

## The Thursday R6 Update

**Environmental education + ski outing + commitment by employees brings more kids to the woods at Mt. Hood NF:** The cross-country ski outing and environmental education program “went great this year” writes Ron Kikel. “We hosted 14 students from the Wash. State School for the Blind ages 10 to 18. Day 1 weather for skiing at Teacup was great, and we had all the equipment ready on their arrival.”



He notes that the skis were donated by Mt. Tracks Ski rental, and Oregon Nordic Club, Teacup and Columbia Gorge Chapter members helped guide the students on the trails, and that evening they lodged at Mt. Hood Community Center.



“Michelle Richardson from DYNW played a pivotal role in getting financial support for food and lodging,” he adds. “AFMO and Andy Beam Engine Supervisor acquired 27 cots for sleeping, Susan Freston made sure food and lodging met the requirements of the students. Only through coordination and partnerships can this program and others like it develop and prosper,” he explains.

The evening environmental program focused on trees of the Pacific Northwest, the topics ranging from forest products to Native American uses of trees such as basketry and arrow making. They also discussed tree growth tree species, how animals utilize trees for shelter and food, and about how the effects of mild winters and dry summers allow for disease and insects to infect trees - as well about as the positive effects of insects in decomposition.

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“All this activity was hands on, curriculum for each station was developed by the Forest Service interpretive staff and AmeriCorps volunteers,” Kikel explains. On the second day of the environmental education/ski event, Tamara Shannon from Hood River Ranger District tagged different species of trees along the trail. Students tried to identify them by feel based on the touch exercises and verbal descriptions given to them the previous night.

Interpretive specialist who made the program interesting, fun and informative included Sue Baker CRGNSA; Shelley Hakanson, ZigZag RD; Arron Pedersen and Linda Turner, CRGNSA; Tamara Shannon and Lawson Reif, ZigZag RD; Amy Hulstein, Hood River RD; Hillary Schwirtlich, Barlow RD; Brian Eberhardt, Clackamas RD; Robbie Walsh, ZigZag RD; Ole Helgerson, Oregon Nordic Club; and retired Forester Leo Segovia. (Courtesy Ron Kikel, Hood River RD, Mt. Hood NF. (Courtesy Ron Kikel, Mt. Hood NF Photos courtesy of Jenny Donaldson, TVI, Hudson's Bay high school liaison, Library Services.)

## *Firefighters make recruiting rounds at Seattle schools*

**Recruiting rounds realize results:** About 22 South Lake High Schoolers crowded into the tiny room listening quietly to Gerald Williams describe what it is like to be a Forest Service firefighter. “I don’t want to sugar-coat this. This is hard, grueling work. You dig all day,” he said. He described fuel breaks and explained a controlled burn, digging lines, and how to fight a wildfire in the middle of nowhere.

They liked the pictures he showed of what could be their office next summer: tents staked outdoors with fixed-wing airplanes and a helicopter in the background. “We ask you to show up, ready to work, have a strong work ethic and be in shape,” he said. Students asked questions about physical training, travel, fire camp, and money.

Most of the kids Gerald recruits are from the city. “The learning curve is incredible. Imagine never having been in a forest environment, never even taking a walk in the woods, then learning the business of fighting fires,” Gerald said.

Richard Tavares, who has worked several summers for Gerald on the fire line, helped present to his former classmates and neighborhood friends. He shared his experiences: camping outdoors for the first time, trying to sleep through a lightning and thunder storm, and standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon and feeling like he was on the top of the world.

“You get to meet a lot of people you wouldn’t meet otherwise, and you feel good helping out,” he said. Gerald said having a former student from the community helps his recruiting efforts and gives kids a first-hand perspective on working as a firefighter for the Forest Service. Gerald brings his computer and helps youth interested in applying navigate the online maze of AVU.



(Above: Gerald at South Lake High School.)

Barbara Quintana, the career counselor at South Lake looks forward to the Forest Service presentations. “It is a great program,” she said. She likes that it gives her students an option after graduation that can lead into a career with the federal government. Donovan Barnes wants to be on Gerald’s initial attack fire crew so he can make money to go to college. “This will be a big help,” he said.

Gerald's approach is systematic. He starts early in the year contacting and coordinating with Seattle schools, counselors, teachers, the International District, Tribes, NAACP, woman's groups.

"It is important to talk to the counselors to make sure the kids that come are really interested and not showing up to get out of class," he said. Gerald schedules back-to-back presentations throughout Seattle in early spring, because starting in spring he plans and conducts rigorous training sessions; then fire season starts.

And his way works. He has been successful filling his six to eight crew vacancies every year with diverse candidates since he started in 2005. Gerald's additional recruits round out the other fire and recreation crews on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, and the excess candidates go to other Region 6 forests. After presenting to 60 students at six Seattle schools and two in Burlington this year he identified 20 who were serious about going to work for the Forest Service.

More importantly for Gerald than filling vacancies is hiring the right people. "I need to have eye contact, direct communication with them, so I know what I am getting," he said. Gerald stresses that his firefighters must start at entry level; they can't go to college, get a degree and start on the fire line in a management position.

"Gerald is successful because he is passionate about what he does: fire and outreach to diversity. He does the job, and the candidates respond to that," said Tony Engel, fire management officer for the MBS.

For more information contact Gerald Williams, [gdwilliams@fs.fed.us](mailto:gdwilliams@fs.fed.us), 360-436-2337; Mitch Fuller, [mfuller@fs.fed.us](mailto:mfuller@fs.fed.us), 360-436-2315; or go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/fire/mbs-ia>. (Story and picture by Renee Bodine, MBS)

### *Your work in rhyme*

**Reminder:** [Poetry Editor in Chief Cindy McCain](#), Siuslaw NF is collecting more poems from R6. In addition to appearing here, they will also be posted as a collection at retiree-friendly [www. R6Poems.ning.com](http://www.R6Poems.ning.com).

### *Well-Read Natural Resource Manager*

Research summaries by Robyn Darbyshire. See 3/12 document, attached.

- **Fixing the communications failure.** People's grasp of scientific debates can improve if communicators build on the fact that cultural values influence what and whom we believe.
- **Decision Processes for Multijurisdictional Planning and Management: Community Wildfire Protection Planning in Oregon.** This research examines Forest Service and community collaboration in the development of CWPPs through a case-study analysis of

two CWPP efforts in Oregon. A decision process framework is used to examine the effectiveness of each community's planning effort to address the wildfire problem. Findings indicate that communities lack effective multijurisdictional decision processes and fail to adequately address all of the decision functions necessary to successfully mitigate the wildfire threat.

- **Timing of cattle grazing alters impacts on stream banks in an Oregon mountain watershed.** The study suggests that grazing riparian areas when adjacent uplands are attractive to cattle may help reduce deleterious impacts on stream banks. Land managers should consider impacts of timing of grazing on individual streams when developing best management practices to meet grazing objectives in riparian areas.
- **Historical fire and vegetation dynamics in dry forests of the interior Pacific Northwest, USA, and relationships to Northern Spotted Owl habitat conservation.** Increasing fire severities posed a greater risk to Northern Spotted Owl habitat than increasing fire sizes or frequencies under historical fire regimes. Improved understanding of historical landscape-specific fire and vegetation conditions and their variability can assist forest managers to promote landscape resilience and increases of older forest, in dry forests with restricted amounts of habitat for sensitive species.
- **Perceptions of landscape change in a rural community.** Examining local preferences and developing a fuller understanding of the dimensions or factors that local stakeholders use to inform their assessment of landscape change is an essential part of developing future landscape management frameworks that have broad local support. In addition to engaging in a complex assessment of alternative consequences, participants provided lengthy commentaries on the cultural appropriateness of particular landscape conditions, and conceptions of landscape care or 'visible stewardship'.

## R6 golf tournament

**The 45th Annual R-6/PNW Golf Tournament** will be held at The Cedars Golf Course in Brush Prairie, Washington on Friday, May 21, 2010. Cost per player is \$50, which includes green fees, prizes, and lunch at the conclusion of play. Awards will be presented 30 to 45 minutes after the last person has turned in their score card. Each forest needs to have a representative stay to receive prizes for the individuals and team(s) from that forest. Current and retired R-6 employees have priority for the tournament. For more information or an entry form, contact retiree Phil Dodd at [phillydodd@gmail.com](mailto:phillydodd@gmail.com).

## WellNews Tip

**Everyone experiences change**—it may be starting a new job, going through a breakup, handling a health diagnosis or a change that you've been considering for years. Whatever change you're going through, remember that change happens *everyday*, to *everyone*. Today, ask your family and friends what they consider to be their biggest life change and be sure to find out what they learned from it. Their answers will probably surprise and inspire you, and maybe even make your change easier!