Pacific Northwest Forest Service Association

OldSmokeys Newsletter

Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Forest Service Retirees
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In this issue

On the Cover
Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region

President's Message

This is my final President's message as Cindy Miner will be taking over as the new President in May at our Spring Membership meeting and banquet. I have enjoyed serving you as President the past year and look forward to moving to Past President. I want to thank Tracy Beck for serving as Past President and express my appreciation for his support and great counsel. Thank you to Cindy for her support in recruiting new members for several Board vacancies.

I want to welcome new board members and members who have moved to new positions:

- Becky Gravenmier and Michael Hampton–Membership Cochairs
- Lesley Kelly–Treasurer
- Su Alexander-Recording Secretary
- Ruth Voltz–Community Outreach Chair
- Janelle Geddes–Grants Chair

We are losing Archivist Ray Steiger. The Board is discussing whether this position is needed in the future and will not act to fill in the position behind Ray at this time. I want to thank Ray for his service over the years.

Coming out of the pandemic doldrums, I look forward to more members feeling comfortable participating in Old Smokeys activities. We have restarted the monthly luncheon at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Portland. After a three-year pause, the annual membership meeting/banquet on May 21 will be in person at the Charbonneau Golf Club, and our annual picnic will be on August 11 at Wildwood Recreation Area in Welches. We will send reminders for each of these events.

My thanks to the Board and membership for your support.

Jim Peña, President

**Editor's Note: Due to the overwhelming response to this issue's theme, to publish all the material we received we are not including the Memories column. We will run it in the summer issue. Thank you for your undertstanding.*

What's Involved in Managing the Mount St. Helens Monument

In April 1983, Kenneth "Ken" Johnson was selected as the first Mount St. Helens Monument manager. In the subsequent 40 years, there have been seven managers. In 2018 the agency changed the position title from monument manager to monument ranger.

From August 2018-August 2022, Rebecca Hoffman served as the most recent monument ranger before accepting a position in the Washington Office Business Operations, Enterprise Program as the projects and planning supervisor.

Rebecca Hoffman

Prior to working on the Mount St. Helens Monument, Hoffman was a staff officer for almost six years on the Tonto National Forest in Arizona and worked in Colorado with a focus on lands, special uses, and recreation.

The Old Smokeys editorial board caught up with Hoffman to learn how she navigated the fiscal and political issues on the monument and what the future may hold for how the monument will be managed.

When you accepted the position, what were your expectations of the job duties?

I had an awareness of Mount St. Helens, its history, and current recreation use. I was prepared for the general job duties, such as managing our staff, working with the communities, and the management of the variety of resource management expectations– recreation, fire, etc. I expected a large part of the position and most of my decisions would be around recreation management and visitor use and finding different opportunities for recreation access. What surprised me was the amount of infrastructure on the monument, in way of facilities and the Spirit Lake tunnel, and how spread out it was. I also didn't realize the complexities of ongoing complex infrastructure management, such as the Spirit Lake tunnel, and community impact because of the eruption. This isn't something widely talked about or widely known.

Were there challenges you had to deal with immediately?

The challenge right away was the complexity of Spirit Lake and the management of its failing infrastructure. There was also protecting the features of the monument, such as the uniqueness of the pumice plain, and the research that's happening. When I arrived, the monument was in the middle of completing an environmental review, so I had to get up to speed and learn all about those issues. There was also the challenge of having two visitors centers and not having the budget to maintain them.

What was your experience working with the different communities that have a vested interest in the monument?

While working on the Tonto, I had experience working with different communities, such as county commissioners and Tribes, which prepared me for working on the monument. But unlike on the Tonto, which is near Phoenix and made it easier for me to blend in with the community, these communities are smaller, which did present more opportunity to work with the groups and local residents. I worked with county commissioners, state agencies, Tribes, local business owners, and user groups.

One community that I hadn't worked with very much previously was the research community, and it was great to be able to work with the research team on the monument.

What were issues that the county commissioners and Tribes brought to the Forest Service?

Spirit Lake was always brought up, as well as the economic viability of the communities around the monument. A lot of the discussions with business owners and county commissioners were based on bringing recreation and tourism back to the monument and how we could increase opportunities for overnight stays and expanded recreational opportunities. There aren't many places to camp, so people usually just visit for the day. We worked with the communities to figure out a solution. This included working with the Mount St. Helens Institute to repurpose the Coldwater facility into a place where people could come and stay.

We also worked with the Tribes to ensure protection of this sacred area. The top of the monument is a Traditional Cultural Property with the Cowlitz Tribe so it's important we provide protections, work closely with the Tribe on management plans, and provide access. We're looking at ways to increase access to their

cultural areas, such as working with them at our Pine Creek facility where they can host a huckleberry camp for their youth. The monument is an important place for them to teach their cultures and their traditions, and we need to make sure they can continue doing this.

With the push for more recreation opportunities, how will the agency continue to protect sensitive areas and research sites?

There is a dynamic tension between these two management priorities. Most of the monument has been closed to public use for safety concerns, but there is the question of whether it's time to open more of the monument. We started these conversations prior to my leaving, and they're moving forward to create a recreation mid-level planning team. One issue is how to balance increasing recreation opportunities for the public, perhaps creating unique opportunities that haven't been offered in the past, while protecting the landscape.

You mentioned the difficulty of maintaining visitor centers due to tightened budgets. How is the monument navigating serving the public without the budget support?

It's definitely a constraint, and one of the complexities of having a monument managed by the Forest Service, where budgets are allocated and prioritized to several different high needs and priorities for the agency. There is not a line item budget dedicated to the Monument. Many people think we're the National Park Service, and we often get complaints of why we aren't providing the same type of services as Yellowstone National Park. We try to explain the budget and different agency priorities without going into the weeds.

The agency does have a lot of competing needs, so we have lots of communication with the Regional Office and Washington Office about the uniqueness of Mount St. Helens and our needs. We are also focused on priority areas and looking for partnerships and working with other agencies.

Earlier I mentioned the Coldwater facility; that's a large facility that's a big cost to the Forest Service and we're not using it. That's why we're working with the Mount St. Helens Institute so they can put the facility into better use as an opportunity for youth education and public recreation opportunities and overnight use. Cowlitz County, the Cowlitz Tribe, and the state are all involved in this effort, and it's a great opportunity for everyone.

While you were the monument ranger, did you have former agency employees or members of the public return to the monument to share their experience pre-eruption? And how do they react to the management changes that are occurring and will continue to occur?

That's a uniqueness of Mount St. Helens that you don't get at other places; everyone has a connection and story of where they were or where their family camped or worked on the mountain. Many have memories of the monument pre-eruption, whether it was where they recreated, had a cabin, or used it in different ways. It was always great to hear people's stories and connections to Mount St Helens, and I really valued how it impacted so many people in different ways.

As far as planning, it has been over 40 years since the eruption. What will the next 40 years look like? We need to develop a plan with our partners and our publics on the best way to move forward and what the future of the Monument looks like. Many would like increased access to the area, and many are concerned about the impacts of opening it up too much. It comes down to communicating, having discussions, hearing everybody's ideas and concerns, and moving forward together.

Are there any final thoughts you'd like to share with the OldSmokeys?

I loved working on the Gifford Pinchot and Mount St. Helens and love Southwest Washington. The people I worked with—agency personnel, community members, researchers, and Tribes—all have a passion and a love for the area and that made it a great place to work. Although we had a dynamic tension because of different needs and values, everyone was coming from a place of loving this special place and wanting to care for the area. *ON*

An Update on the Spirit Lake Tunnel

By Chris Strebig, Spirit Lake Project Support

The Spirit Lake Tunnel was built in the wake of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens to address the imminent public safety threat posed by rising water levels in Spirit Lake. The lake's outlet to the Toutle River system was blocked by the debris flow from the eruption. The lake began to fill, putting pressure on the debris blockage and threatening to release another catastrophic flow of water, mud, and ash downstream to vulnerable communities still recovering from the eruption. The solution was to create an artificial outlet for the lake: the Spirit Lake Tunnel. The tunnel was built in an emergency response setting. In addition, the tunnel passes through a geologically active ridge.

This landscape is revered and loved by many who visit both in person and virtually. Spirit Lake is a centerpiece of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, a talisman of the landscape changes wrought by the 1980 eruption, and managing its outflow is an ongoing maintenance and safety concern whose engineering design and retrofit must be addressed in this dynamic and intensively studied area.

Over the past four decades, weak rock zones and external pressures have compromised the tunnel's operating capacity necessitating periodic and costly repairs. A 2018 National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) report on Spirit Lake and the downstream Toutle River System concluded that a long-term management solution is needed to address concerns regarding the lack of outflow redundancy and the significant risks associated with the uncertainties regarding the debris blockage characteristics. Given the need for ongoing repairs and recommendations from the NASEM report, initial steps are underway to explore potential improvements or outflow options that would not require repeated, expensive repair interventions.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest, working with the Regional Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Geological Survey, conducts annual tunnel inspections, installs and maintains lake level sensors, and repairs the tunnel as needed. Currently, the Forest is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to replace the tunnel's intake gate system and conduct geotechnical drilling of Spirit Lake debris blockage.

Spirit Lake Tunnel annual inspection team with engineers from Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a confined rescue team. Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region

Since its eruption in 1980, Mount St. Helens has brought researchers and land managers together. In 2018, Gina Owens, then forest supervisor now regional forester for Region 9, invited PNW Research Station Director Paul Anderson to a Gifford Pinchot National Forest leadership field trip to discuss research and engineering plans for Spirit Lake. Photo courtesy of Cindy Miner

The NASEM report recommended agencies and entities with management responsibilities to create a system-level consortium to share information and identify opportunities to address sediment management and risks associated with catastrophic flood risk in the Spirit Lake and Toutle-Cowlitz River system. The Forest Service working with Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments and the Ruckelshaus Center supported the development of the Spirit Lake, Toutle/Cowlitz River Collaborative whose purpose is to bring state, federal, tribal and local governments together to cooperate on addressing sediment management and catastrophic flood risks in the Spirit Lake and Toutle/Cowlitz River system.

Safety and protecting downstream communities will continue as the Forest Service's top priority in this critical, complex project. *ON*

Leadership Lessons of the Spirit Lake Tunnel

Complexity. That's the word frequently mentioned when Forest Service staff discuss Spirit Lake. The complexity of artificially managing the lake to stave off a natural disaster that could destroy downstream communities. The complexity of maintaining the aging infrastructure that's diverting water out of the lake. The complexity of working with local community leaders and federal and state agencies to develop response plans should the worst-case scenario occur. It's a complexity that isn't found elsewhere in the National Forest System.

"When Bill [Hahnenberg] and I came to the Gifford Pinchot with Portland National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) to work on the Spirit Lake [in 2015], we both commented several times that this would make a great staff ride," says John Giller, the director of Fire and Aviation for Regions 6 and 10 before retiring in December 2020. "This is just one example of a disaster and what can be learned here can apply to wildfires too since both require escape routes and safety zones for the communities."

In 2012, the agency recognized the need to address the 1.6-mile Spirit Lake tunnel bored through the mountain. Since its completion in 1985, the tunnel floor has buckled and upheaved due to movement.

Repairs were made in 2015, but managing the tunnel remains an ongoing issue for the agency. "There's an opportunity here to really encourage line officers to think a little bit differently about landscape disasters that might happen in their own backyard and are they prepared for it," Giller explains. "Do they have the leadership skills and do their troops respect and follow them? Ultimately this is all about protecting communities and our employees."

NIMO originally was assigned the role of developing an emergency response plan for the incident in 2015. The staff ride was an idea borne from that assignment. The staff ride team grew to include Dan O'Brien, who was manager of the Northwest Coordination Center until retiring in December 2020; Steve Rawlings, the assistant director for Fire Operations for the Pacific Northwest and Alaska when he retired in December 2021; and Nick Giannettino, a plans section chief with Portland NIMO who retired in January 2016.

As the coordinator center manager, O'Brien helped the forest and monument facilitate a tabletop simulation of Spirit Lake and the tunnel collapse, which Rawlings also participated in. "I realized just how complicated things can get out there on the ground," O'Brien explains. "It gives you an example of how some issues never really go away. They just take other forms that the next generation has to deal with." In 2019, the planning of the staff ride was dusted off. The following year, we "probably had it 90 percent completed and then everything shut down because of Covid," Giannettino explained.

The plan to hold a beta run in spring 2022 fell through because an attendee tested positive for Covid. Finally, in fall 2022, the team did the beta run. Attendees were line officers primarily from Region 6 but also staff from the regional office and outside the region. Presenters on the staff ride included Chris Strebig and representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers and Gifford Pinchot. Giannettino described the staff ride as "a lot of fun and informative. The group seemed to enjoy it."

The staff ride is designed as a one-and-a-half-day session, with a half-day orientation and introductions, followed by a full day beginning on the mountain and ending at Castel Rock, Washington, in the Cowlitz River valley, "which is where things come together." Giannettino says.

Discussion topics include collaborating with local agencies and how to manage risk if the tunnel is closed for an extended time for repairs. "These are the key learning points we're trying to talk to these line officers about," explains Giller. "You're the person making the decisions that a lot of people are going to assume a lot of the risk because of your decision."

For each of these topics, they strove for a balance on why the risk exists and then discussing how a leader could respond to the risk. However, in one instance, the team found that the lengthy discussion on the engineering aspect of the tunnel caused the attendees to lose focus of the larger issue of managing the risk the tunnel posed.

"The staff ride is always going to be a work in process," says Rawlings. "We want to be careful that we're hitting the target audience of line officers and decision makers."

Based upon the response to the beta ride, the plan is to make the Spirit Lake tunnel a formal staff ride that's offered regularly. This will require more presenters, which Giller hopes could be fellow retirees, such as OldSmokey members. "We would love to expand our cadre so we're looking for other retirees," he says. "We know agency personnel don't have the time and that's why retired folks would be a perfect fit." *ON*

Pacific Northwest Forest Service Retiree Association Expenses and Income

Over the past couple of months, the Board of Directors have been discussing our expenses and income. With the downturn this year in the financial markets, our investment accounts are not providing the same level of income as in the past two to three years.

Our funding model is that the annual budget is supported by income from annual dues payers, income from the investment of one-time lifetime dues payments, donations to dedicated funds and fees charged for specific events, i.e. annual picnic. When our investments were doing well, we could contribute more to our grant programs to supplement donations. We plan to have the fees we charge for events to cover their cost with no additional contributions from investments.

Our major annual expense is the publication of the *Old Smokeys Newsletter* and the printing and mailing of it to those who prefer to receive a hard copy. The production of our quarterly newsletter costs approximately $9,700 annually. Printing and mailing accounts for nearly two-thirds of the annual cost. We have discussed ways to reduce this expense considering the reduced income we are receiving from our investment accounts to free up additional funds for our various grant programs.

The Board has discussed encouraging more members to opt to receive the newsletter online instead of hard copy. Only 300 members have selected receiving the newsletter online. This could significantly reduce our production costs if more members moved to online delivery. Charging a subscription for receiving hard copies was also discussed. We estimate that it costs approximately $3 for printing and mailing per copy. Is it worth $3 to members to continue to receive a hard copy? Additional expenses of returned issues are costing about $100 annually when the Post Office is not able to deliver due to change in address. Postage rates also continue to increase.

The Board will continue to evaluate our options. I wanted to share this information with you and ask for your feedback. Please send your feedback to jimoldsmokey@gmail.com. We are interested in hearing from Members who receive hard copy newsletters about their willingness to pay $3.00 a quarter for a hardcopy and other ideas the Board should consider to improve our financial position. We would like to hear from you before July 1st to inform our discussions for the fall 2023 newsletter. *ON*

Mark your calendars for the OldSmokeys Membership Luncheon

Membership luncheons are held on the last Friday of each month (Thanksgiving and Christmas might be the exception) at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Portland,

The Old Spaghetti Factory has asked us to go to a reservation system. Members can either reserve a seat online or contact Deb Warren by email (debrawarren69@gmail.com), text, or phone 503.201.5934. Lunch will still be paid in person. Reservations should be made by Wednesday.

The sign in/menu selection begins at 11:30 a.m. and all guests will complete their meal and be on their way home by 1:30 p.m. The cost will be $20.00 for each guest (cash or check only). This cost includes entrée, beverage, ice cream, and gratuity.

- The entrée will be limited to: Soup and Salad; BLT Salad w/Soup; choice of three (3) Pastas: Rich Meat Sauce, Mushroom Sauce, or Mizthra Cheese & Browned Butter Sauce-w/salad.
- Beverages: Coffee, Hot or Iced tea. (Beer & Wine are ordered and paid for by the guest).

Old Smokey member Bev Pratt was instrumental in arranging these lunches, and she will be missed.

Planning for the Next 40 Years of Research on the Mount St. Helens Monument

The eruption of Mount St. Helens created an unprecedented opportunity to study how ecosystems recover following such a destructive event. In the subsequent 43 years, hundreds of research articles have been published on every aspect of the volcano, from its ecology, geology, and hydrology.

Donald Brown, a research ecologist with PNW Research Station and lead scientist for Mount St. Helens

Donald Brown is a recently hired research ecologist with the PNW Research Station and the new lead scientist for Mount St. Helens. In this role, he serves as the liaison between the research community and the monument. Brown, whose research focus is wildlife responses to ecological disturbances, with emphasis on amphibians and reptiles, was a research assistant professor at West Virginia University, and held a joint position with the Forest Service Northern Research Station before moving to Northwest and joining the PNW Research Station.

The OldSmokey editorial board caught up with Brown to learn more about the research underway on the monument and how Brown is improving researcher access.

What is your role as a liaison?

I am essentially the point person for all things research and serve as the conduit for the research community and the monument managers. I attend the weekly meetings with the management team and bring any research-related issues or discussion points to them. They also relay anything to me that's important. I also serve as the point person that universities and other groups can inquire with about potential research on Mount St. Helens.

What is the history of the station working pre- and post-eruption on the monument?

Since the area was heavily utilized for the timber industry pre-eruption, we don't have a lot of pre-eruption data and the station wasn't very active in the area. But the amount of data obtained post-eruption is huge. Over the last 43 years, Charlie Crisafulli [who recently retired as PNW ecologist and science liaison for Mount St. Helens] was the point person in charge of the Forest Service research program, along with Peter Frenzen, an ecologist stationed at the monument headquarters. Crisafulli helped facilitate hundreds of external researchers working on the monument and conducted a lot of research on his own that is synthesized in *Ecological Responses at Mount St. Helens: Revisited 35 years after the 1980 Eruption*. This book, which was published in 2018, is a follow-up to *Ecological Responses to the Eruption of Mount St. Helens: 1980-2005*.

What are some ongoing long-term studies the station is involved with?

One of our focal areas has been Spirit Lake in terms of changes to the water chemistry and productivity, reintroduction of rainbow trout, and, most recently, invasion of the New Zealand mud snail (*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*). The snail is so small that it can fit on your fingertip. It's also resistant to digestion from animals, which means fish and birds can move this snail around so there's a lot of potential for expansion.

We don't know how it got into the system, but it's well established in the southern portion of Spirit Lake. There is some concern about the species spreading. Last year researchers detected the snail in south Coldwater Creek, which the Spirit Lake tunnel empties into. Currently, there's not a focus on a removal but understanding where it is; this research is being led by Jim Gawel (UW-Tacoma), in collaboration with Charlie.

A project I'm looking to start this year is connecting Mount St. Helens to the PNW Research Station's avian bioacoustics network, which spans from Canada to Northern California. This will allow us to track bird community dynamics across different habitats and systems and hopefully become a long-term dataset to assess how birds continue to respond to the changing landscape in Mount St. Helens.

What amphibian research are you planning to conduct?

One of the reasons I applied for the position is that a large portion of my research program in the

Appalachians was focused on salamander responses to natural and anthropogenic disturbances. The Pacific Northwest is one of the major salamander diversity hotspots in the world. Many of the salamander species in both regions are severely understudied, and I felt this was a good opportunity for me to transition my research program to the Pacific Northwest.

Two amphibians of particular interest to me are the Larch Mountain salamander (*Plethodon larselli*) and Van Dyke's salamander (*Plethodon vandykei*). Both are species of conservation concern that are present in the Mount St. Helens system and were focal salamanders for Charlie's research program, providing an opportunity for me to build on past research. In the next few years, I hope to conduct population trend assessments and create new habitat suitability models for these species in collaboration with other Forest Service scientists and researchers at Washington State University. There is also quite a bit of research being conducted by universities at the Mount St. Helens hummocks ponds, and I am thinking about new amphibian research projects that could complement these other research activities.

Portions of the monument have remained closed to the public since the eruption. Has there been any changes regarding these closures?

Over the past 40 years, there's been a forest order in place to protect some of the sensitive areas, particularly the pumice plain, from potential recreation impacts. The forest order restricts access for recreationalist to the trail systems: There is no off-trail hiking or pets allowed. The forest order did lapse, but the managers at the monument agree that areas should be protected for research. We have various projects that are very sensitive to potential impacts, such as nitrogen addition experiments, so the restriction is going to be reinstated this year.

What new initiatives you are pursuing as the liaison?

I have been putting a lot of effort on the programmatic side on the Mount St. Helens program, with goals of connecting the research community and reducing barriers to entry for new researchers. I recently launched a research website for Mount St. Helens (mshresearch.org) that will continue to be developed over the next few years to serve as a resource for future researchers and also a promotional tool for research products. It will be a one-stop shop for questions such as, 'How does the permitting work?, Where is lodging available?, Who is currently conducting research on the monument?, and What has been published recently?'

Another thing that we'll be launching soon is a research working group to bring researchers together to discuss their research, share information, and facilitate new collaborations. Because the monument is so large and researchers work at many different organizations, many researchers aren't interacting on a regular basis. I'm hoping this working group spurs additional research projects and collaborations, and it will be a valuable tool for keeping the PNW research station and monument connected to the broad Mount St. Helens research community.

A third initiative that we just launched is a shared Google calendar to coordinate research activities on the monument. We recently found there were two different research groups working in the same place who were doing similar things and had no idea! This calendar will allow researchers to coordinate meeting in the field and helping each other with research.

Another accomplishment is streamlining the process for permits, which was another source of confusion. We have an updated permit form that goes to a specific person who then outreaches to the appropriate people; now the permittee doesn't have to contact multiple people.

What are the challenges to conducting research on the monument?

One major limitation for research at the monument is the lack of dedicated facilities for research, both housing and lab space. Although we have designated camping areas on the periphery of the monument that researchers can use, this setup isn't optimal for projects that require longer term field visits. There are plans underway for the Mount St. Helens Institute to convert the Coldwater Visitor Center into the Mount St. Helens Lodge and Education Center, which will be available for use by researchers.

Finally, what would you like OldSmokeys to know about the PNW Research Station's involvement on the mountain?

PNW is committed to continuing to work on Mount St. Helens and to facilitate research and be an integral part of that into the future. The programmatic examples I gave earlier are ways in which we're trying to facilitate the continuation of a vibrant research program in the coming decades. *ON*

Frontline and Personal Reflections

For this Frontline and Personal Reflections column, OldSmokey members Kenneth "Ken" Johnson, Bob Williams, and Tom Mulder share their experiences working on the St. Helens Ranger District and the Monument. The OldSmokeys editorial team virtually sat down with Johnson, Williams, and Mulder to discuss the Forest Service's response to the eruption and balancing the needs of science and management while providing a world-class educational experience for the public.

In 1963, Johnson graduated from the Louisiana Tech School of Forestry. He received his first permanent appointment on the Ukiah District on the Umatilla National Forest in 1964.

Kenneth "Ken" Johnson

In October 1979, he became district ranger on the St. Helens Ranger District on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Following the creation of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, he was selected as its first monument manager in April 1983.

Subsequent assignments took him to the Washington Office, Mississippi as a forest supervisor, and a return to the Washington Office from which he retired in January 2003.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota with a degree in forest management in 1957, Williams accepted a forester position on the Payette National Forest in southwest Idaho. Over the course of his 42-year career, he worked in the Rocky Mountain states, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Juneau, and Portland/Vancouver. Positions held included district ranger on three districts, forest supervisor on two national forests, and several staff and deputy positions.

Bob Williams

He retired in 1999 as the regional forester for the Pacific Northwest Region. Of all his jobs, Williams considers the best job was forest supervisor of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and the Mount St. Helens' challenges were a large part of that.

Tom Mulder

Mulder's Forest Service career launched in May 1980 on the Chequamegon National Forest. His career path included stops in Wisconsin, Alaska, Oregon, New Mexico, and Washington State in roles ranging from forestry technician to Youth Conservation Corps staff, camp manager, analyst, financial manager, administrative officer, district ranger, and acting forest supervisor. Along the way, Mulder also had interesting detours to the Bureau of Land Management, Mineral Management Service, and Bonneville Power Administration.

He took the challenging helm as the Mount St. Helens Monument manager and district ranger in 2006 during the volcano's reawakening and retired in 2015. Mulder is a past president of Old Smokey retirees and has continued to use his passion as an instructor, coach, gardener, and facilitator in retirement.

Activity on the district pre-eruption

Johnson – Since it was wintertime on the district, we were confined to the lower elevations for timber sales-related work. The earthquake activity started in early March and that threw things into a cocked hat! By mid-March the frequency of earthquakes had increased. Toward the end of the month, the bulge developed on the top of the peak and gas began escaping. That's when things became a little bit on the scary side.

We had regular meetings to let the employees know what was going on. In consultation with the forest supervisor, others in the agency, and the U.S. Geological Survey, we evacuated the ranger station; it was on the east end of the Swift Reservoir managed by Pacific Power and Light. Our reasoning: If anything happened on the mountain, it would likely cause flooding or avalanches that would come toward the ranger station. We also went across the reservoir where there were residences and notified the community that we were evacuating.

On the first of April, the ranger station and all the residences were vacated in less than eight hours

with a convoy of moving vans and employees and their spouses. We evacuated east to the Wind River Ranger Station. The employees and their families were housed with other Forest Service families who didn't live at Pine Creek. The ranger station was relocated to Cougar because we thought that was a safe location. The station consisted of house trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Around this time, a red zone was placed around the mountain to prevent sightseers from going inside because of the danger. Many of my employees, along with law enforcement personnel, became responsible for manning the checkpoints.

When the mountain erupted

Johnson – I was at home and heard of the eruption from my wife, who was listening to the Forest Service radio. I called the ranger station and, fortunately, reached Bill Harteloo, who was a fire management assistant. I asked him to send someone to the house with a car so I could get to the ranger station. The main concern was the safety of our employees since there was a planting crew on the south side of the mountain. I heard one of the contractor's crewmembers took off running and had to be chased down to get him into the vehicle so they could get out of there. The loss of life occurred mainly on the west and north side, away from Forest Service land.

After the eruption

Johnson – The Forest Service flew fixed wing flights continuously around the mountain for days. A few weeks later, I finally went up to see the area. It was a sight hard to describe. What was previously green was now gray, with trees just laid over. Since I was familiar with the area, I could locate the drainages, streams, roads, but it was very difficult to locate anything else.

After the eruption, we moved the ranger station to Amboy, where we stayed for the rest of the time I was a ranger. A lot of our work now focused on ensuring the public could view the mountain and learn about the eruption. Our employees continued to be employed either in visitor information, providing security, or in planning. Some of our employees went to work on other Gifford Pinchot districts while we recovered. We did hire additional staff with experience in visitor outreach and recreation.

For the visitor centers, we secured two trailers: one in Ridgefield and one on the north end that were both staffed. About three years after the eruption, adecision was made to establish a permanent visitor center at Silver Lake.

Creating the visitor experience on the monument

Williams – I came on in the fall of 1983, so the chaos of recovery was pretty much over. The monument had already been established. The planning process for the monument within the context of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest plan, which was required by the National Forest Management Act, had already occurred. Bob Tokarczyk had done an outstanding job leading; he had strong people, strong engineers, strong planners, and of course, Ken and his crew. I worked in legislative affairs in the Chief's Office when that was going through the debate process in Congress. One of the other staffers was handling it so I was observing from the distance. When I arrived, the Windy Ridge viewpoint had been opened.

Anytime you stepped out of a vehicle wearing a uniform, you'd have eight or 10 people gather around you, asking, 'Where was Harry's place?' or 'What happened over there?' Most of us learned the answers fast. In 1984, on any decent day, all summer long, there were crowds. Not overwhelming crowds, but there was constant movement of people going up there.

Early in my tenure, and three years after the eruption, we took a helicopter trip to the base and crater. That was the noisiest place I've been in my life. Rocks were constantly rolling off the crater. The construction of the visitor center at Sliver Lake was well underway during this time. When I walked into it, I thought, 'Holy cow, we're building a cathedral.' I was really concerned that the public would criticize us for overbuilding.

A few months after the dedication ceremony, which I was the emcee, I wandered around the center in my uniform. Within the center are large posts with carvings around them, and I noticed this gentleman studying them. I walked over, and he told me, 'By golly it's good to see somebody do something right with our money.' I still get emotional sharing this story.

Funding the construction of these visitor centers is quite the story. Before I left D.C., I already knew I was coming to the monument, so I visited members of the congressional staff on the Hill, one of which was Congressman Don Bonker. Since he wasn't there when I stopped by, I chatted with his assistant. As I was readying to leave, he came in.

After we were introduced, he put a finger on my chest and said, 'I want to talk to you.'

I thought, 'Holy cow! I'm not even there and I already got a congressman mad at me.'

Continued on page 22

Welcome New OldSmokeys Members

Welcome to these new OldSmokeys who have joined the Pacific Northwest Forest Service Association since the winter 2023 *OldSMokeys Newsletter* went to press.

Becky Gravenmier of Walla, Walla, Washington.

Becky worked in a shared position between PNW Station and Region 6 as a science/climate change coordinator.

Now retired, she moved from Aloha, Oregon, to Walla, Walla, Washington, and has built a new home. Becky keeps busy with landscaping and unpacking at her new home and working part-time planning events and wine tastings at a resort down the street.

Michael Hampton of Keizer, Oregon.

Prior to retirement, Michael held a combined position of regional planner and regional environmental coordinator. He also served as the Region 6 representative at the Regional Ecosystem Office, which oversaw the NW Forest Plan.

Since 2015, Michael has worked periodically as a natural resource consultant, mostly for Region 6 Resource Monitoring and Development yet he hasn't worked much since Covid. Michael also spends his time volunteering, including serving as cochair of the membership committee for the Old Smokeys and on the legislative committee for the Marion County Democrats.

John Ransom of Marcola, Oregon.

While with the agency, John was a land surveyor. Now retired, he keeps busy with projects around the house but plans on doing some traveling.

Chris Strebig of Portland, Oregon.

Chris began his federal career in 1991 with the Bureau of Land Management at the Oregon State office serving in positions in various areas within Lands & Records, Incident Information and Public Affairs. He joined the Forest Service in 2006 as the Gifford Pinchot National Forest's public affairs officer and later was the Rocky Mountain Region's press officer.

For the last six years of his career, Chris was the project manager for Spirit Lake Outflow effort on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Tasks included ensuring operations, maintenance and critical tunnel repairs were completed, preparing and implementing an emergency response plan, and working with regional and national resources to inform and analyze long-term lake outflow options.

Chris is still figuring out retirement and finding different ways to occupy any extra time. *ON*

Seeking Volunteers for High Desert Ranger Station's 2023 Summer Season

Again this summer, as they have every summer beginning in 2009 (with the exception of Covid-19 summers 2020 and 2021), OldSmokeys and other volunteers will staff the historic High Desert Ranger Station at The High Desert Museum on U.S. Highway 97 south of Bend, Oregon. You could be one of them!

For a dozen summers, OldSmokeys and a few other Museum volunteers have provided one-on-one interpretation of the Forest Service and its role in the evolution of the Old West of natural resource exploitation into the New West of natural resource stewardship to an average of 1,500 visitors at this unique historic exhibit at this world-class museum of natural and cultural history.

Readily identifiable in their forest green polo shirts, these volunteers' five-hour duty days (11 a.m.-3 p.m. from July 1 through Labor Day) are individually scheduled by volunteer team leader Martha Henderson based on each volunteer's availability and convenience. Martha, a retired geography professor with significant seasonal Forest Service experience, trains new volunteers, updates returning volunteers, and serves days not scheduled by other volunteers.

High Desert Ranger Station volunteers sign on as High Desert Museum volunteers, and first-year volunteers pass a criminal background check, attend Museum volunteer training, and receive a full day of on-the-job ranger station staffing orientation. Volunteers pay for their own uniform polo shirts worn tucked into regular blue jeans set off by proper belts and footwear. Warm uniform jackets are provided for rare spells of cool weather.

the High Desert Ranger Station is a great way OldSmokeys help citizen-owners of the National Forest System appreciate the current and historic roles of the Forest Service and the national forests and grasslands it administers for them. For more information, contact Martha by telephone at 360-789-1512 (leave message if nobody's home) or by email geowildfire@msn.com. *ON*

The National Museum's History Corner

By Amanda Wickel

What do you do with your history? I was 21 months old when Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980. Unlike it did for others, the eruption didn't really impact my life. We lived about 650 miles away where my dad had his first Forest Service job, on the Burley Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest. What I do remember from the eruption is that every gas station for most of my childhood had a poster by the door, with a picture of the volcano and tiny bags of ash for sale as mementos. Not having much pocket money, I never bought one. If I had, what would I do with it more than 40 years later?

For the Emergency Watershed Rehabilitation team formed after the eruption, they had mementos, memories, and boots-on-the-ground experience as they rushed to form a short-range plan to rehabilitate 82,056 acres within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. They used all the technologies and transportation they could to photograph, document, test, and sample the changed area.

The team members were silviculturist Jim Edgren; plant materials specialist Bob Hamner; fisheries biologist Gordon Haugen; soil scientist Steve Howes; geologist Pete Patterson; geotechnical engineer John Steward; hydrologist Jerry Swank; and team lead civil engineer John Pruitt.

As the years pass, what would they do with all the pictures and reports and how would they make sure history doesn't forget the hard work of the team? How will today's researchers know what it took for the land to recover?

In 2019, John Pruitt and Steve Howes, the two remaining team members, donated 758 slides, reports, recommendations, and materials from the study to the National Museum of Forest Service History. Many of the slides are available to view in our online collection: http://forestservicemuseum.pastperfectonline.com/search.

Here's an excerpt from their report:

What we observed on our first flight into the blast zone on June 27, 1980 was unlike anything we had seen before. Our first impressions were that of a moonscape. Even the helicopter pilot, this being his first trip, remarked about how difficult it was to judge distance above the ground. He was also alarmed by the dust blown up by the rotors. The topography that existed prior to the eruption had been altered to the extent that it was barely recognizable. Spirit Lake was now a different shape and was nearly covered with floating logs and woody debris. It was also deeper and at a higher elevation. Roads, bridges and recreation facilities in the area were destroyed with no remains in sight. Deep mudflows covered the upper Toutle River Valley....

Another major concern now emerged. The current available resource aerial photography was totally useless, because everything had changed, we only had our surface measurements, on-site photography and soil and water samples to aid in these calculations. We needed new aerial photography for stereo observations, rectified images for measurements, new contour maps, etc. The normal acquisition of Forest Service resource photography could not possibly react in time for us to meet our deadlines. The Regional Forester had previously solicited the Nationwide Forestry Applications Program, using high altitude, photography-based survey techniques to support Forest Service efforts and subsequently other planning efforts.

Of course, the nation was on alert to this significant event. The United States Air Force, Lockheed Engineering and Management Services and NASA were immediately mobilized to support the assessment, using previously arranged quick response agreements. They flew high altitude missions over the volcano and provided before and after satellite images and oblique images of the area. In less than 10 days, as we recall, a team of Lockheed's photogrammetrists converged on Portland with equipment and 9"x 18" color-positive transparencies from the U2 flights, for use as resource photography.

As you remember where you were when Mount St. Helens erupted, you can explore how the Forest Service preserved and documented that historic time. *ON*

Amanda Wickel currently works as the Campus Manager at The National Museum of Forest Service History

Macduff: The Mountain, the Man, and the Mystery

By Don Pederson

Macduff Mountain, a 5,052-foot peak about four miles south of McKenzie Bridge, Oregon, is named for Nelson Ferris Macduff, supervisor of the Cascade National Forest from 1920 to 1930, who died under suspicious circumstances. (The Cascade National Forest combined with the Santiam National Forest in 1933 to form today's Willamette National Forest.) Ray Engles, the McKenzie district ranger at the time, told me this story while I was district ranger there from 1975 to 1980.

As Ray told it, Supervisor Macduff had come to the district and was staying at the Log Cabin Inn in McKenzie Bridge. Sometime during the evening, Macduff couldn't be located and a search was started. Ray was with the searchers who found his body about 6:40 a.m., shot through the head. Ray remained with the body until the Lane County coroner and sheriff arrived, so he had a long time to study the scene. Macduff lay on his back with his arms at his side and his legs out straight out. Ray believed Macduff had been moved to this spot and laid on the ground after he was dead. He noted there were no scuff marks on the ground, which would have been expected if the victim had been shot while standing. His pistol was near his right hand, but the bullet appeared to have entered his head from the left side. Ray also noted that nobody had heard a shot although the body was found close enough to the inn for someone to have heard it.

According to Ray, when the coroner and party arrived, they were not careful about keeping others out of the area and took pictures only after the body had been moved around. Ray was convinced Macduff had been murdered and believed the authorities had taken the easy way out by calling it a suicide. When I asked Ray who he thought might have murdered Macduff, he implied there had been some shady things going on at the time but offered no details.

Ray died a year or two after telling me this story. When his brother Harold Engles, who also worked on the Cascade National Forest, cleaned out Ray's house, I asked if the Forest Service could have any old diaries he might find. Harold gave me a large bag of diaries, and I immediately turned to the day of Macduff's death. Most of the daily entries contained only a few lines of information, but the entry on the day of the death went on for several pages and the description of that day's events was almost exactly what Ray had told me. Ray must have thought about this incident many times over the years to be able to recite it so accurately nearly 50 years later.

Lawrence and Mary Rakestraw's *History of the Willamette National Forest* quotes Harold Engles describing Nelson Macduff as "a very, very fine man, a scholar and a gentleman" who "serves as Supervisor in the Santiam 1911-1912 and in the Cascade 1920-1930. He was born in Ohio, the son of an Episcopal priest; graduated in forestry from the University of Michigan; first served on the Siskiyou and then on the Santiam and the Cascade. He was shot in 1930 in what is still an unsolved mystery." In the days after his death, the *Eugene Guard* newspaper was filled with testimonials, from a wide range of civic groups and individuals, praising Macduff as one of the city's most outstanding citizens and, in time, managed to name a mountain after him.

There is a postscript to this story. While I was district ranger at McKenzie Bridge, I was also a member of a U.S. Naval Reserve unit in Eugene. One of the other officers in that unit, whose last name was Macduff, turned out to be Nelson Macduff's grandson. He told me the story of Macduff's family's effort to install a bronze plaque on Macduff Mountain. The day the plaque was to be installed—June 28, 1931—was rainy and foggy, and there was a mix-up. The plaque was placed on what was then McLennen Mountain. This had been a frustration to the family for many years, and I encouraged them to get it relocated, which happened after I left the district. The whole story is told on pages 600-601 of the seventh edition of Lewis A. McArthur & Lewis L. McArthur's *Oregon Geographic Names* published by the Oregon Historical Press in 2003.

So, what really happened that day in 1930 near the Log Cabin Inn in McKenzie Bridge? Was it suicide, an accident, or murder? And, if it was murder, who did it and why? We will probably never know. *ON*

OldSmokey Members' Memories of Mount St. Helens

As Rebecca Hoffman mentioned in "Managing the Mount St. Helens Monument," "everyone has a connection and story of where they were or where their family camped or worked on the mountain." For many Forest Service employees in Region 6, they have personal and career connections, or both, to the mountain.

In keeping with this issue's theme, we invited OldSmokeys to share memories of Mount St. Helens.

Editor's note: The following stories are the personal opinions and recollections of the writer and may not reflect the OldSmokeys as an organization. Due to space limitations, they have been edited for conciseness.

Mel Dittmer – After two years on two ranger districts on the Willamette National Forest, in May 1962 I was promoted to district engineer on the Randle Ranger District where I worked for District Ranger Harold Coates. Although it did not include Mount St. Helens, the west edge of the Randle District was maybe 10 miles from the volcano. I visited it and the lake at least twice while we lived in Randle.

About a year before I moved to Randle, a timber sale was made on that west edge of the Randle District with a road through the sale area for timber removal. When the purchaser of the sale began building the road, they found the roots of a thick stand of nearly three feet in diameter Douglas-fir trees about five feet below ground level. That five feet was puffy volcanic ash. These trees had survived the 1857 Mount St. Helens eruption.

A few years later as an assistant forest engineer on the Umatilla National Forest, while I was inspecting a timber sale road under construction on the Ukiah Ranger District, I spotted something white in a draw above the road and went up for a closer look. It was volcanic ash, very similar, but finer grain to that on the Randle Ranger District. No doubt it was from the Mt. St Helens eruption in 1857.

On May 18, 1980, my family and I lived in Missoula, Montana, where I worked for Region 1 Regional Engineer Bob Larse. About noon on that Sunday, I hooked the trailer behind my car, grabbed my chain saw and drove to an old timber clear-cut on a hill on the Lolo National Forest to get some firewood for the following winter.

It was a clear and sunny day. An hour or two later I noticed a large weird-shaped cloud maybe 50 miles to the west. My first thought was that it must be an unusual thundercloud. Between sawing firewood and carrying it to my trailer I kept my eye on that cloud wanting to get my trailer loaded before a downpour of rain arrived. The cloud kept coming, and the sky darkened. Once my trailer was full, I headed home.

By the time I got home, a few tiny bits of ash were falling. My 18-year-old daughter came out of the house and said the news on TV/radio were reporting that ash from Mt St Helens is starting to fall and could be hazardous to the lungs. Cars needed to get off the road and into garages, so they didn't stir up the ash, and people should stay inside. She insisted I immediately come into the house.

I hurried unloading the trailer and got my car into the garage. The town was shut down to traffic and business for two or three days until the rain washed most of the one to two inches of fluffy ash away.

W.Y. Gene Pong – I was one of five Forest Service employees asked to visit the crater shortly after the first eruption on May 18, 1980; there was a second, smaller eruption sometime later. The agency wanted to assess whether the blown-down timber was salvageable. Myself, Tom Snellgrove, and Tom Fahey flew to the crater in a helicopter. When we landed, the pilot warned us not to go further than we could run in 10 seconds, in case we had to make an emergency exit. I ran track in high school so I figured I could go a bit aways, but after seeing all the trees covering the ground, I didn't dare go far.

The ground was so warm the soles of my boots were melting, and the trees were still smoking. I could actually look into the crater. I didn't feel safe at all. We stayed there for only a brief time, and fortunately, the pilot didn't have to sound the emergency horn to call us back. When I returned home that night, my wife asked why I went up there. In hindsight, I shouldn't have since it was truly dangerous being on that active crater.

Les Joslin – When Mount St. Helens erupted, I was a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander serving as assistant intelligence officer in the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk. Having returned from a not-so-routine six-month deployment to the Western Pacific—which,

courtesy of the Ayatollah Khomeini, was extended to a nine-month deployment by a three-month trip to the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea—we were in San Diego preparing for our next scheduled deployment. When Mount St. Helens erupted, the ship's intelligence center received a high-precedence message advising that the big explosion in the Pacific Northwest was a volcanic eruption, not an enemy attack.

Ted Stubblefield – My wife and I got our initial "dusting" from Mount St. Helens after the ash had traveled around "Earth" and we were in Grant Pass, Oregon. We were glued to the TV trying to catch the news and follow the horrible aftermath. Little did I know that after moving to Olympia I would become the forest supervisor on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest with the task of overseeing the building of the infrastructure for Mount St. Helens: highways; two visitor centers; trails; the Spirit Lake tunnel, salvage; and so much more.

While my responsibility was mostly indirect, the actual oversight came from our Monument Manager, Lynn Roberts, and the work was carried out by our engineering department, led by Larry Seekins. The Statewide Emergency Management Plan updating and Incident Commander was tasked to Rich Stem. The devastation was breath-taking but different on each side of the mountain. Lynn, the engineers, and I met on a regular basis with surrounding county commissioners as work progressed on the Monument. Concurrently, we realigned the Ranger Districts from five to three based on the major watersheds; it just made good sense.

By far, the greatest challenge was obtaining funding, even though our senators, counties, congressionals, Chief and regional forester were for once all in agreement to build the facilities and announce to the world that the single greatest geological event in America was open for all to see. But people change, and in this case, it was a tooth-and-nail fight to obtain funding in the right categories (engineering vs recreation) to finish the road to Johnston Ridge and build the visitor centers. Many national forests had to sacrifice some of their funding to help us get the job done, but, collectively, we did just that. A great achievement that millions from all over the world came to see and experience.

Jim Merzenich – Saturday, May 8th, was warm and sunny when we awoke in Missoula. It was opening day so we decided to go fishing in a stream east of town. As we drove home in the afternoon, an ominous black cloud appeared in the west. After pondering for a minute, we realized that Mount St Helens must have blown. Around 5 p.m. the ash cloud descended on Missoula, darkening the sky and causing the streetlights to turn on. We excitedly drove around, not realizing that the ash could cause serious damage.

When I awoke the next morning, the radio announced that due to the hazardous conditions all people must stay indoors. Surface winds were blowing, and visibility was near zero. By Tuesday, rain arrived and life returned to normal. Missoula reportedly received 3/4th of an inch of ash. Along the crest of the Bitterroot Mountains bordering Idaho two to four inches of ash fell.

Gordon Schmidt – Having been raised in and around the Gifford Pinchot, Mount St. Helens was a staple in my life. When I joined the Forest Service in 1966, Mount St. Helens was the Mt. Fuji of the US, a seemingly perfect cone of snow. I remember working on a trail maintenance crew. As we cleaned up the Soda Peaks Lake trail, you had a perfect view of Mount St. Helens before the eruption. That same view was prevalent from many locations in the area. Somewhere I have a photo from the Soda Peaks Lake trail that brings back memories.

On March 27, 1980, Dr. David Sandberg, Dr. Stewart Pickford, and I were on a field review of the Ruth Fire searching for fire effects and what contribution fuel treatment might have had on the escaped slash burn (Ruth Fire). We were just south of West Point in the Canyon Creek drainage. Sometime shortly after lunch (as I remember) we heard a very loud crack in the air, sharper than a sonic boom but certainly that loud or louder. We all looked at each other and asked, "What was that?" We were perplexed, went on about our review, and finished up midafternoon. On the way home we learned that Mount St. Helens had opened a steam vent that afternoon. It was our first experience with the eruption of Mount St. Helens; in fact, you could say it was the first eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980.

Carrie Gordon – Mount St. Helens was not close to Cle Elum, Washington—on May 18, 1980, we learned differently. I was helping a friend with her Bluebird troop on an overnight campout at Camp Illahee. We had hiked to the top of a near-by ridge on Sunday morning. Looking off to the south, we saw a huge black cloud. Fearing a major rainstorm, we elected to take the girls back to camp to wait for their parents to pick them up.

When we arrived at camp, frantic parents were racing to load up their children. The huge cloud was not rain but ash. The ash and light sulfur odor infused

the air for the rest of the day. I lived in an upper studio apartment near the elementary school in Cle Elum. Peoh Point ridge, to the south, had a dark black cloud rising along its length. My parents and family lived on the south side of the ridge 15 miles to the east. They were in total blackout.

Cle Elum experienced what at first seemed like a "light snowfall" but was sifting fine volcanic ash. We were fortunate, unlike the rest of the eastside of the state.

Field days the rest of the summer were scratchy and a challenge. Our optical survey instruments, eyeglasses and skin were bombarded with sharp crystalline volcanic ash particles, as the dry ash started to incorporate with the surface soils, falling off the vegetation where it had landed.

We were most definitely close to Mt. St. Helens.

Dick Woodfin – After the devastation caused by the eruption, a long series of questions about safety, timber conditions, potential for salvage were discussed. In July, the PNW Station was asked to begin a series of surveys and studies to determine salvage potential.

The first flight by Station folks to look at the damage before field crews went to work included Station Director Glenn Cooper, the deputy director, myself, and one other person. That flight past the crater mouth blast zone revealed a landscape we had never seen before. A forest downed as if a giant hand had used a comb to put the trees down! Someone described it as looking like "hair on a dogs back."

All the questions of safety, future eruptions, timber salvage, wildlife, road construction, value in the timber were being asked. From the standpoint of salvage, it would take people on the ground to begin to assess recovery potential. This is where the PNW Station Timber Quality (TQR) Project folks started. Our first helicopter stop was very short, limited to about 15 minutes. The helicopter idled the whole time as I recall. Besides the awesome destruction and stark landscape, one of most vivid memories is what was left of a 40-50 DBH tree, now a stump about 10 feet tall. It had been twisted off as it were a one-inch twig. Flights continued through the summer as forest inventory and the TQR crew did their assessment.

Dean Parry – On that Sunday, I was in Petersburg, Alaska. I watched on television as the eruption of Mount St. Helens was being reported. I called home to Gresham and my wife didn't know it was erupting.

As I remember, the Forest Service planned to salvage the downed timber. They realized that this would be different from a normal falling operation. Most of the trees had been blown over by the blast of hot air and ash (pyroclastic flow). They wanted to compare blast wind falling damage to breakage incurred in a normal falling operation.

Our team flew in by helicopter. Since the damage assessment project took place soon after the eruption, it was unknown if there would be more eruptions. To ensure the safety of crews in the blast area, a helicopter was available for immediate egress. As soon as we landed and exited the helicopter at our first sample plot, we were hit with the stark realization that the only color you saw was gray, and everything was covered with volcanic ash. Walking across the landscape stirred up a small cloud of ash. One of my photos shows a nearly bare landscape. This was the closest plot to the volcano that we sampled. Depending on how far from the volcano you were, the

Photo coutresy of Dean Perry

amount of scalping of all ground vegetation, leaves, branches, or whole trees decreased with distance. Our most distant plot was about 12-14 miles from the volcano. At that location, most all trees were standing but dead, flash-roasted by the heat. We found a dead horse and camping equipment at that site.

To help us identify species and establish breakage length measurement methods, we borrowed an individual from Region 6 Timber Staff. Without being able to see cut ends, branches or leaves, we had him help us until he was sure we could identify species correctly.

Impacts from the blast varied by distance and direction from the volcano. The closest areas were wiped clean to the ground surface. About 14-16 miles north of the mountain most trees were standing but killed by heat. Another interesting observation we made was that the blast flowed, followed valleys and it turned corners. In one location the trees were felled and the tops were pointing at the volcano. It was quite surprising that the results of our efforts demonstrated that loss to breakage from the blast was significantly less than what would be expected in a normal falling operation.

Tom Snellgrove – When I first arrived at PNW in 1968, the common discussion at professional and social events was chatting about the mountain. When the mountain began to bulge, the conversation shifted but remained casual. With the actual eruption, there was a quick response. The Chief wanted general information he could take to Congress on resource situations. The result was to set up appropriate skill groups that included silviculture, ecology, forest products, forest inventory and others. The challenge was access, safety, and general coordination.
The National Forest System's use of the Incident Command System (ICS) came to play. Leading that as I recall was Paul Stencamp of Region 6. The only team members I remember were Jerry Franklin, Tom Fahey, myself, although I know there were others.

Some observations:

- The area appeared as a moonscape, everything gray, bizarre, and hard to focus and delineate terrain.
- The size of downed timber and magnitude of it all.
- More standing dead timber than expected. Apparently dead trees offered less resistance than green trees. This was considered good news according to wildlife biologists for habitat for cavity nesters.

We landed in several locations on a flight to get samples and cut cross sections from logs. It was obvious that silica was going to be a serious issue with salvage. Early thoughts were that timber would be useless. The team gathered a few samples of blast material, the light and soft pumice blocks and crater material that was heavy, jagged, sharp and dangerous for the helicopter.

Logs were taken out for veneer peeling by the Van Ply mill in Stevenson, Washington. My recollection is that material did peel okay, but the resulting plywood had heavy dark staining from the silica. That material was marketed as Mount St. Helens plywood. Logs to be sawed went to the SD&S mill in Bingen, Washington. There were saw issues as with the chain saws.

Post-MSH research on inventory and damage was compiled by the Forest Products and Forest Inventory teams; Ken Snell, Tim Max, John Teply and Tom Snellgrove. The challenge for inventory was to include standing and downed timber. Standard forest inventory methods only covered standing timber. Reporting findings became a question as the President had put a hold on all research publications. The PNW editorial staff solved the problem by having findings reported in General Technical Review papers: "Breakage of Timber and Quality of Woody Material Damaged by Mount St. Helens" by Snell, Max, and Snellgrove and "Damage to National Forest Timber on Mount St. Helens" by Snellgrove, Snell, and Max.

Steve Kimball – I worked at the Mount St. Helens District as a forestry technician when the volcano's blast shook Southwest Washington. On that sunny Sunday morning, I was driving from my home in Amboy to Vancouver, Washington, with my fiancé. She suddenly screamed for me to stop. We pulled over to see the explosion of ash shooting up from the mountain; it looked like a plume from an atom bomb. In Vancouver, I called the St. Helens district office. I was told to report the next morning with my fire gear. I was assigned to patrol a new "blue zone" closure area on the less impacted south side of the mountain. I spent summer through fall of 1980 with a crew cruising a land exchange out of the blast zone near Randle and Packwood.

In spring of 1981 I worked with the district presale crew preparing the first salvage sales on the northeast fringe of the blast area. Daily, we traveled by helicopter to helispots freshly cut by fire crews Because of the threat of additional eruptions, we were required to be within a 15-minute hike to the helicopter; this meant working from helispot to helispot.

Soon we posted boundaries around the first salvage units and began trying to cruise the chaotic assortment of jack-strawn, ash-covered, down and

leaning old-growth trees on steep slopes. With most trees down we couldn't use prisms or reliskops, so we tried fifth-acre plots. Walking through, on top of, and along the huge down and leaning trees with a measuring tape was slow and dangerous. We quickly realized it would take forever to cruise the seemingly endless landscape of down trees. After an exhausting first day we retreated back to the office to talk to our boss about other options.

We were talking through the volcano salvage cruise problem when it occurred to us that there were many old clearcuts within and near the blast zone. We sought out the cut-out records from these past sales and developed an intricate system of comparable sales analysis. We created spreadsheets to compare elevation, aspect, site index, species composition, log grade, and other attributes of sales in the area. Not satisfied with singular unit by unit comparisons, we assigned and weighted the information from several of the previously cut units to generate a composite volume estimate for each unit of the new salvage sale. We proceeded to estimate volumes this way through the next couple of years as we prepared the remaining volcano salvage sales.

John Dibert, Phil Dodd, Steve Marten, and Jeff Starnes doing recon for where logging systems could be placed for the salvage. Photo coutresy of Steve Kimball

The Mount St. Helens District team that worked on the volcano salvage layout included John Dibert, Dennis Wright, Dexter Defibough, Ed Brown, Perry Ham, Stephanie Cross, and others I no longer recall. Phil Dodd, the district timber management assistant, plotted the strategy, procured resources, and provided exceptional leadership.

After the volcano salvage I moved on to other jobs with the Forest Service. One day in the late 1980s, a letter from the Washington Office found me in Gold Beach, Oregon, with "Volcano Salvage Sales" in the subject line. The letter said a post-sale review of the cutout volumes of the salvage sales found the volume of wood removed was inexplicably close to the pre-harvest estimates. The reviewers wanted to recognize those who made such close estimates given the conditions at the time. I remember thinking it was self-preservation, along with a disdain for climbing around huge down trees covered with ash, that drove us to find a better way. In the '90s I returned to work at the Mount St. Helens Monument where I found an extraordinary group of employees devoted to innovation, research, and interpretation as the recovery effort continued.

Roland Emetaz – At the time I was employed by the Forest Service in the Regional Office of the Northwest Region. Among others, I was asked to be an information officer at the Rescue Center located at the Toledo, Washington, airport. All declined other than me since I thought it sounded like fun. Once at the Rescue Center, I had second thoughts. I dealt with 100-a-day media requests from all over the world: BBC London, Paris TV, Tokyo TV, where I had trouble understanding the Japanese interpreters, and other mainline US networks.

Finally, things got a bit organized with holding two briefings daily at 1000 and 1500. Since rescue on national forests is managed by the county sheriff, I essentially worked for them: Lewis County managed the ground search, Cowlitz County the air search, and Skamania County managed the morgue. One evening the sheriffs asked me to deliver the list of deceased to Vancouver; those days we did not have the electronic communication devices that we have today. In the middle of the night, I made the delivery.

I went home to sleep in my own bed for a few hours but was up early the morning of May 25th and on the road to the Rescue Center. As I drove north on I-5 it became darker with dirty rain, blue flashes in the northern sky. I realized this was the second eruption where the ash cloud traveled to the southwest toward Portland. Very soon the water supply in the windshield washer on the government car became exhausted.

I pulled into the first Longview exit service station. Unfortunately, the water was turned off. There was a telephone booth so I called Forest Headquarters for a water delivery. I was sort of desperate since I needed to be at the 1000 briefing at the Rescue Center.

Walking back to the car, I noticed a case of beer in the backseat of a neighboring car. I explained to the driver who I was and my situation and filled the window washer with beer. I called Forest Headquarters and told them forget the water, I filled the washer with beer. (That got on national news) I made it to the 1000 briefing on time!

Peyton "Pete" Owston – My wife, Connie, was the first in our family to know about the main eruption, but she didn't realize it at the time. A few hours later we learned the cause of the "boom" she heard from our backyard just north of Corvallis. Upon hearing the news, we and our two young daughters jumped in our car and headed to the top of Mary's Peak to see what we could.

That didn't satisfy us, so we took off for a more up-close view early the next morning. We ended up behind a roadblock. At the time, I figured that would be my limit of involvement with the event—I was wrong! A week or so later, I got a call from District Silviculturist Gene Sloniker, whom I knew from previous contacts. He wondered if I would be interested in installing a planting study in the affected area. I, of course, jumped at the opportunity! Gene, Jim Edgren, a PNW Station colleague, and I made our first recon of the blast area by helicopter later that year when clearance was given. There was still the smell of "sulfur" in the air, and landings required several approaches to clear away loose volcanic ash by rotor action so the pilot could see well enough to touch down.

We planned a study to install 11 experimental plots the following spring in a line running from as close to the crater as allowed and ending in the ashfall zone. Fortunately, the district had appropriate seedlings of seven local conifer species available for planting as 2-0 bareroot stock from the nearby Wind River Nursery. To install the plots in the "Red Zone," three of my crew and I along with the bags of seedlings were flown to the planting sites in a large helicopter.

After two years and other research assignments later, I arranged for an Oregon State University master's student assume the monitoring and data analyses. She worked diligently and produced a good master's thesis. Basically, although there were some small differences in results between the species and various treatments applied such as shading and/or fertilizing, all the plantings were successful. That was not too surprising given that the planting sites had little to no competing vegetation or animal browsing. The biggest difference was that on steeper slopes, smaller seedling did not do as well as larger ones because of partial burying by ash erosion from uphill.

Cat Woods, PNW field tech, planting seedling in ash-fall zone.
Photo coutresy of Peyton "Pete" Owston

Ron Humphrey – On Sunday May 18, 1980, I was floating the Blackfoot River in Montana. I had recently transferred from the Zigzag Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest to become the district ranger at Trout Creek on the Kootenai National Forest working for Forest Supervisor Bill Morden. We were enjoying a clear, sunny day on the river, but around 2 o'clock we noticed an ominous cloud looming. We decided to hotfoot it to the takeout before the storm arrived. When we got in the rig, we turned on the radio and heard the news of a massive eruption at Mount St. Helens. When we got to Missoula and turned on the TV, we learned the huge cloud of ash had reached Spokane about noon.

Looking back, it was a poor decision, but I chose to drive to Trout Creek, hoping to beat the cloud. I knew I had enough daylight to make it and I wanted to be on duty to face whatever the fallout would bring. So, off I went. I didn't make it far out of Missoula when the first ash began to fall. At first it wasn't bad, like a light snowfall, but eventually the ash became a total whiteout. It was an ugly gray cocoon. Creeping along using the road reflectors and shoulder stripes, I slowly made my way. Fortunately, most people decided to stay off the highway and I encountered few vehicles. When I did, vision went almost to zero.

Luckily, hours later, I made it home safely and didn't do any damage to my car. In Northwest Montana, we received less than an inch of ash, but it was enough to give everything a coat. We purchased face masks and limited our field work to essential tasks. Eventually, the winds and rains mitigated the hazard. We washed down our structures and cleaned the rain gutters. I imagine that the long-term effects of the ash

was beneficial to the ecosystem. The mountain gave many of us lessons we never forgot.

This wasn't my only experience with Mount St. Helens. In May 1969, I transferred from Region 9 to the Lewis River Ranger District on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. There Mount St. Helens, in all her glory, loomed over us. I had the privilege to climb her, led by our Ranger Bill McCleese.

One of my jobs at Lewis River was overseeing reforestation. One of the challenges to planting success was soil dominated by pumice from eruptions many years previous. Bare root planting didn't work very well, and container stock was unavailable. With some replanting, the units were eventually satisfactorily stocked.

Flash Forward to 1983, I transferred to Region 6 as district ranger at Lowell on the Willamette. I had a chance to tour the Mount St. Helens National Monument. Although most of the damage done by the eruptions was done on the north side of the mountain, there was damage all around the mountain. On the tour we saw timber salvage operations underway as well as restoration activities. Over on the Muddy River side of the divide, my 1969-70 plantations had been covered with feet of ash, pumice and other accumulations. It was sad to see what the mountain had done to our hard work, but I was encouraged to see that crews had begun replanting with the newest techniques.

Roger Deaver – On the morning of this historic event, the Deaver family was departing their home of four years and the rewarding Forest Service appointment as district ranger of the Zig Zag Ranger District, Mount Hood National Forest to travel to their next career assignment: legislative liaison, Chief's Office, Washington D.C. As a family of four, we set about on our five-day driving journey across the U.S. But before fully underway on this moving adventure, we had arranged a departing breakfast with the mayor of Government Camp, Oregon, and other dignitaries we had befriended in this assignment. While we enjoyed this delightful parting social event, the mountain just 80 miles north and just across the Columbia River went into full volcanic eruption. And we were unaware of the blast, as it was hidden behind the southside of Mt. Hood.

We said our goodbyes and accepted the well wishes and got back to the driving route toward the Columbia River Highway to take us east out of Oregon. As we rounded Mt. Hood to descend into the Gorge, the travel issue that we would be facing for the next several days became apparent. The first clue was the giant ominous, full northern horizon black cloud; definitely not your typical thunder cell cloud. The other more definitive sign was the Oregon State Police (OSP) roadblock. We would not be traveling east on I-84 into Idaho.

Our revised route to avoid the volcanic ash outfall on an easterly track across the northern tier of states would be south through Southeast Oregon into Wyoming. We would start out every morning with a thick layer of volcanic ash coating the windshield and hoods of our vehicles. We escaped the worst of the fallout and made it to our new duty station.

Ironically, my first assigned work as the Legislative Liaison for the Office of the Chief, was to hand carry the official Forest Service news release along with copies of several very dramatic photos taken at the moment of the eruption to be delivered to selected members of the Congress. It was a task that I could carry out with personal experience.

Richard Zechentmayer – I was the district resource officer on the Monterey Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest. District Fire Management Officer, Gary Mangus and I just completed the spring survey of the Gamboa Trail from the summit of Cone Peak to Kirk Creek Campground on Highway 1, Big Sur Coast. Reaching the campground, we were immediately confronted by a very distraught middle-aged lady screaming Mount St. Helens had just erupted. Gary called the Pacific Valley Engine Crew and confirmed the eruption had occurred. My immediate thought was that Bob Tokarczyk gained another unique feather in his cap as the first forest supervisor with a volcano on his forest.

Mel Teigen – On May 18, 1980, I was the forest engineer on the Kootenai National Forest and was scheduled to report to work in early June as the new forest engineer on the Gifford Pinchot. We were visiting friends that afternoon and heard on TV that Mount St Helens had erupted that morning. It was about 3 p.m. when ash began drifting into the Libby, Montana, area.

We left our friend's home in another hour and the ash was getting very heavy and it reminded us of a snowstorm in the area we grew up in, North Dakota. After we got home, warnings were issued to not breathe the air and wear a mask when outside. Everything was shut down in Libby for three days as the ash was so thick and considered dangerous to your lungs.

A week later, I traveled to Vancouver, Washington, to report to work. I was in charge of the Engineering Program, and we entered into one of the biggest rescue and rebuilding program the Forest and Region

had ever been involved in. I traveled to our D.C. office several times as we worked with Congress on funding needed for the rebuilding of roads, facilities, and bridges on the forest.

I was the forest engineer on the Gifford Pinchot for eight and a half years and really enjoyed working there. We had a great staff. Much of the recreation development and restoration work was completed or was in the process of being completed before I moved to Region 5, as one of the assistant regional engineers working for Dick Deleissegues.

I believe this experience and exposure of working on this forest helped my career in the Forest Service. I was elected as the Forest Service Engineer the Year in 1986, one of three assistant regional engineers in Region 5. When Dick Deleissegues retired in 1994, I was eventually selected as the regional engineer in Regional 5 and had that position for almost 10 years until I retired in 2003.I give credit for much of my success to working on the Gifford Pinchot and the recovery and development work after the eruption of Mount St Helens.

Bob Williams – I recall a small group of us looking for the best place to site the Johnston Ridge facility. We were on the ridge about where the Observatory is located. It was a hot summer day with wind blowing. The air was full of grit/ash. There was no vegetation around us, just bare, gray, rocky soil. There were remains of broken stumps, large chunks of shattered tree trunks and large rocks. I recall thinking, "This is the most inhospitable place I have ever been."

When I left the Gifford Pinchot, I went to Juneau for my next job. My home was close to the Mendenhall Glacier and I occasionally walked out to the lake and bare shoreline left by the receding glacier. It finally hit me—the similarity of the bare land uncovered by the retreating glacier and the bare land created by the Mount Saint Helens eruption. In both cases life was struggling to come back. First small weeds, then grasses, then tiny shrubs starting, then insects and other animal life. This was a very unscientific observation but one that stuck with me. *ON*

Frontline and Personal Reflections
Continued from page 12

It turns out, the Regan administration wasn't telling how much was needed to develop Mount St. Helens; spending money on a visitors' center and interpretation and recreation wasn't a high priority with the administration. The Cowlitz County commissioner's staff, the Gifford Pinchot staff, and the congressman's staff worked behind the scenes to identify what funding was needed. Because of these working relationships, we never got into conflicts at the leadership level. It was all done through high-quality staff.

Managing for science, public safety, and visitors on Mount St. Helens

Williams – The legislation establishing the monument had a requirement for a science advisory board. It was a rich place for anybody with an academic or research science background, and there were dozens of studies going on at that time. However, there definitely was a point of tension between those who were doing scientific work and the need to provide access for management activities and visitors.

There had been a road through the basin that connected Cowlitz County to Skamania County, along with a whole complex of roads built over the years for timber harvesting. Some people wanted to reestablish this network, but the scientific committee was concerned that developing roads and bringing people in would mess up their research. To the credit of the science advisory board, they figured out a way to blend the needs of the scientists and bringing people in.

There were also public safety considerations needing addressed on the monument. When I arrived, huge pumps, staged on pontoons floating in Spirit Lake, were pumping water into a series of culverts that went over the unconsolidated earthen dam that plugged Spirit Lake. If the lake level ever overtopped the dam, the water would erode the loose and unconsolidated soil and cause it give way, flooding out the communities downstream.

This reality evolved into the discussion on finding a permanent solution. We landed on building a tunnel, which the Army Corps of Engineers constructed, that would drain the water into the South Fork Coldwater Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Toutle River. But landing on that solution took quite some time and many conversations. People were concerned about mixing water from two drainages.

Johnson – My experience working with the researchers was kind of ticklish. Anything that was

going on in the way of research had to be carefully worked out so there weren't conflicts. The researchers didn't want anybody doing anything out there, but we had to. Soon after the eruption, we began salvage of the downed timber, which outside the monument, and we sold millions of board feet in a short period of time. Placing those pontoons on Spirit Lake required building a road from Windy Ridge out across the debris avalanche. There also wasn't housing for the employees performing the work, and they had to be relieved. It was a difficult situation to avoid running into conflicts that would cause a real heartburn.

Mulder – A big part of the recreation on the monument is education, and you can't have world-class education without having world-class science that informs it. I saw it as a very natural interaction even though some of our public saw it as a conflict. During my time on the monument, I strived to espouse that the monument was a place to go for an educational experience more than the typical forest recreation.

There were times when there was tension between research and recreation. At the time it was stressing; now I can say it was entertaining.

> Early in my tenure, and three years after the eruption, we took a helicopter trip to the base and crater. That was the noisiest place I've been in my life.

Navigating budget cuts and defining the mission

Mulder – I had the benefit of working on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest earlier, so I knew many of the management issues when I arrived in 2006. There were many staff who had been there all the way back to 1980 and were feeling challenged since funding and staffing had declined and they were no longer sure what their priority missions were: Are we a monument or a district? I arrived at the monument with a strong commitment to be a listener to find out the challenges people were dealing with.

My tenure was really a different era than what Ken and Bob experienced. My challenges were dealing with agency-wide budget cutbacks from which the monument was not exempt. We had multiple visitor facilities: Coldwater, Johnston Ridge, and Silver Lake, and visitor portals at Cascade Peaks and Pine Creek. The Silver Lake visitor center was still in Forest Service ownership, although Washington State Parks staff oversaw most of its operations. We tackled the challenge of how to sustain as much of our program and facilities as possible with limited resources. The decision to hand off Silver Lake to the state was made outside of my control. It was a sad moment at the time, but I am glad it went to a good use. Working in partnerships with other organizations became our mantra.

There was the political perception we were overbuilt, having both Coldwater and Johnston Ridge visitor centers open. Johnston Ridge is the monument's crown jewel since it's the closest to the crater and offers the premiere views of the volcano. But all the infrastructure and housing to operate Johnston Ridge depends upon Coldwater facilities so Coldwater could not be completely closed. I'm excited that the partnerships we fostered back in the early 2000s have developed into the vision and strategy helping to run Coldwater; the St. Helens Institute is a big player now with a long-term permit to update facilities and develop impressive citizen science and recreation.

Advice for employees working on the monument

Johnson – The advice I would give is you can't work on your own so don't try—work with a team.

Williams – Ken's point of working with the team is recognizing the skills available to support you. We received excellent support from staff in public affairs and recreation at the Regional Office when developing the facilities and interpretation signage to explain an event as significant as Mount St. Helens.

Mulder – For team members and partners arriving at Mount St. Helens, remember that the mountain keeps changing; The landscape is endlessly changing. What's living and growing and thriving in the disturbance zone keeps changing. The knowledge gained from expansive ecological and geologic research keeps changing our understanding of the area. The politics keeps changing. Know that while there's a master plan that sets the tone and legislation that spells out an intended purpose, the monument operations involve non-stop learning and adaption in response to constant change. That adaptability is what makes Mount St. Helens such a fascinating place to work. *ON*

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