as a gift or to grace your evergreen, you may purchase an ornament, as long as supplies last, through our online Heritage Gift Store at [www.NMFS-History.net](http://www.NMFS-History.net) or contact the Museum office. Proceeds from the sale of the ornament will support the Museum's goals to collect, preserve and interpret the conservation legacy of the U.S. Forest Service, its cooperators and partners.

The Museum's capital campaign partners from the fire and aviation industry include the National Smokejumper Association, the Lookout Association, Air Tractor, Aero Tech, Firewise 2000, Forest Stewardship Concepts, Minute-man Aviation, The Pack Shack, Phos-Chek, Safe Fire Programs, Sierra Pacific Airlines, Waterous Company, Wildfire Environmental U.S.A., and the U.S. Forest Service.



## Restoration Award to Cascade District

Cascade Ranger District, Boise National Forest, is the first recipient of the Museum's newly established Historical Restoration Award. The award recognizes an individual or group who have demonstrated initiative and innovation to restore historical Forest Service buildings or sites.

"The National Museum of Forest History Board of Directors congratulates former District Ranger Carol McCoy-Brown and her colleagues for their dedication and resourcefulness in restoring the Landmark Ranger Station," said Gray Reynolds, president, National Museum of Forest Service History. "Their efforts ensure that the Forest Service legacy will be safeguarded for this generation and for generations to come."

The award will be presented in November to the Cascade Ranger District employees by Regional Director Dick Smith and NMFSH Executive Fellow Lynn Sprague.



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## Welcome New Life Members

7/27/2011 to 10/26/2011

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## Welcome New Members

7/27/2011 to 10/26/2011

Ellie Hill  
Smoke Elser  
James Marsh

## 1910 Great Burn Fire Exhibit

Since March 2010 the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula exhibit galleries have hosted a large display of photographs and artifacts about the 1910 Great Burn and early Forest Service history. Many of the artifacts in the exhibit are on loan from the National Museum of Forest Service History. The Museum and the exhibit are seen by more than 40,000 visitors annually.



**Telephone, Radiophone, Flag & Use Book**



**Wood Covered Pannier, Pack & Horse Goggles**

NEWS continued from page 2

## National Coal Council Meeting Presentation Washington, DC

On October 20, 2011, President Gray Reynolds and board members Larry Craig and Ellie Hill described to members of the National Coal Council (Council) our plans to tell the story of forest and grassland conservation and multiple-use management of National Forest System Lands. Council members were invited to become our partners in telling of this multiple-use story. A short video was shown during the program and a brochure was given to all Council members attending.

Also attending the Council meeting, or the evening reception, from the Museum were: Dave Jolly, Lynn Sprague, Mark Rey, Liz Madison and Dave Stack. National Council members attending were: Robert Bibb, Larry Grimes, Nils Johnson and Clayton Yeutter. Our guests attending the meeting, or reception, were: David Guiney, exhibit planning advisor; Melissa Simpson, Director of Government Relations, Safari Club International and Jeff Crane, Executive Director, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.

The Council functions as a federal advisory council to the Department of Energy and represents more than 100 coal corporations, associations, utility companies and university research centers.



**Dave Stack, Liz Madison, Dave Jolly, Gray Reynolds & Rob Bibb at the National Coal Council Meeting (left to right)**



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### Come to Vail in 2012!

Join your friends and colleagues the week of **September 17 - 21, 2012** for a fun, educational and activity filled week at the Forest Service Reunion in Vail Colorado. Make your 2012 REUNION reservations starting in February 1. <http://fsreunion2012.com/>

**It's Time To Book Your Room.....** [https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome\\_ei\\_new&eventID=5639460](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=5639460) or phone reservations 800-266-9432. Please use the dedicated website or phone number to make your hotel reservations. The room rate will be \$109 plus tax for all rooms. To ensure early registration and guaranteed reunion hotel rates, you will need to register for both before June 15, 2012.