



SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

15 Burnett Court
Durango, CO 81301
970 247-4874

www.fs.fed.us/r2/sanjuan
www.co.blm.gov/sjra/index.html



Southwest Public Lands People

Employee News of the
San Juan National Forest &
San Juan Field Office-BLM

An Electronic Newsletter

**EXTRA, EXTRA,
READ ALL ABOUT IT!**

Stories and Photos on:

- ◆ New Employees
- ◆ New Positions
- ◆ Employees Moving On
- ◆ District Office News
- ◆ Who's Receiving Awards
- ◆ Personnel Programs
- ◆ News From Home Front

OFFICE	TOPIC	PAGE
San Juan Public Lands Center	Admin Announcements	<u>2</u>
	Engineers are Interesting	<u>4</u>
	Miscellaneous Departments	<u>7</u>
	Dispatches from Dispatch	<u>13</u>
	SJMA	<u>15</u>
Dolores	New Employees	<u>16</u>
	An Employee on the Move	<u>18</u>
	The Co-op Kid	<u>18</u>
	Kudos	<u>19</u>
	No Disappointments	<u>20</u>
Columbine	Look Who's Back	<u>21</u>
Pagosa	New Employees	<u>22</u>
	SCSEP Enrollees Help Out	<u>24</u>

Southwest Public Lands People Electronic Newsletter

Editor/Layout: Ann Bond, Tom Harris

Writers: B.J. Boucher, Alan Peterson, Kathe Hayes, Toni Kelly, Phyllis Decker

Copy Editor/Webmaster: Tom Harris

Photos: Ann Bond, Kathe Hayes, Toni Kelly, Phyllis Decker, Alan Peterson

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER Admin Announcements

ANNETT AND VICKI TO THE RESCUE

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Changes in the Financial Services Department at the Public Lands Center will help Supervisor Linda Knipp and her assistant, Connie Barry, breathe a little easier. Two newly created positions now help relieve their workload. Annett Hitchell, with the SJNF since 1986, has taken a position as Budget and Finance Assistant.

Vicki Switzer, recently with the Bureau of Reclamation office in Farmington, New Mexico, is also a new Financial Assistant in the office.

Annett, a graduate of Durango High School, began her career on the San Juan as a seasonal draftsman. She remained with the drafting and survey crew until 1996, then became an office manager and "jack of all trades."

Annett is a native of southwest Colorado and a third-generation descendent of a ranching family. Her dad ranched in the Marvel area for years. Gardening is still in

her blood, though she has little time for it now. "Working full time and taking care of my family demand most of my attention," she says. "Besides, the deer ate my tomatoes this year."

Annett has two daughters, the youngest, seven-year-old Ashley, helps out as mom's office assistant after school hours. Annett will be splitting her time between her old and new jobs until a replacement is hired.

Vicki has had a career as a civil servant for the last 13 years, first with the National Park Service at Zion NP, then with the BOR as a budget



Annett's daughter, Tana, recently entered her border collie, Sandy, in the Stock Dog competition at the county fair in Durango. Sandy won Grand Champion in her class.



Vicki has two daughters, two horses, and two dogs (but only one husband).

technician in Farmington. She also has two daughters, both of whom are married. Her face lights up when she talks about her first granddaughter, who lives in Utah.

Vicki and her husband are looking for a home in Breen with their two horses and two dogs. Vicki has raised Boston terriers and boxers commercially, but no more. "I'm done with that," she says. "It's a lot of work.

She'll be working with reimbursables and fleet, as well as in-service agreements. Annett will work with billing, tracking expenses, and writing reports. Both give kudos to Connie Barry, both for her skill in training them and the hard work she has done prior to their hiring. Meanwhile, Connie will be detailing to the Rio Grande soon, since they need her expertise for a while.

TRISH IS TOPS



Trish is one of the most valuable employees in the SJPLC.

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Trish Hinzman, a Fort Lewis College student who has been working with Jeanie Harris in Personnel as an Office Automation Clerk for a while now, has also been helping out during the Public Lands mailroom transition.

Trish works full time during the summer and part time during the school season. She is earning a degree in Business Administration on a full scholarship. She is from the small town of Wall, South Dakota, population 800.

"It's the home of the largest Wall Drug store, which is really a tourist trap," Trish laughs. She says she finds Durango much more exciting.

Trish has been working with recruitment and staffing of temporary employees, putting together employment packages and paperwork. "This is a great learning experience," she says. She has no plans yet for what to do after graduation.

In the meantime, the employees in the Public Lands Center will continue to benefit from her professionalism and charming disposition. "Now that Annett has moved on, I don't know what I would have done without Trish's help this summer," said Ann Bond, Public Affairs Specialist. "She's as dependable and professional as they come."

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

Engineer Changes

MEET MR. MERKEL

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Peter Merkel, a new Surveyor in the Public Lands Center in Durango, is happy to settle in southern Colorado. He grew up in Evergreen, near Denver, earning his degree in Natural Resources from Colorado State University in 1991.

For the next decade, he worked on the Routt NF. Peter was stationed in Kremmling, population 1,500. He tells of experiencing quite a change coming to Durango, both in terms of numbers of people and availability of services. "I get lost in City Market," he says, "because there are so many choices."

Peter and his wife have two young children: a 10-month-old daughter and a four-year-old son. They have moved into a home in Durango West.

Peter has an extensive background in fire, having been out on fires every year since beginning with the Forest Service. Now, he's learning about the terrain of public land in southwest Colorado, since he is assigned to do surveying on all three Districts. "I'll be out in the field a lot, so folks won't see much of me," he says.

When not on the job, Peter can be found kayaking area waters or camping with his family. "I'm really glad to be here and have all the outdoor adventures available to me," he smiles.



Peter is conquering culture shock after moving to Durango from Kremmling.

WIFE, MOM, ENGINEER



Since 1994, Laurie has handled engineering and planning for many of the facilities on the San Juan.

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Laurie Yeager is working hard this summer to handle her multiple roles of wife, mom, and engineer. Recently promoted to San Juan Public Lands Facilities Engineer, she now develops and administers contracts for repair or construction of buildings on the National Forest.

"If a building needs repair, like a new roof, I oversee the contract. For new facilities construction, like the addition to the East Animas bunkhouse, I put together the entire package," she says.

Laurie received a BS in Biological Sciences from the University of Nebraska in 1985. She became a San Juan NF Civil Engineer after earning a second degree, from the University of Wyoming in 1990. She had spent two summers in college working as a coop student on the Routt NF. "I grew up in Nebraska," she says, "but I knew I wanted to live in the mountains."

Since 1994, Laurie has handled engineering and planning for many of the buildings and facilities on the San Juan. "There used to be three of us doing this work, and now we're down to one—me!" she says. "But I love it here, and I love my job. It offers great variety."

Laurie has two girls, ages four and seven, and a husband who is a great help with the children during Laurie's busy summer field season. A favorite family pastime is camping.

ADOPT A ROAD GETS "ON THE ROAD"

By Kathe Hayes, SJMA Volunteer Coordinator

DURANGO - Thanks to the vision and support of San Juan Public Lands Road Engineer Paul Christensen, local volunteer groups have adopted 10 roads on public land in southwest Colorado.

The volunteers provide light maintenance, monitoring, and surveying. The San Juan Mountains Association developed the program this spring and trained monitors in individual-road needs. The volunteers travel the roads and submit reports about what they see and work accomplished.



In his spare time, Paul serves as the mayor of Mancos.



Patty is the person to see if you (or someone you know) would like to adopt a road.

SJMA volunteer extraordinaire Patty Brady, who had previous experience in road monitoring with another Forest, took on the job of Program Assistant. Through her efforts, volunteer fire departments, youth groups, organizations, and individuals now assist with light road maintenance.

Roads across the Forest have been assessed and adopted, ranging from the Mill Creek Road, adopted by the SJMA Pagosa Springs Chapter, to the Lime Creek Road, adopted by the Rafter J Women's Reading Group.

Other roads that have been adopted include the Piedra/Williams Creek, Hay Camp Mesa, Sage Hen/Black Mesa, Spring Creek/Beaver Meadows, Black Bear, La Plata Canyon, and Missionary Ridge Roads.

Though only a pilot endeavor this season, this program can expand across all San Juan Public Lands in future years. With the enthusiasm of Patty and the large number of folks interested in helping, it has no limits.

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

Miscellaneous Departments

MIKE MAKES A MOVE

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - There's more whistling in the hallways of the Public Lands Center these days. Former Columbine District Ranger Mike Johnson has moved in as the new Manager for Renewable Resources for Forest Service and BLM lands.

Mike's new position has him overseeing management of fire, timber, range, wildlife, ecology and fisheries. On an interim basis, he's also working with watershed, and oil and gas issues.



Mike merely manages fire, timber, range, wildlife, ecology, fisheries, watershed, and oil and gas.

Mike joined the San Juan 13 years ago as the Pine District Ranger. Before that he was a hydrologist in Missoula, Montana. When the San Juan went from five Ranger Districts to three, he became District Ranger for the enlarged Columbine RD. Because of funding cutbacks at the time, he and the other Rangers assumed many of the tasks formerly handled by staff officers who retired and were not replaced.

Mike, who helped formalize the Service First organization, is ready to provide the advice and support needed in the field from the Supervisor's office, while learning the protocol and processes of BLM. He spearheaded fire planning this spring and helped finish some Columbine RD business, such as the *Molas Pass Winter Recreation Management Plan*.

"I wanted to keep the new District Ranger from being hamstrung by old issues when he or she arrives," he says.

Mike's youngest daughter just graduated from high school and will be joining her sister at CSU this fall.

"I'll be doing direct deposits to CSU from now on," he says with a smile.

DEE DOES IT ALL



Ambidextrous Dee deftly juggles administrative services and budget.

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Dee Lewis has been promoted to the position of BLM Budget Analyst at the Public Lands Center.

Dee has worked for the BLM for 18 years: one year in Burley, Idaho; six in the Montrose office; and 14 as San Juan Field Office Administrative Services Clerk in Durango. Until a replacement is hired for her former position, she'll be doing both her new and old jobs. "I'm swamped," she says, "so I probably won't be able to respond to requests as quickly as I'd like."

As Budget Analyst, Dee will keep track of budget spending and work with budget formulation in preparation for annual requests. Though she has been doing this for a couple of years, she felt as though she was responding to crisis management. Her goal now is to "Do it right, since I can concentrate on budgeting specifically."

"Dee has worked hard to keep the 'budget wheels on the wagon' for many months," says SJPL Associate Manager Kent Hoffman. "Now, after successfully competing for the full-time position, she'll keep the axle's wheels greased and rolling along."

Dee and her husband, Randy (that guy who brings fresh vegetables to the break room), have two daughters. Their 21-year-old attends Fort Lewis College, and their eldest lives in Phoenix. Dee leaves the gardening to Randy but loves to hike and camp. She is also an avid reader. To clear her head of numbers during breaks, she finds a quiet spot and loses herself in books.

Dee, who is a member of the San Juan's Type Three Fire Team, also travels to fires and works in the local dispatch center when needed.

PECK HITS A PEAK

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Paul Peck, SJNF Recreation and Wilderness Program Leader, was honored as the recipient of the American Recreation Coalition's (ARC) annual Forest Service Legends Award in June.



Paul is officially a Legend in his own time.

Paul traveled to Washington, D.C. to receive the award from ARC President Derrick Crandall and Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth. "Over more than a decade as a District Ranger, Partnership Coordinator, and now Program Leader, Paul has successfully fostered a variety of partnerships in southwestern Colorado," Crandall said upon bestowing the award.

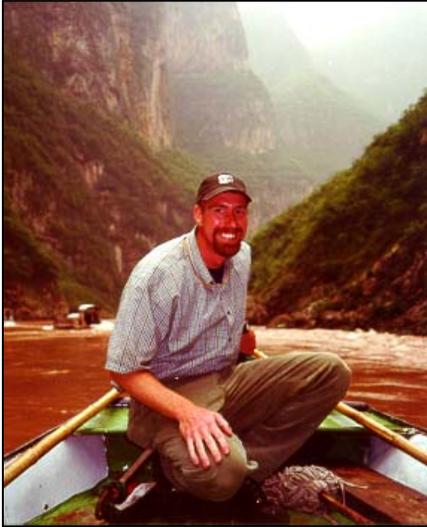
ARC's Legends Awards are presented annually during Great Outdoors Week. They recognize outstanding federal employees for their efforts to enhance the nation's recreation opportunities and resources.

Paul has been active in several local and regional partnership efforts, including the Four Corners Heritage Council, Forestry Initiative, Regional Resources Coordinating Committee, Four Corners Gateway Tourism Project, Southwest Colorado Youth Corps, Southwest Colorado Travel Region, and SJMA.

"It's not just me, but many other folks in and outside the agency that made this happen," Paul says. "Any success in partnerships is a result of all parties working together and the invaluable efforts of the volunteers and stewards who help."

Paul, an Iowa native, received his Bachelor's Degree from Colorado State University in Outdoor Recreation Management. He has worked extensively with the Rural Community Assistance (RCA) program, facilitating development of community action plans and supporting community projects implemented with RCA funds.

A HYDRO WHO LOVES HEIGHTS



Bob checking hydrological phenomena near the Yangtze River in China.

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Bob Lange had little idea, when he earned his dual undergraduate degree in Technical Journalism and Physical Science at Colorado State University in 1991, that he would someday be studying water on public land in southwest Colorado.

After graduation, Bob spent a decade as a technical writer at CSU, where he earned his master's degree in Hydrology. He discovered his passion for hydrology while working with a group that developed software for water research at CSU.

His study of fire and its impact on watersheds for his master's degree has proved very timely as the new National Fire Plan is being implemented. Fire and water go hand in hand for Bob.

"I wanted a job that gave me field experience, and the San Juan offered that. This Forest has a long history of working with prescribed fires in scrub oak stands, and that's exciting," he says. "Monitoring fire and its effects in small-scale controlled burns can translate into a better understanding of how fire impacts watersheds and water quality in larger fires."

Bob has been on the job two months; in his spare time, he enjoys exploring the backcountry. This Denverite has climbed 20 of Colorado's 54 fourteeners; so far this summer, he's bagged Wilson, Handies, and Uncompahgre in the San Juans. He anticipates a trip to Chicago Basin later this summer to scale its peaks.

"We collect a lot of data that help us understand water sources and volume," Bob says. This winter, he'll be monitoring snowfall amounts and next spring, snowmelt.

That information will be used to assist with ongoing negotiations over federal reserved water rights. Bob is one of three new hydrologists now helping Kelly Shanahan on the San Juan.

WHAT A S...WELL IDEA!

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - Promoting fitness is an important concept to Tom Harris, San Juan Public Lands Writer-Editor, who is now managing the Wellness program for employees.

That's why, when the Region 2 Wellness Plan was put into effect last winter, he began working to make it more applicable to local employees. SJPL Wellness Committee members helping Tom adapt the Regional plan to fit local needs are Gary Ferdinando, J.J. Frank, Jeff Redders, Linda Tanny, and Della Zeller. The draft SJPL Wellness Plan will soon be submitted to Kent and Cal for approval. Meanwhile, SJPLC Forest Service employees may participate under the umbrella Regional plan.



"The Wellness program is especially beneficial for office workers, who spend most of their time chained to the computer or in meetings, and seldom exercise as part of their job," says Tom.

"Both Cal and Kent want a program that serves every employee—Forest Service and BLM," Tom says. The program has different benefits, however, for FS and BLM employees. For example, FS employees may be reimbursed for health club membership dues up to \$20 a month. BLM employees, on the other hand, are entitled to reimbursement of health club fees up to \$275 a year.

Also, SJNF employees may engage in approved fitness activities on official time, up to 1½ hours a week, as long as they contribute a matching amount of personal time. San Juan Field Office employees are not allowed this option (due to Department of Interior policy), but are encouraged to use flexible work schedules for health and stress-reduction activities.

Medical screening and evaluation are required of those who are 45 and older, and/or who have certain health conditions, in order to participate in either the health-club or (for FS employees) matching-time options. The approval of the employee's supervisor is also necessary. The appropriate medical-screening and supervisory-approval forms are included in the SJPL Wellness Plan.

For more information on the benefits and restrictions of the plan, or on how to sign up—or to join the SJPL Wellness Committee—contact Tom at 385-1237, or [Thomas E Harris Jr/R2/USDAFS](mailto:tharrisjr@fs.fed.us), or tharrisjr@fs.fed.us.

JUST CALL ME GRAMPA



Thanks to the SJMA, Art is equipped with the grandchild-care essentials.

By Alan Peterson, SJMA Visitor Information Specialist

DURANGO - Visitor Information Specialist Art Sanchez has been wearing an even bigger smile when he greets visitors since grandson Benjamin Robert Sanchez was born this spring.

The SJMA bought a special care package for Art and his wife, Barb, with all the essentials for grandparents: rubber gloves for changing diapers, earplugs for quiet moments, wipes for those many cleanups, and toys for both baby and grandparents. Art says it feels great to be a grandfather. "I'm looking forward to doing lots

of things with him—hiking, fishing, and playing ball," he adds.

MEET MARK & THE CREW

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - New SJMA VIS specialist Mark Winkworth has made himself very valuable at the Public Lands Center Front Desk, helping out with the numerous visitors and phone calls. "Mark jumped right in when he arrived in May and took the initiative to begin updating pamphlets, something we really needed to do," says VIS Manager Art Sanchez. "He comes to us with a wealth of professional experience."



Mark's knowledge is appreciated by visitors and employees alike.

Mark earned a degree in advertising from CU in 1989 before becoming a marketing assistant in Albuquerque with Western Paper Distributors and the New Mexico State Fair. He served as events coordinator with the fair for 5 years, coordinating more than 100 events annually. Then he joined Purgatory in 1999 as night manager for the Village Hotel—a great place to be when you love to ski.

Mark is an enthusiastic climber and has scaled peaks in Nepal, Peru, and Mexico, as well as the U.S. He loves working in a place "where I know the area and can give folks the kind of information they need." His parents live in Durango, another enticement to settle here.

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

Dispatches from Dispatch

PENA IS PREPARED



Versatile Vera can handle an initial attack or an opera.

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - If you ask Vera Pena what her specialty is, she'll tell you logistical support for fire, but her real specialty? "I make a killer salsa," she says.

Vera has lived in Ignacio since 1976, time enough to have learned all the ingredients to sear the mouth and satisfy the soul. She is now training to be Durango's Assistant Center Manager for Fire Dispatch.

"I have to learn all facets of the center's operation, including working with aircraft, initial attack, intelligence, logistical support—everything," she says. Vera has worked on the San Juan for 13 years, previously as Contracting Officer Technical Representative.

Because of her expertise in logistical support, Vera is now a member of the International Disaster Response Team. She recently spent six weeks in Washington D.C., training to work for the U.S. Aid Office and earning security clearance. This makes her qualified to assist with international disasters where U.S. help is needed, whether earthquake, flood, fire, or political uprising.

Vera's top priority is helping to create "a place of excellence at the Durango Dispatch Center, and we can do it with the quality folks we have on board." She marvels at the workload formerly handled by Sue Yager and Frank Bedonie, who managed the center alone before. "I give them kudos for all they did before four new people were hired to help them," she says.

Her interests besides cooking and gardening? "I love opera and attend Shakespeare festivals." Vera also has an 18-month-old grandson who keeps her entertained.

THREE'S COMPANY

By B.J. Boucher

DURANGO - A new crew of dispatchers is helping cover the phones at the Durango Interagency Fire Dispatch Center. Not only are they a team at work, but also at home. Center Manager Chris Buckman and Dispatchers Mary Eide and Cindy Donnagan are roommates who share a country home off La Posta Road near Weaselskin Bridge.

Chris worked for 13 years at the Rocky Mountain Coordinating Center in Denver, but always wanted to live in southwestern Colorado. When local fire jobs opened up, she applied and was accepted. She has worked with the Forest Service since 1977, starting on a timber crew on the Pike/San Isabel NF. One of Chris's hobbies is remodeling old houses, and she says she "swings a mean hammer." Upon arrival in Durango, she purchased a home that needed a lot of TLC.



When she's not managing the Dispatch Center, Chris likes to remodel old houses.



Cindy was on the ski patrol for 15 years and has worked on a BD crew in Oregon.

Cindy Donagan, who loves to cook and garden, rounds out the new team of dispatchers and roommates. Cindy comes from Ashland, Oregon, where she spent 12 years with the Medford BLM Office as a wildlife technician. Before that, she was on the Rogue National Forest working with the brush disposal fire crew.

Cindy has worked with hand, helicopter, and engine crews, as well as in logistics. She also discovered southwest Colorado working a fire here last summer. She is an avid skier and was a professional ski patroller for 15 years. She grew up near Boston, Massachusetts, and has a Bachelor's Degree in interdisciplinary studies.

Mary Eide (who was on a fire when we tried to take her photograph) came from the Black Hills NF. Since Mary's family was unable to move to Durango at this time, she teamed up with Chris to help with painting and woodworking at the house. Mary discovered this part of Colorado in 1996, when she worked on a fire. She has been with the agency for 11 years, all on the Black Hills NF. Her two birth children and six foster children are all grown and "scattered around the country." Her foster care work with youth has earned her statewide recognition.

SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION

CITIZEN KANE

By B. J. Boucher

DURANGO - Jenny Kane assumed the position of Executive Director of the San Juan Mountains Association this spring as gracefully as a ballerina. Both she and the association seemed to know it was a perfect fit from the start. "When the opportunity to compete for the position presented itself, I was intrigued, to say in the least," she says.

The SJMA Board of Directors found her extremely qualified, what with a graduate degree in Nonprofit Management from Regis University, an undergraduate degree in Geology/Environmental Studies from Colgate University, and several years of experience with The Conservation Fund, a national nonprofit land conservation organization in Boulder. Jenny grew up in a small town in upstate New York "on a beautiful 100-acre piece of heaven." Her parents and grandparents instilled in her a respect for nature, strong work ethic, and kindness toward others.

"I really like working for nonprofits because you get things done on the ground," Jenny says. "You're solving problems, helping people become involved and seeing results."

Having worked with public agencies negotiating real-estate transactions while working with The Conservation Fund, she gained experience in working with those unique challenges. "We are doing great things. It was a huge relief to have a strategic vision in place when I arrived because it becomes a great guiding tool," she says.

Jenny wants to expand SJMA education programs to reach more people by working closely with the San Juan's Conservation Education program. She sees opportunities to expand the volunteer-clearinghouse capabilities and other successful programs.

Appropriately, Jenny likes the outdoors: hiking, boating, skiing. She moved to Durango with her fiancé. "I'll get married when I have time," she laughs. "Right now, I'm too busy."



Jenny brings both a solid background in nonprofit management and a ready smile to her position as SJMA Executive Director.

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

ANNOUNCING ANN

By Toni Kelly, Visitor Information Services

DOLORES - There's a new smile at the Front Desk of the Dolores Public Lands Office. Ann McDonald is the new VIS staffer greeting visitors and answering phone calls. Ann is a full-time employee of the SJMA, just like the VIS staff at the Durango and Pagosa Springs offices.



Ann worked for the North Carolina state forest service and has six pets.

Ann's is a familiar face to many in the Dolores area. She and her husband Larry moved to the Four Corners in 1992; she worked in Cortez at a local nursery. She was born in the Philippines and traveled extensively while growing up in a military family. After attending college near Asheville, North Carolina, Ann worked for the state forest service there as a ranger, receiving the training and experience needed for stewardship, firefighting, forestry, and land management.

Ann and Larry have a large animal family—a dog, two western box turtles, and three cats. They both enjoy a wide variety of sports, and Ann's enthusiasm for this area shows in her ability to answer questions and discuss various opportunities with visitors and residents. Come by and say hello. You are sure to be greeted by a warm, friendly smile.

JUMPIN' JENSENS

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - There's a new hydrologist in the Dolores Public Lands Office, by the name of Shauna Jensen. If the name sounds familiar, that's because her husband, Mike Jensen, was recently hired by the BLM as a range conservationist. Shauna most recently worked with the Elko BLM Field Office in Nevada as a hydrologist on fire rehabilitation projects. She and Mike met and married in Elko.



Hydrologist and animal lover Shauna knows fauna (and flora).

Shauna was born and raised in northern California. She attended the University of Nevada in Reno, receiving her bachelor's degree in Hydro-Geology. Shauna's position at the Dolores office will alleviate some of the load previously carried by Forest Hydrologist Kelly Shanahan, who works out of Durango.

The Jensens are outdoor enthusiasts and have a house full of pets: black lab Skeeter, cat Carmel, and yellow lab pup Scout.

GREETINGS TO GEESLING

By Toni Kelly



Don is savvy about both fire and forestry.

DOLORES - The Dolores Public Lands Office has hired a new Fire Management Officer to fortify its fire program and meet the objectives of the National Fire Plan. Don Geesling, most recently from Needles, California, comes with several years of fire experience under his belt, as well as resource experience in forestry.

Don most recently worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, where he was the Fire Management Officer on the lower Colorado River refuges. Before that, Don worked at the Brazoria National Wildlife

Refuge Complex (south of Houston, Texas, on the Gulf Coast), where he was also a Fire Management Officer.

Don also worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Fort Apache Agency out of White River, Arizona, before joining the Fish and Wildlife Service. He worked primarily with their forestry department, doing timber administration and pre-sale work as a Forester/Silviculturalist. Don says Fort Apache has the largest BIA-managed fire program in the country. "I started out as a basic firefighter", he says, "but with 1.5 million acres of land to manage for the fire program, I had incentive to increase my skill level."

Don's qualifications include Type III Incident Commander, Fire Behavior Analyst, and Burn Boss II. His wife, Karen, and two children, 15-year-old Michael and 14-year-old Julie, are looking forward to living near the mountains. "Both of the kids love to ski, and my son and I are planning to get back into hunting" says Don.

A MONUMENTAL MOVE

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - Laura Kochanski, former Archaeologist for the Mancos-Dolores RD, is now the Supervisory Archaeologist at BLM Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. Laura looks forward to the new challenges that accompany oversight of cultural resources in the BLM monument

Laura had worked on the San Juan since 1989. During the past four years, she conducted an archaeological survey of the Glade in the northwest part of the District with Passport in Time volunteers, who assist Forest Service archaeologists nationwide with surveys, site excavations, and restoration. Laura also helped out with investigations of vandalism cases involving cultural resources. She worked on four separate burial-site disturbances, consulting with over 30 tribes and pueblos.



A feather in her cap: Laura will supervise the archaeology program of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

CELESTE SEES THE WEST



Celeste goes to college in Texas and has worked for the FS in Nevada, Montana, and now Colorado.

By B.J. Boucher

DOLORES - Celeste Gallardo, a wildlife student trainee from Corpus Christi, Texas, never expected to wear a jacket in July, having spent her entire life in the humid climate of south Texas. A tank top and shorts have always been appropriate summer wear at home. "It's not supposed to be this cold in July!" she says.

Celeste was hired under the Student Career Employment Program, to work on goshawk surveys on all three Districts of the SJNF. Though stationed on the Columbine RD, much of her work this summer is on the Dolores RD. Celeste will complete her bachelor's degree in Range and Wildlife this winter at Texas A&M. "The co-op program allows students to gain experience in their field of endeavor with the promise of a position upon graduation," says her supervisor, Brad Morrison, Columbine RD Wildlife Biologist.

Celeste has worked as a seasonal or temporary employee with the Forest Service for the last two summers, first in Nevada on the Humboldt-Toiyabe NF and then in Montana on the Beaverhead/Dearlodge NF.

PHIL FILLS THE BILL

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - The Washington Office recently recognized Phil Kemp, Timber Program Manager for the West Zone on the SJNF, for his role in implementing the Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership.

Phil, with the Forest Service for 25 years (nine of those in Dolores), was recognized as the "2001 Forest Products

Employee of the Year" for Region 2. He received the honor in Reno, Nevada, in April at the annual National Forest Products Conference, as one of several FS employees honored for achievements in forest products development.



Phil with his recent award as "2001 Forest Products Employee of the Year."

The Pines Project, as it's known, brings together the Colorado Timber Industry Association, Colorado State Forest Service, Fort Lewis College, Colorado State University, Montezuma County, and the Dolores Public Lands Office. The project focuses on harvest of smaller-diameter trees to increase the overall health of the pine forest, while creating viable markets for the timber industry.

"The ecological goal is to create open stands of trees, a condition common to ponderosa stands prior to European settlement," he says. "This is not a healthy environment for the pine. When trees grow in thick stands, it increases the potential for catastrophic insect infestations and widespread fire damage."

Since the development of the original project, a number of pine timber sales have taken place on the District. Industry has made adjustments in logging practices, and markets for smaller-diameter trees have been aggressively promoted. "We've found that the biggest existing trees could be left on the landscape," Phil says.

NO DISAPPOINTMENTS IN THIS VALLEY



Clyde Johnson gives the lowdown to students from the "Show Me" state.

By Kathe Hayes, SJMA Volunteer Coordinator

DURANGO - Eleven University of Missouri students worked in Disappointment Valley for a week this season as part of a national Alternative Spring Break Program. Organized by the SJMA, the group proved "soft hands" can do hard work, like stringing fence wire and digging postholes.

When BLM Range Manager Clyde Johnson first met the crew, he says he scratched his head and wondered how much work would get done. But by week's end, the students, under the supervision of Clyde, Andy Stump, and Rick Ryan, had repaired the perimeter fencing for the BLM Spring Creek wild horse herd.

David and Pati Temple of the National Mustang Association worked side by side with the students throughout the week. During their stay, the students learned about grazing and public-land issues, as well as about the BLM wild horse program. Area residents provided housing, meals, and evening entertainment. The youth were treated to a real cowboy barbecue at the Slickrock bunkhouse, hosted by Disappointment Valley ranchers David James and Al Heaton.

Another spring break group of 15 Colorado State University students helped with trail building and kiva excavation for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. The CSU students learned first hand about tribal culture and traditions. Local rock art specialist Fred Blackburn invited them to his home and outlined the travels of early people in the Mancos area.

Alternative Spring Break is an annual nationwide program, and hundreds of colleges and universities participate, providing students with service-learning opportunities in new environments, cultures, and communities. Arrangements for their help can be made through SJMA.

COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT/FIELD OFFICE**A SHORT-TIMER COMES HOME**

By B. J. Boucher

DURANGO - "It's like coming home," says Bruce Short, who's been back on the Columbine District since early July as Acting District Ranger. Bruce spent seven years with the SJNF as a Silviculturalist before moving to the Regional Office in Denver two years ago, where he now serves as Regional Silviculturalist.

"The Four Corners is where we want to end up," Bruce says of his family's long-term plans. He has found that some things have changed and some remain the same. "Nancy Berry was just beginning work on Molas Pass when I left," Bruce says. "Now, a decision has been signed and an appeal filed."

The most pressing issue of the moment? "We have sewer problems at the Columbine West Office in Durango," Bruce laughs.

Bruce has enjoyed getting up-to-speed on current issues. He is excited about the National Fire Plan and the integration of fire goals into silviculture. "A lot of the Fire Plan has to do with mechanical treatments, and fire folks now see that, as they accomplish vegetation management, they are using silvicultural practices," he says.

Bruce graduated from North Carolina State, though he grew up in Colorado Springs. He later returned west to work for the Forest Service in Idaho fighting fires, and then to Denver, to work on Dutch Elm disease.

He also spent time with the Army Corps of Engineers in South Dakota, then found himself back in North Carolina. He rejoined the Forest Service in 1981, working for six years on the Nez Perce NF before coming to the San Juan.

Bruce's family remains in Denver while he is here.



Although he defected to the Regional Office, Bruce's heart is still in the right place.

PAGOSA RANGER DISTRICT/FIELD OFFICE

HOWDY, HYDRO

By Phyllis Decker, Visitor Information Services

DURANGO - New Hydrologist Becca Smith, who arrived on the SJNF this spring, is serving both the Pagosa and Columbine Ranger Districts out of the Pagosa RD office.

Becca comes from New York—but not, as she points out, New York City. She earned a bachelor's degree in Geology from Wesleyan University and a master's degree from Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

As a volunteer for Guadalupe National Park in Texas, Becca inventoried 80 miles of trail. After graduation, she worked as a BLM geologist in Idaho, dealing mostly with mining claims. For the past 6 years, she has worked with road removal and watershed restoration in Redwood National Park, in California.

Becca found the restoration work very satisfying, but she was glad to return to Colorado. Although the learning curve was initially overwhelming, Becca finds her new job varied and interesting. In her free time, she enjoys exploring the Weminuche and South San Juan Wilderness Areas and playing ball with her dogs.



Becca has worked for the Park Service and the BLM, as well as the FS.

LAURA ANSWERS THE 'CALL OF THE WILD'

By Phyllis Decker, Visitor Information Specialist

DURANGO - Laura Johnson-Boudreaux may now be working out of the Pagosa RD office, but she hopes to be spending most of her time in the mountains.

As the District's new Wilderness Program Coordinator, Laura is enjoying working close to the land and with the District employees. She started work on the San Juan in 1996 as a seasonal Wilderness Crew Leader on the Columbine RD.

She then served as Monitoring Program Coordina-



A rare shot of Laura indoors.

tor for the San Juan - Rio Grande Wilderness Program. In 1999, she was hired to fill the position as a permanent seasonal employee.

Laura was introduced to the Forest Service early in life. Growing up in Mankato, Minnesota, she spent summers at her grandfather's cabin, surrounded by the Superior NF. She remembers hearing wolves howling at night. Her first job with the FS was as a Wildlife Technician in 1993, doing stream surveys and habitat restoration projects on the Superior.

Her desire to study abroad led her to Madrid, Spain, and a degree in Spanish from the College of Saint Benedict. After two seasons of skiing at Winter Park, she returned to school at Colorado State University and earned a master's degree in Natural Resources.

Laura and her husband, Bill, enjoy river rafting, mountain biking, hiking, and skiing.

SCOTTY BEAMS UP

By B.J. Boucher

PAGOSA - Scott Wagner's vocation with the Forest Service takes him deeper and deeper into the forests, literally and figuratively! Folks in Bayfield knew him first as a GIS Biotechnician. Then he assumed the job of Timber Crew Supervisor on the Pagosa RD.

After commuting for two years, Scott recently moved to Pagosa Springs, where he is now a Timber Fuels Forester working with the National Fire Plan to reduce hazardous fuels with mechanical treatments and prescribed burns.



Scott's career has taken him from Paraguay to Pagosa.

Scott joined the San Juan seven years ago after spending a number of years as a private contractor working with wildlife and timber sales. With a degree in Natural Resource Management from Colorado State University, Scott worked with seasonal crews on different Forests across the West before moving to Colorado. He also did a stint in the Peace Corps, spending two years in Paraguay.

"I was involved in the initial establishment of a tropical forestry program in that country," he says. "I spent a lot of time in the rural area helping establish tree farms and nurseries. Soil erosion is very high because of clearcutting for cropland."

Scott admits to being one of those "outdoor enthusiasts" who hangs out in the woods a lot on and off the job. "I do a lot of outdoor stuff," he says, "like kayaking, skiing, fishing."

Pagosa feels very much like home, and he appreciates its smallness compared to the big city of Durango.

BRUSH STROKES



Bonnie and Don's help is much appreciated on the Pagosa RD.

By B.J. Boucher

PAGOSA SPRINGS - Super couple Don and Bonnie Brush of Pagosa Springs are providing extra hands on the Pagosa District as "jacks of all trades" under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

Bonnie helps Vita Herrick with bookkeeping tasks, and Don stays busy painting signs and handling lots of other work. "We stumbled into these jobs," Don says. "Sometimes I'm painting, then building boxes or

erecting shelves. It's fun, and retirement was boring."

These 71-year-old youngsters began working with the Forest Service this spring. They have lived in Pagosa Springs for two years. Before that, they lived in Arizona for 14 years and, previously, Fort Collins, where Don owned a pet shop. Their experiences have prepared them to be flexible in work assignments.

"I owned a campground in Estes Park," Don says. "It was great until we had the Big Thompson flood. That, coupled with gas shortages, changed things, so we moved to Arizona." The Brushes have four children and one grandchild.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio-tape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.