



Cleveland National Forest

2005 & 2006 Accomplishment Report

Dear Cleveland National Forest Visitors, Friends, and Neighbors:

It has been a very busy two years for the Forest and its partners. We are continuing our efforts to remove dead and dying trees and shrubs from the Forest that pose a wildfire threat to communities and are working with our partners who are coordinating similar efforts on adjacent public and private lands.

In 2005, we reviewed and adjusted the recreation fee (Adventure Pass) program to fit within the new legislation. This adjustment defined high use areas where fees would be charged and allowed the expansion of free areas. We also completed the revision of the Land Management Plans for the four southern California national forests. I would like to express my appreciation for the comments received and the participation in our planning effort.

In 2006, the Forest continued fuels reduction work on all three of the ranger districts; and continued coordinating with our local state, federal, and international partners. We also started the route designation process and held public meetings in several locations adjacent to the Forest. We are continuing the route designation process and hope to have a motorized transportation map completed by 2008.

Southern California has grown into one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country. As the population increases, national forest lands will become even more important to the surrounding communities for future generations. We are proud of our accomplishments over the last two years and have outlined some of them in this annual report.

We welcome your comments and suggestions in the year ahead and I invite you to visit and enjoy the Cleveland National Forest.

Thomas F. Gillett
Thomas F. Gillett
Acting Forest Supervisor

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Wildland Fire Management

Ramona Air Show

In June 2005, the Cleveland National Forest, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and San Diego County Airport Authority held the 11th annual air show held at the Ramona Air Attack Base. The show hosted a pancake breakfast, aircraft rides, food booths, ultra-light and vintage plane displays, the Forest Service helicopter and crew, and CAL FIRE air tankers conducted aerial operations. Profits from the event benefit the families of aerial firefighters who have perished in the line of duty, and scholarships for local students seeking careers in aviation and fire fighting have also been added.



Parade of Engines at Air Fair

Camp Pendleton Fire School Celebrates 25 years

The fire school at Camp Pendleton celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2005 with the largest ever participation from over 50 fire departments (approx. 2,500 personnel) participating in the five day event. Engines, crews, water tenders, aircraft, dispatchers, and other Incident Command System (ICS) personnel were represented from the federal, state, tribal, county, and municipal levels. This gave all firefighters an opportunity to learn about and train on “live fire” exercises and gain experience as part of the ICS. Media orientation training was provided to about 80 firefighters from the Cleveland and Angeles national forests by public affairs staff. Firefighters reviewed interview tips, were given safety media cards in case the news media showed up at a fire, and received *A Guide to Successful Media Interviews* and a pocket card with good tips on how to interview successfully.



Employees working at the Fire Expo

San Diego Fire EXPO

This annual event raises money for the San Diego Burn Institute. The funds raised support “Camp Beyond the Scars” which is a camp for burn victims. The event is the Burn Institute’s most notable burn survivor support program and is offered twice a year, including a three-day winter camp and a week long summer camp. Children from the local area get to attend the camp at no charge. Children participate in support sessions, which provide a supportive forum where young burn survivors can talk openly about issues they face as a result of their injuries. Cleveland National Forest firefighters raise money on their personal time to contribute to this worthy cause. The expo also hosted games for the children, displays, and fun events throughout the day. A visit by Smokey Bear is always a favorite of all that attend. Forest Fire fighters participate annually in this great community event.

Wildland Fire Management

Forest Employees Help with National Emergencies

After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast area in what has been called the worst natural catastrophe the country has known, Forest employees responded to the call for assistance. The Forest provided employees who were called upon to provide assistance by using their incident management abilities to help manage evacuation centers and base camps, provide logistical support, clear roadways and operate mobilization centers and trailer staging areas. They also distributed food, removed debris, and set up trailers for people to live in. In some instances, they also provided disaster mortuary support in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding. In addition to the assistance with hurricanes, employees were dispatched to fires across the nation during 2005 and 2006. Many employees serve on local and national fire teams that provide support for local southern California incidents and national incidents such as fires, floods, and earthquakes.

Border Fire Prevention and Resource Protection Crew

The Cleveland National Forest, located some five miles north of the international border with Mexico, is the southernmost of the national forests in California. Unauthorized travel, camping, and campfires in the southernmost portion of the Forest create significant resource impacts. The Cleveland National Forest staffs a border fire prevention and resource protection crew that hikes daily on user created trails to pick up trash, extinguish abandoned campfires, and rehabilitate damage to the land. The accomplishments of this crew from 1996 to 2006 includes the detection of over 6200 illegal campfires of which 241 escaped and burned 18,599 acres. The likely wildfire suppression cost savings of this early detection and suppression action is \$1 to \$5 million annually. During 2006, the crew removed almost six tons of food and drink containers, and other refuse from the Forest. Since 1997, more than 128,000 pounds of refuse has been collected and removed. In the past, the crew has also assisted the Bureau of Land Management with resource protection work in the Otay Mountain Wilderness Area.



Basic Firefighter Training Held in Mexico

In 2006 the 2nd Border Wildfire Protection Course was held in training facilities at Sierra de San Pedro Martir National Park, Baja California, Mexico. This annual training class is sponsored by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAF FIRE); USDA Forest Service, Cleveland National Forest; Bureau of Land Management; Comision Nacional Forestal (CONFOR); and Secretaria de Fomento Agropecuario (SEFOA). This translated Spanish version of the Basic Firefighter Course was introduced this year through the National Wildlife Coordinating Group (NWCG) to set the baseline and approve the updated version of the basic training. Class work consisted of the S-130 and the S-190 courses as well as a Global Positioning System (GPS) class. Other training consisted of fire line tool use, fire line construction, fire shelter deployment, weather observations as well as vegetation and topography orientation. Over 80 firefighters from across Mexico were trained at this event.

Fire Recovery And Fuel Reduction Activities

Fire Recovery Activities

The Cleveland National Forest experienced two major fires in 2006, the Sierra and the Horse fires. A team of rehabilitation specialists conducted site surveys and identified emergency rehabilitation land treatments on National Forest System land in the burned areas. Rehabilitation activities were coordinated with other local agencies including the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. The Forest is in the process of implementing these rehabilitation actions.

Horse Fire – this fire burned approximately 16,681 acres, 15,292 of which were on National Forest System land and included two federally designated wilderness areas and the Corral Canyon Off-Highway-Vehicle area. Rehabilitation treatments included restoring drainage function to 15 miles of road, protection of archaeological sites, purchase and installation of pipe barriers and gates, stock fence, trail tread stabilization, hazard tree removals, and patrol of the burned area. With the help of the off-highway vehicle volunteers, a portion of the Corral Canyon area has been reopened.



Horse Fire

Sierra Fire – this fire burned approximately 14,934 acres, 1,759 of which were on National Forest System land. Rehabilitation treatments that were implemented within the burned area included sign replacement, restoring drainage function to four miles of road, and installation of pipe rail gates and fences, monitoring and removal of noxious weeds, cone collection from Tecate cypress, resource patrol, and monitoring of a population of heart-leaved pitcher plant.



Tree Planting

Local Efforts to Improve Burned Areas

During the Cedar Fire in 2003, a crown fire killed most of the Jeffrey pines on the north end of Laguna Mountain. To reduce the fuel loading and improve future regeneration efforts, most of the dead trees were cut down and ground up by a whole tree chipper. The chips were then scattered on the ground to protect the soil. The Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association (LMVA) marked the start of spring with a tree planting event on the Cleveland National Forest. Volunteers planted approximately 1,000 Jeffrey pine seedlings in a portion of the area burned in the Cedar Fire near Garnet Peak on Laguna Mountain. The trees planted will supplement the natural regeneration of the site.

Cone and Seed Collection - In 2005, the Forest continued to work on seed and cone collection that was begun in 2004 following the major wildfires and is storing the collection at the Forest Service seed nursery for future use in reforestations. In 2006, seed was collected in the Tecate cypress stand that was burned during the Sierra Fire.

Fire Recovery And Fuel Reduction Activities

Descanso Ranger District

Thinning and Timber Stand Improvements

The Descanso Ranger District has an ongoing program of thinning overstocked stands in the Wooded Hill area on Laguna Mountain and are using a whole tree chipper to chip up slash and small trees. This work is being accomplished for forest health and fuel reduction in overstocked stands of Jeffrey and Coulter pine trees affected by bark beetle and drought. Chipping was also completed in 2005 in the Horse Heaven campground area. Thinning and timber stand improvements were completed in Kitchen Creek and Camp Ole Penny Pines Plantation to improve forest health.

New Hazardous Fuels Removal Permitting Process

After the Cedar Fire of 2003, the County of San Diego passed an ordinance requiring 100 feet of defensible space around private residences. In some cases, this would require treating vegetation on National Forest System (NFS) lands, because many residences are within 100 feet from the property boundary. The Descanso Ranger District completed an environment analysis, decision document, and permitting process which allows private citizens the opportunity to remove vegetation on NFS lands near their property under certain specifications. This is the first program of its kind developed and implemented in the Pacific Southwest Region.



Transporting logs to mills



Brush Removal Fry Creek

Palomar Ranger District

Fry Creek Hazardous Tree Removal - The Palomar Ranger District is removing dead trees from the Fry Creek area on Palomar Mountain to reduce fire risk and improve the health of a dense area of the Forest where drought and beetle activity have resulted in large-scale tree mortality. Tree removal began in the fall of 2005. The project includes removing dead trees and brush on over 200 acres in and around the Fry Creek Campground. This popular recreation facility has been closed to the public for the last two years due to the dead tree hazard. The campground reopened in 2007. In addition to extensive stands of oak and conifer trees, the project has treated three Penny Pines plantations of coulter pines on Palomar Mountain. Much of the larger material removed from the project area has been transported to mills for use as wood products, such as fence posts and wooden pallets. Other material will be chipped for use in gardens and as mulch in landscaping. Some material has been made available for firewood. By reducing the amount of dead, dry wood and brush, this project will create a healthy forest and also reduce fuel buildup. This Forest Service project will join the efforts on other public and private lands to provide support for community wildfire protection on Palomar Mountain. Thinning also occurred in the Black Mountain Penny Pines plantation in 2005.

Fire Recovery And Fuel Reduction Activities

Trabuco Ranger District

Thinning and Timber Stand Improvements

Timber stand improvement including dead tree removal occurred in 2005 in the Trabuco Penny Pines plantation near Ortega Highway.



Mulching Machine

Fuels Reduction

In 2005 and 2006 approximately 1,409 acres of prescribed burning was accomplished in the Tenaja Falls area located between the community of La Cresta and the San Mateo Wilderness. In 2006, approximately 60 acres of prescribed burning was completed on the North Main Divide fuel break. Additional fuels treatment work was completed around the Los Pinos Boy's camp, the El Cariso Hot Shot Camp, and the electronic sites at Sierra, Santiago and Elsinore peaks. The District also completed approximately 100 acres of a mastication (mulching) project on the North Main Divide fuel break and in the El Cariso Penny Pines Plantation.

Improvements, Roads, Trails, Construction Projects



**New Vault Toilet at
Oak Grove Campground**

Toilet Upgrades

The Forest removed two sub-standard vault toilets from El Cariso and Oak Grove campgrounds and replaced these with new prefabricated concrete toilet buildings. The new concrete buildings are architecturally designed to blend with the environment and require less maintenance. The new facilities meet all of the current accessibility standards.

Fire Station and Barracks Replacements and Repairs

The Forest demolished the substandard Palomar and Pine Hills barracks and replaced them with new facilities for fire fighters. In addition, Camp Ole engine station was expanded to accommodate two fire engines and crews. These new facilities now meet all national standards including accessibility standards. The new facilities are designed to provide training rooms for fire personnel; upgraded restroom facilities; new heating and air-conditioning systems includes high energy efficient components including lighting; insulated building materials including doors, and windows; and new office facilities for fire crews. The Forest has replaced roofs on the Temescal and El Cariso Hot Shot fire station facilities.

Improvements, Roads, Trails, Construction Projects

Burnt Rancheria Campground Improvements

The Burnt Rancheria Campground on the Descanso Ranger District reopened on May 19, 2006 to the public with new and improved facilities. The campground originally constructed in the 1960's, has been updated and improved to include new flush restroom and shower facilities, new campsites, campfire rings/grills, and an amphitheater. Many of these improvements are fully accessible. The existing asphalt roads and camping spurs were recycled in place, and then used as base material for new asphalt pavement. This project will meet customer needs by providing three of the most requested improvements: showers, flush toilets and more accessible camp units. The charm of this campground remains while the new toilets, longer spurs and better roads provide the type of facilities the public wanted. The campground is now accessible to persons of all abilities. The Burnt Rancheria Campground is a very popular destination for campers from western states. It is generally used to capacity most summer weekends. The visitors come to enjoy the cool mountain air, the beautiful pine/oak forest and to hike the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. This campground is a camping and staging area for many hikers that hike the entire length of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mexican border to Canada. It is one of the few sections on the trail that offers a water source for hikers and animals.



Accessible Campsite



Shower Building

New Warehouse

The Forest constructed a new warehouse facility at the Goose Valley Ranger Station to replace the warehouse that was burned in the Cedar Fire of 2003. The new facility provides storage for support equipment and other activities.

Black Star Canyon Road Repairs

The Forest, Supervisor Bill Campbell of District 3, Orange County; and Herb Nakasone, Director of Public Works, conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony to dedicate the 2006 completion of major repairs to Black Star Canyon Road, a main route used during fire suppression activity for community protection in Orange County. The Forest and the County of Orange partnered to repair this road to provide adequate access into the Santa Ana Mountains near the National Forest for fire equipment during emergencies. Road access in backcountry areas is vital to provide wildfire protection in surrounding communities. Bill Campbell spearheaded the efforts to repair the road and worked in conjunction with the Department of Public Works to ensure that this important route be ready for the 2007 fire season.

Improvements, Roads, Trails, Construction Projects



Repairing Roads

Road Repairs

The heavy rain that hit southern California in the winter of 2005 severely damaged eight roads. The Forest has completed repairs on these roads to provide for public safety and fire equipment access. In some locations the roads were realigned, retaining walls were built, low water crossings were constructed, culverts were replaced, and road beds were repaired.

Laguna Visitor Center Refurbish

The 1930's visitor information center was completely remodeled in partnership with Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association (LMVA). A portion of the remodeling cost was covered by recreation fees/Adventure Pass collected on the forest. The project included a new parking lot, a new public restroom building with flush toilets and hot and cold running water. The toilet facility is open year round seven days week and is heavily used during snow events. Located at the same facility is a popular trailhead to the guided nature trail. A new amphitheatre was also constructed with a picnic table and benches to accommodate the public during interpretive walks led by LMVA volunteers. The outside and inside of the facility were completely remodeled to provide updated interpretive information about the national forest resources and recreation opportunities in the local area.



Refurbished Laguna Mountain Visitor Information Center

Meadow and Garnet Visitor Kiosk Replacements

The Forest replaced the old Meadow Kiosk and the Garnet Kiosk that burned in the 2003 fires with new improved structures that match the architectural design of the storm canyon overlook and Lake Henshaw viewing platforms. The new and improved viewing platforms and interpretive station are made of tubular steel and the decking planks are made of recycled plastics that are more durable than wood construction. The interpretive information is currently being developed and new signing will be installed in 2007.

Volunteers & Partners

Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) Volunteer Honored

Jim Weinel retired as the trail adopter of the Barrel Springs section of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCNST) in December of 2004. Jim started working with the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) in 1994 at the age of 77. In 1999, Jim adopted the Barrel Springs section of the PCNST. This section of trail was well-known for being almost impossible to find. The PCNST guide book recommended using a compass and heading northwest from State Route 22 until you ran into State Route 79 at Warner Springs. Jim worked tirelessly over the years by himself and coordinated reconstruction projects to establish what is now one of the best maintained sections of the trail that stretches from Mexico to Canada. Jim averaged 300 to 400 hours a year and traveled 6,000 miles to to and from his house annually each year. When Jim retired at the age of 88 he said his mind wanted to keep at it but his body was getting tired. Jim's contribution to the PCNST and the Palomar Ranger District will always be remembered and will surely be missed.



**Jim Weinel, PCT Volunteer
and Dave Harloff, Recreation**

Environmental Educator and Land Stewards of the Year Award

The Forest Service volunteer group, the Santa Ana Mountain Natural History Association (SAMNHA) received the Environmental Education Group of the Year Award from the Orange County Wildlife Network at the 2006 Earth Day Celebration event held at Upper Newport Bay. The group organized and began monthly programs in the fall of 2005 to offer free natural history programs for the public in the Santa Ana Mountains surrounding foothills. Their work has been conducted primarily on the Trabuco Ranger District. Programs are presented by volunteers who are university professors, researchers, professionals, and naturalists specializing in ecology, botany, biology, geology, ornithology and more. The programs are fun and provide an opportunity to learn about plants, animals, and habitats in the local wild land areas. These programs also give the public a chance to meet the people who work, recreate, and volunteer in these areas. Most programs are appropriate for families and young children. The Trabuco Ranger District is very pleased to have such a dedicated group assist in providing environmental education. Congratulations to these dedicated volunteers.



**Forest Service volunteers leading a free
natural history program**

Volunteers & Partners

Orosco Ridge Shooting Area Cleanup

In 2006 the Palomar Ranger District hosted its annual Orosco Ridge Recreational Target Shooting Area Clean Up Day. Volunteers from across the county came to help clean up the 500 acre shooting area. Volunteer and ranger district employees hauled trash and debris left behind from shooting area users. Large dumpsters were filled and later removed to a disposal site.

The Laguna Mountain Passport in Time Archeological Project

For the past 4 years, the Heritage Program has conducted a volunteer project to identify and record archeological sites in Laguna Meadows located within the Laguna Recreation Area. Volunteers from all over the country come to learn about the culture history of San Diego, methods for identifying artifacts and recording sites. There have been about 100 volunteers and between 50 to 60 sites have been identified and recorded thus far.

Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association Celebrate 20 Years of Service

The Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association (LMVA) has a long and distinguished history of providing a services to the public and to the Forest. Formed in 1985, it celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2005. Throughout its history, the LMVA has enhanced some of the most precious areas in San Diego County's backcountry. It is an honor to acknowledge the individuals who make up this organization who have contributed so much to the public land managed by the Forest Service. The volunteers have contributed over 350,000 hours of service to improvement of facilities and the enhancement of the public's experience on the Descanso Ranger District. They have constructed over 10 miles of new trail, maintained over 500 miles of trails, hosted 300,000 visitors at the visitor information center in Laguna Mountain, conducted interpretive programs for over 10,000 people, patrolled thousands of miles of trails on foot, horse and mountains bikes, adopted a stretch of Sunrise Scenic Byway for trash removal, and conducted 17 annual living history weekends to educate visitors on the area's history.



Laguna Mountain Volunteer 20th Anniversary



Fast Display

Forest Area Safety Task Force

The Forest continues to participate and provide a leadership role in the Forest Area Safety Task Force (FAST). The collaborative group continues to coordinate hazardous fuels reduction in San Diego County. As of October 2006, over 457,000 dead and dying trees have been removed from areas in the County. A good portion of the trees removed are from evacuation corridors in selected areas of the county. In addition, 8,402 acres of brush have also been treated by either mulching or removal. FAST agencies and organizations also staffed a fuels reduction display at the San Diego County Fair.

Volunteers & Partners

Prehistoric Ceramics Studied

The Cleveland National Forest has begun a new collaborative effort with the San Diego Archeological Center. The Forest has loaned the Center its entire prehistoric ceramic collection including seven whole ollas (pottery vessels) that were found in the vicinity of the Pacific Crest Trail and other locations within the Cleveland National Forest boundaries for academic studies. The ollas are typical Kumeyaay olla form, but they vary in size and function. The ollas are on display at the center and will also be included in a research project that will examine pre-contact pottery form and function. For more information on the center or archeology in San Diego County, please visit www.sandiegoarchaeology.org.

Archeological Restoration and Protection Act Training (ARPA)

The Heritage Program and New Mexico Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office partnered to offer a free ARPA class for law enforcement, archaeologists and tribal members. About 75 people attended the class. They were a mix of state and federal archaeologists, several from CA State Parks and Caltrans, law enforcement including US Border Patrol agents, and tribal members including one Tribal Chairman and members of the California Indian Basket Weavers Association.



Kumeyaay ollas

Tribal Forest Protection Act Training

The Forest in partnership with the Regional Office and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians sponsored a workshop about the Tribal Forest Protection Act and Stewardship Contracting. Participants included the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal Chairmen from neighboring tribes, Tribal Council Members and tribal members, and Forest Service Staff from the Regional and Washington Offices.

Safety Patrols

During stormy conditions, Cleveland National Forest personnel along with Border Patrol crews check the roads and trails in the National Forest for people who might have been caught unprepared. These inter-agency efforts have significantly reduced the deaths of immigrants during winter storms in the mountains. Unfortunately, the number of deaths from exposure increased significantly last year.

Federal Agencies meet with California Native American Tribes

More than 14 local Native American tribes, representatives from U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein's office, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the National Resource Conservation Services came together in two separate meetings in January 2005. The goal of the meetings was to bring together federal agencies and local tribes to discuss issues that jointly affect the reservations and the agencies. Issues on the agenda included: fire topics; on-going and new land management planning efforts by the US Forest Service and the BLM; and a discussion of a new forest products policy being considered by the Forest Service and how it might affect the traditional gathering practices of tribal peoples on lands managed by the Forest Service.



Tribal Meeting

Volunteers & Partners

YMCA Tours the Trabuco Ranger District

A group of 100 dads and their kids from the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) from Mission Viejo participated in a day long event hosted by the Cleveland National Forest, Trabuco Ranger District. The participants met at the El Cariso Fire Station. Four activities were held: the first was a hike along the El Cariso Nature Trail; the second was a stationary point that included displays and a talk. The third activity included a tour of an engine and finally the kids and their dads were given a chance to look over all the gear a firefighter uses in his/her job. The children learned about nature from the district wildlife biologist, enjoyed a short hike to the Wildland Firefighter Memorial Picnic Area led by the district wilderness and trails manager. In addition, local firefighters displayed fire equipment, trucks, and the group toured the local fire station. It was a learning experience for all that participated. The dads and kids learned that they had a National Forest in their back yard. The organized event introduced them to the backcountry wildlife and plants in the area, some of the recreation opportunities available on the Forest, and gave all a greater appreciation for their National Forest.

Sister Forest Program

The Cleveland National Forest currently has a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the National Forestry Commission of Mexico (CONAFOR), the Forest Services' sister agency in Mexico. This agreement was signed on June 4, 1999 and was established after the *International Forestry Cooperation Act* of 1990, 16 U.S.C. 4501 Sec. 601, Forestry, and Related Natural Resource Assistance. The objectives of the cooperative relationship include reviewing the Wildfire Protection Agreement, setting goals and objectives, and developing annual operating guidelines. Frequent meetings and common goals provide a forum where both groups can exchange ideas, information, and technology that may help develop binational programs, projects, and activities for the mutual benefit in fire prevention, fire suppression, natural resource protection, and forest management.

Binational Children's Environmental Education Camp

The Fourth Annual Binational Children's Environmental Education Camp took place in San Diego County on the Forest, at the El Prado Campground on the Descanso Ranger District, on Saturday, May 20, 2006. The camp is the first of its kind and is a key part of the Sister Forest Program between the Forest and CONAFOR. The objective of the camp is to educate 6 to 12 year old children who live in the urban core of border cities of San Diego and Mexicali, on how they can help to protect the environment and care for the land. Environmental education and fire prevention are the central themes that all participants learn about while playing games, doing hands-on projects, and viewing presentations from local agencies. In 2006, the children had an opportunity to see a real maneuver that helicopters do when working on fires; the San Diego Archaeological Society had clay for the children to craft their own art pieces; and finally, they learned how to plant a tree. The event marked a surge of interested organizations that believed in the mission of the camp, to educate 200 children that share a common environment as well as an airshed and watershed. The Cleveland National Forest along with the National Forestry Commission of Mexico (CONAFOR), the Baja California Department of Forestry (SEFOA), and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) hosted the event. New participants included the local chapter of the Sierra Club, Bureau of Land Management, the Laguna Mountain Volunteers Association, Centro Social Deportivo Mexicano (CESDEM), and the San Diego Archeological Society in conjunction with El Instituto de Archelogia y Historia (INAH) of Mexico.



Volunteers & Partners

Southwestern College for Wildland Firefighter Training

In March 2006 the USDA Forest Service approached Southwestern College to set up a Basic Wildland Firefighter Academy at the college, as part of the new Southern California Consortium developed by the Cleveland National Forest and other National Forests in southern California to facilitate hiring and training new seasonal firefighters for the fire season every year. Under the Consortium, the USDA Forest Service provides equipment and instructors, and pays the students to attend the training. (The students pay regular tuition to the college in order to receive college credits for the course.) Those who successfully complete the course and perform satisfactorily in practical skills have the opportunity to apply for jobs with the Forest Service. The course, temporarily designated FS 295C, consists of classroom lectures, physical fitness training and hands-on skills. Students in the academy learned how to cut a fire break, do a progressive hose lay, do a mobile attack with an engine, roll up hose, use torches and deploy emergency fire shelters. At the end of the academy, management personnel from the Forest Service come to the college to observe testing, handout certificates and recruit for seasonal and permanent jobs with the Forest Service.

Border Agency Fire Council Celebrate its Ten-Year Anniversary

The Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC), the first international multi-agency group formed in California to cooperatively work together to protect human lives and natural resources along the California-Mexico border, celebrated its ten-year anniversary. The celebration was held June 9, 2005 at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Monte Vista Headquarters in El Cajon, CA. Pre-

ceremony signing activities began at 9:30 a.m. The public had the opportunity to view displays, a wide variety of fire fighting equipment, and meet and talk with U.S. and Mexican officials. The signing ceremony included remarks by elected officials, BAFC members, and representatives from the United States and Mexico. Council members signed the amended BAFC Operations Plan, which authorizes the Mutual Assistance Agreement between the United States and Mexico and officially commemorates the 10th anniversary of the Border Agency Fire Council. "The agreement grants firefighters the ability to cross into Mexico or the U.S. automatically for fire suppression activities," said Ken Miller, BAFC Facilitator. "The success of BAFC is of great significance in saving lives and property and reducing the number of wildfires and burned acres on both sides of the Border." BAFC held its first meetings in October/November 1995. From its original 23 members, BAFC now has a membership of more than 33 elected officials, agencies, departments, and private organizations, including associate members. The formation of BAFC was an unprecedented accomplishment and demonstration of cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico.



Mutual Assistance Agreement with Mexico and the U.S.

The Cleveland National Forest, CAL FIRE, and the U.S. Consulate's Office, along with their counterpart agencies in Mexico, recently updated the Mutual Assistance Agreement with Mexico. This important agreement establishes dispatching and resource utilization procedures that enable participating agencies to work cooperatively to suppress fires and take appropriate actions on floods and other emergency situations on border lands of the U.S. and Mexico.

Volunteers & Partners

Fire Safe Councils

The Forest works with many Fire Safe Councils (FSC) in wildland urban interface areas to remove hazardous fuels.

Greater San Diego Fire Safe Council - The Greater Fire Safe Council of San Diego County provides support and guidance to fledgling FSCs in the San Diego area. There are currently 48 active fire safe councils in San Diego County including 18 subchapters to primary councils. There are currently 14 approved Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and 10 approved Community Protection and Evacuation Plans (CPEP) overseen by San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) in San Diego County. The Cleveland National Forest and the Greater Fire Safe Council of San Diego County honored numerous fire safe councils for their fuel reduction project coordination, partnership efforts, and community outreach at an awards ceremony in 2006. Several volunteers were presented with awards for outstanding leadership and fuel reduction efforts.



Forest Service and Greater San Diego Fire Safe Council presents award to local Fire Safe Council

Inter-Canyon League Fire Safe Council - The Inter-Canyon League Fire Safe Council (ICLFSC) of Silverado, Williams, and Modjeska Canyons completed its CWPP. The plan was approved by the County of Orange, the Forest Service, and the Orange County Fire Authority in October 2005 with review and input from the fuels officer on the Trabuco Ranger District. The ICLFSC meets monthly and coordinates with the Trabuco Ranger District on a regular basis. The district has made several presentations at the regular FSC meetings on fuels management.

Southwest Riverside Fire Safe Council - The Southwest Riverside Fire Safe Council (SWRFSC) is in the process of developing its first CWPP. The Forest Service provided liaison support to the SWRFSC and the ICLFSC for coordination of the development of their CWPP. The Trabuco Ranger District is working with the council to coordinate fire prevention and protection projects that will benefit the District and the council. The SWRFSC meets monthly and coordinates with the Trabuco Ranger District on a regular basis. The district has made one presentation at the regular FSC meetings on fuels management.

National Arbor Day Foundation - In September 2005, the National Arbor Day Foundation donated funds for planting trees on the Cleveland National Forest. Areas currently undergoing tree removal will be candidates for further reforestation efforts. The Cameron tree nursery irrigation system was repaired with Plant-A-Tree funding and volunteer efforts in 2006. Penny Pines donations have been used for stand maintenance of Penny Pines Plantations that were planted decades ago. This includes thinning and limb removal to insure health and vigor of the stands. Tree Planting - On March 19, 2005, volunteers helped plant 1,000 Jeffrey pine seedlings on Laguna Mountain near Garnet Peak.

Hazardous Material Cleanup

Hazardous Spills

The Forest responds to hazardous spills on National Forest System lands when they occur. There were several such hazardous spills over the last two years. The Forest coordinates the environmental components of the cleanup to ensure that resource damage is minimal and that National Forest System land is restored to as natural condition as possible.

Mine Cleanup

The Forest will impose a temporary closure for the Blue Light Mine Complex in the Silverado Canyon area to provide for public safety and to facilitate clean up of old mining rock piles that are contaminated with heavy metals. Signs will soon be posted in the area. The Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest is requesting that the public stay out of these areas until the clean up is complete. At this time, it is not known how long the area will be closed. Information on the closure and a map of the closed area will be posted on the current conditions page at www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland. The District continues to clean up other abandoned mine materials from past mining operations. Many backcountry areas in southern California were historically used for mining. There are several known abandoned mines under Forest Service jurisdiction. An abandoned mill site in Trabuco Canyon was cleaned up last December; old trailers, debris, and trash were removed. Although it is not known where all of these mining operations historically occurred, the Trabuco Ranger District has been in the process of closing off known abandoned mines since January 2002. To date, the Forest has closed seven abandoned horizontal mine openings with bat friendly gates and one vertical shaft for public protection. In addition, several other mine shaft closures are underway for San Diego County mines located on National Forest System land. Clean up efforts will continue in the Blue Light Mine Complex over the next two years. If any member of the public is aware of any abandoned mines on National Forest System land they are encouraged to provide these locations to the nearest Ranger Station.



Hazards Material Cleanup

Safety Activities

Safety Committee Activity

Safety committees have been formed on each of the ranger districts and at the Forest Supervisor's Office. All units developed new safety and health plans in 2005. Motor vehicle accident data reflect a decline in the frequency and severity of vehicle accidents. In addition, the personal accident/injury rate for the Forest has decreased. In 2005 and 2006 the Forest conducted several required safety stand downs emphasizing driving safety. In 2006 the Forest completed its baseline safety self assessment and is in the process of inspecting facilities and continuing to meet safety training requirements. All districts conducted after-action reviews to discuss the fire season as it related to district personnel and their most recent fire experiences. These reviews were attended by district employees and provided a great opportunity for interaction, learning, and team building.

Forest Planning and Monitoring

New Forest Plan Completed

The new Forest Plan has been completed and will guide management of the Cleveland over the next 10 to years. The Forest Plan provides a balanced, strategic blueprint for responding to the increasing demand for recreation and other uses of the National Forest while protecting ecosystems and resources, especially threatened and endangered species. The Forest Plan gives top priority to protecting urban and rural communities from the threat of catastrophic wildfires and encourages the Forest Service to work closely with local communities to reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface. Motorized administrative access to certain backcountry areas will be allowed for reducing hazardous fuels and fighting wildfires in valuable watersheds and wildlife habitat. The Forest Plan incorporates numerous measures to protect watersheds, plants, wildlife, and their habitats during all management activities.



Forest Plan meeting

Land Management Plan Monitoring

The Forest completed monitoring of activities implemented in 2006 to comply with requirements in the new Forest Plan. The completed monitoring and evaluation reported can be found on <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/projects/forestplan>.

Route Designation

In 2006, the Forest hosted several public meetings to introduce the motorized route designation process to the public. Motorized route designation is underway and the Forest is in the process of identifying inventory and plan to host additional public meetings in 2007 and 2008.

Environmental Management System

In June 2006, the Cleveland National Forest implemented a new Environmental Management System (EMS) to help the Forest continually improve environmental conditions on the National Forest. The focus of the EMS is to make progress toward the vision described in the new Forest Plan and to continually improve environmental conditions through monitoring, reporting, and correcting environmental impacts from our management activities or public use on the Forest. The Forest was one of the national pilots for this process. Based on feedback from the pilot forests a national EMS is expected to be in place by the end of the 2007. For more information on EMS, go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland>.

Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions

The quarterly schedule of proposed actions (SOPA), which identifies all projects undergoing environmental analysis on the Cleveland National Forest, is now available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/sopa>. The site contains information for all national forests. Visitors to the site can find descriptions of proposed actions, timeframes for analysis, contact information for each project, and projected completion dates for each project.

Habitat Enhancement

■ The Forest completed three miles of fish habitat enhancement and 25 acres of wildlife habitat enhancement. ■ Some 29,000 acres of National Forest System land were surveyed for wildlife habitat improvement and protection. This included surveys for special use permits, recreational improvement projects, land exchanges, hazardous fuels treatments, fuel breaks, prescribed burning, fire barracks relocation, one cabin restoration project, and a border patrol checkpoint relocation project. ■ The Forest continues to collect data and monitor golden eagle pairs and nesting success in partnership with the Wildlife Research Institute. ■ The Forest continued a five year study of the effects of wildfire on chaparral birds in partnership with the San Diego Natural History Museum. ■ The Forest removed invasive species from the Ajachamen meadow and continued work toward treatment of tamarisk removal near Cottonwood Creek and worked with San Diego Weed Management Area under a Memorandum of Understanding. ■ The Forest has published an illustrated guide to the butterflies found on the National Forest. This was accomplished with recreation fee funds in partnership with the San Diego Natural History Museum. A similar bird checklist was published in 2004. The Forest is working with the San Diego Natural History Museum in the development of a plant atlas. ■ The Forest also coordinated with Native Americans for continued access to plants used for traditional activities such as basket weaving and for religious/ceremonial purposes.

Intermediate mariposa lily found - The intermediate mariposa lily (*Calochortus weedii intermedius*) was seen on the Cleveland National Forest by a Forest Service employee for the first time since 1940. The plant was found on the Trabuco Ranger District. The species taxonomy was verified by the San Diego Natural History Museum.



Land Adjustment & Special Uses

The Forest acquired approximately 320 acres of undeveloped lands adjacent to the Hauser Wilderness and Corral Canyon areas. The most notable public benefits from these acquisitions are improved public access along national forest roads; the completion of an important trail within the Corral Canyon OHV area; the retention of valuable watershed, scenery, and wildlife habitat; and the elimination of over four miles of national forest boundary. The Forest administered over 700 special use authorizations to use and occupy over 5000 acres of National Forest System land. The Forest annually collected and deposited to the U.S. Treasury nearly \$1.25 million of land use rent from these special uses.

Improvements Recreation Fee (Adventure Pass Program)



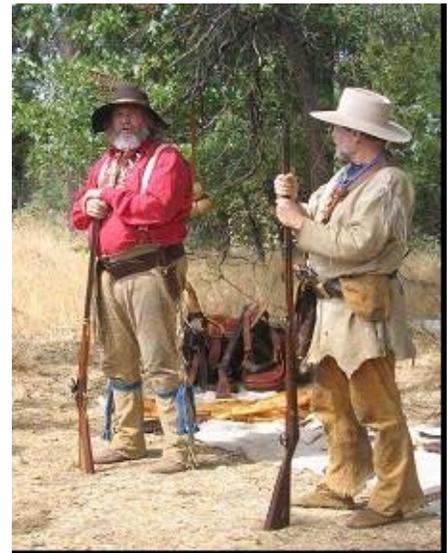
Revenues from the Adventure Pass have allowed the Forest Service to maintain trails, clean restrooms, remove litter and graffiti, and provide visitor information and other services. In 2005 the Forest significantly reduced the areas that require an Adventure Pass. Less than 10% of Cleveland National Forest lands fall under the Adventure Pass program. The changes are the result of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which was passed in December 2004 as part of the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act. For more information you can visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/passes> or contact any of the local ranger stations. Some highlights of the improvements that have been made possible as a result of the recreation fee (Adventure Pass) funds are noted below. While on the Forest, you can always recognize improvements made possible using Recreation Fee funds by signs stating: **“Recreation Fees - your fees at work.”**

Better Maintenance of Facilities and Protection of People and Nature

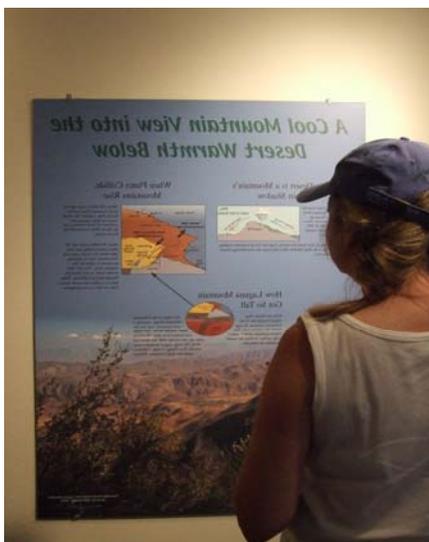
The Forest has repaired and replaced picnic tables; stoves and BBQ grills; installed and repaired traffic barriers to keep vehicles on the roadways; removed abandoned vehicles; installed fencing to protect resources in sensitive areas; and removed over 7,410 cubic yards of trash to protect the environment. The Forest continues to remove graffiti from facilities that occurs on an on-going basis.

Living History Interpretive Program

The Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association (LMVA) hosts an annual Living History Event on Labor Day each year. Visitors enjoy guided tours that highlight the local history of the area. Volunteers reenact the lives of Native Americans, mountain men, cowboys, and a visiting farm family from Imperial Valley, the first ranger on the Cleveland National Forest, and a gold miner. Recreation fee funds help to provide this wonderful free program to the public.



Mountain Men Living History

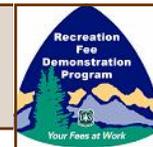


Visitor Information Signs In Laguna Mountain Visitor Center

Visitor Information Service

The Laguna Mountain Visitor Information Center which receives 20,000 visits per year, is staffed by Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association volunteers. Fee demo funds are used to clean and maintain the facility. Adventure Pass funds were used to redesign the interpretive displays inside of the center. Fee demo funds contributed to the remodeling of the Visitor Center in 2005, redesign of the interpretive display inside the center, accessible toilets and a native plant garden.

Improvements Recreation Fee (Adventure Pass Program)



Henshaw Overlook Interpretive Signs

Environmental Education Signs

Interpretive signs were completed for the Henshaw Overlook that provided background on historical use of the valley located below the overlook and information on the birds and raptors that can be seen in the skies around the area. Adventure Pass funds were used to fabricate and develop the signs. Additional interpretive signs were installed at the picnic area.

Brochures and Handouts

The Corral Canyon Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Guide was revised and reprinted for free distribution. The revised guide provides information on the latest OHV roads and trails on the Descanso Ranger District. Some 40 percent of the funds used to print the guides were provided by recreation fees. In addition, the Forest Visitor Guide is also printed using recreation fees.



OHV Guide

Snow Play

During high use periods of snow play on Sunrise Scenic Byway, Adventure Pass funds are used to staff a visitor information station and develop bilingual brochures regarding recreational snow opportunities on the Forest. Forest Service employees distributed these brochures to over 1200 vehicles during each of our busy snowplay weekends.

Wildomar OHV Area Improvements – In late 2006, a critical Forest Service partnership provided the resources necessary to accomplish significant tread and drainage improvements in the Wildomar OHV Area. The project utilized funds from the State of California Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program, as well as funding from the Forest Service Recreation Fee Program. The work was performed by Trails Unlimited, a Forest Service Enterprise Team. The accomplishments consisted of trail tread enhancement on approximately two miles of trail (known as “Loop A”) and installation or repair of drainage features that promote trail longevity such as rolling dips, run-off diversions, and catch basins. The trailhead parking/staging area was also re-shaped to reduce the amount of soil erosion in the upper San Mateo Creek watershed, which provides Steelhead Trout habitat. The “tot lot”, which provides an acre of practice riding area for young beginners, was re-shaped to include small berms and to facilitate more effective drainage.

Forest Emphasis Areas for 2007 & 2008

The Cleveland National Forest has identified the following emphasis items for 2007 & 2008:

- **Continue to work toward the completion of the motorized route designation process with the goal of completing it in 2008.**
- **Begin recreation facility master planning in 2007.**
- **Continue to implement the National Fire Plan, with focus on training and readiness, prescribed burning, and removal of dead and dying trees and shrubs on Palomar and Laguna mountains.**
- **Continue to refine the Forest Use Restriction Awareness system. Coordinate with the other southern California national forests and local agencies.**
- **Continue to work with the Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC) to manage environmental impacts associated with the U.S. /Mexican border.**
- **Cooperatively work with San Diego County Forest Area Safety Task Force (FAST) to assist county residents, cooperating agencies, and organizations to manage dead and dying fuel in San Diego County.**
- **Assist local fire safe councils to develop fuels management strategies and support grant application efforts.**
- **Assign crews, support personnel, and incident command teams when needed for national and local fire and disaster support.**
- **Focus on special uses program management, renewal of expired permits, and evaluation of proposed uses.**
- **Recruit in local schools and communities for seasonal firefighter, recreation, and law enforcement positions that require proficiency in Spanish.**
- **Continue to plan and implement activities associated with the Sister Forest Agreement with Mexico.**
- **Continue to maintain and improve habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants; continue to manage habitat to move listed species toward recovery and de-listing.**
- **Continue to implement Environmental Management System on the Forest.**

Cleveland National Forest Statistics

Fiscal Year (FY): 10/01/05 thru 09/30/06
Calendar Year (CY): 1/1/2006 thru 12/31/2006
National Forest Acres: 568,245 (Gross Acres)
437,690 (NFS Acres) additional acreage info:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/lar/index.html>
Forest Budget: (2006) \$21,050,255
Emergency Burn Rehab Funds: \$771,067

<u>Payments to Counties</u>	<u>CY05</u>
Orange	\$ 33,079
Riverside	\$ 89,186
San Diego	\$139,433

<u>Fire Management</u>	<u>CY05/06</u>
Prescribed Acres Burned	2,157/1,290
Mechanical Treatment (acres)	343./1,235
Timber Stand Improvement (2006)	447
Illegal Campfires Extinguished	167
Number of Wildfires	112/91
Wildfire Acres Burned (2006—approx.)	27,895

<u>Ecosystem Management (2006)</u>	<u>No.</u>
Sensitive Plant Species	49
Sensitive Wildlife Species	18
Threatened & Endangered (T&E) Species	24
Fish Habitat Enhancement (Miles)	3
Wildlife Habitat Enhancement (Acres)	25
Wildlife Habitat Acres Surveyed	29,000
Head Month Grazed	2,938
Allotments/Livestock Areas	9
Fuelwood Sold (MBF)	60

<u>Human Resources</u>	<u>Hours/Work Value</u>
Volunteers (2005/2006)	33,814/ \$568,460
Senior Community Service Employees	\$40,762.00

<u>Penny Pines</u>	<u>Donations</u>
2005	\$12,177
2006	\$16,932

**Annual recreation use estimate based
on statistics gathered during 2002.**

Visits—850,000 38,4

<u>Employees-2005</u>	<u>No.</u>
Permanent	239
Temporary Seasonal (approx.)	202

<u>Employees-2006</u>	<u>No.</u>
Permanent	285
Temporary Seasonal (approx.)	106

<u>Law Enforcement-2006 (estimated)</u>	<u>No.</u>
Cannabis Plants Eradicated	25,000
Pounds Marijuana Seized (lbs) processed	1.5
Stolen Vehicles Recovered	15
Estimated Stolen Vehicle Recovery Value	\$210,000

Land Use-2004
The Forest annually collected and deposited to the Treasury of the United States nearly \$1.1 million of land use rent from special uses.

<u>Recreation-2006</u>	<u>No.</u>
Campgrounds (Family)	15
Campsites	632
Campgrounds (Group)	7
Campsites/Person Capacity	3115
Miles of Trail	356
Picnic Areas	7
Trailheads	10
Off-Highway Vehicle Areas (Acres)	2,160
Total Miles Motorized Routes	62
29 Miles of Mixed use roads	
12 Miles of 4WD trails	
12 Miles of ATV/Motor cycle trails	
Miles of Roads open to the public (apx.)	233
Miles of Admin Use Only roads (apx.)	153

<u>Wilderness Areas (2006)</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Agua Tibia	15,933
Hauser	7,547
Pine Creek	13,480
San Mateo	38,484

Note: For additional information on Ranger Districts, contact the district directly at the phone numbers listed.

Cleveland National Forest Contacts

Cleveland National Forest

Tom Gillett, Acting Forest Supervisor

10845 Rancho Bernardo Rd. #200

San Diego, CA 92127-2107

(858) 673-6180 (Voice)

(858) 673-6192 (Fax)

Dial 711 for California Relay Assistance (TTY)

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland>

Forest Staff Officers (858) 674-2901

Gloria Silva, Resource & Planning Staff

Anne Carey, Acting Recreation & Lands Staff Officer

Steve Eastwood, Engineering Staff Officer

Debbie Rutherford, Administration Staff Officer

Richard D. Hawkins, Fire & Aviation Officer

Joan Wynn, Public Affairs Officer

Miguel Martinez, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager

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Descanso Ranger District

Tom White, Acting District Ranger

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Alpine, CA 91901-3923

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(619) 445-1753 (Fax)

Trabuco Ranger District

Keith Fletcher, District Ranger

1147 E. 6th Street

Corona, CA 92879-1616

(951) 736-1811 (Voice)

(951) 736-3002 (Fax)

Palomar Ranger District

Vacant, District Ranger

1634 Black Canyon Road

Ramona, CA 92065-1205

(760) 788-0250 (Voice)

(760) 788-6130 (Fax)

**This annual report is dedicated to the memory
of Grace Terrazas, District Ranger of the
Palomar Ranger District from 1995—2007.**