



Forest Service, US Department of Agriculture
WATERSHED – FISH – WILDLIFE – AIR – RARE PLANTS ::: WFW
MONTHLY WFW STAFF NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2008

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GENERAL/CROSS AREAS

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Submitted by: Julie Blankenburg, USFS/NFSL

AQUATIC/FISH

Fish Biologist Staffing Trends 1997 - 2007

There were 340 permanent full time fish biologists (GS-482 series) at the end of FY07. This number was down 28 positions from the FY03 high of 368 and 5 less than the 11-year average of 345 fish biologists in the National Forest System.

A substantial portion of the funding for these positions comes from other resource areas, such as timber, fire, and range, to support planning efforts in these and other resource areas. As budgets get tighter in these other resources, support dollars for the fish biologists will dry up and a further decline in positions is anticipated. This decline will be greater than that which would occur with a reduction of NFWF funds alone. Even if NFWF funds were stable, a further decline would be anticipated due to reductions in other support areas.

While the numbers of fish biologists have declined, the number of support staff, such as fish technicians and survey crews, have declined to nearly zero in many areas. These positions, often term or temporary positions, tend to be the first to go during budget declines. They also reflect a substantially higher decline than the fish biologist numbers alone would indicate. Loss of these important positions hinder the capability of the fish programs to assess status and trends, implement projects on the ground, and identify future needs and opportunities.

Excel Spreadsheet: [Fish Staff FY1997 – FY2007 \(XLS 18.0 KB\)](#)

Submitted By: Steven Phillips, USFS/WO/WFW

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Coming Events – Conferences & Meetings:

GENERAL/CROSS AREAS

North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

March 23 – 29, 2008

"Effective Conservation through Partnerships"

Hyatt Regency Phoenix, Phoenix, Arizona

[More Information](#)

Submitted by: David Pivorunas and Jina Mariani, USFS/WO/WFW

Technical Information & Publications:

GENERAL/CROSS AREAS

National Forest Service Library - Journal Requests

Did you know that you can order journal articles from the National Forest Service Library (NFSL) when you do not have electronic access to them? Download the request form and instructions at: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/library/document-delivery.htm>. You can also request proceedings articles and other items using the same form. The articles will be scanned and sent to you by email or mailed to you in print copy. Most items are emailed so if you **only** want it in printed form you need to note that on the order form. The National Forest Service Library also subscribes to many items that are not yet electronic that are listed on the 'Want List' from WFW. NFSL will supply you with articles from these journals. Articles from additional journals can be obtained by the National Forest Service Library for you through our interlibrary loan agreements with other libraries. If the library cannot get something for you, they will tell you of the problem. If you don't know how to get a book or article, it never hurts to ask the library. They will try and find it for you!

Submitted By: Julie Blankenburg, USFS/NFSL

Call for FY2007 Fish, Hydrology, and Soils Partners and Employees Nominations

It is time to identify nominations from our outstanding partners and employees who have been leaders in implementing the FY2007 fish, hydrology, and soils programs across the country. This year, we are combining the fisheries "Rise to the Future" awards with the national hydrology and soil science awards. We ask for your help in identifying these leaders.

The call letter for nominations should arrive at Stations and Regional Offices in the near future. In the mean time, attached is a list of the award categories and the nomination form so that you can start thinking about which of your great partners and colleagues you will be nominating! The nominations should be submitted through your Regional Office and Station and forwarded to the WO by April 30, 2008. Please help us give those outstanding performers the recognition they deserve!

[Award Categories \(DOC 36.5 KB\)](#)

[Nomination Form \(DOC 30 KB\)](#)

Submitted By: Steven Phillips, USFS/WO/WFW

Training & Tools:

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Advanced Concepts in Aquatic Ecosystem Analysis -- Going Virtual!

Join in the development and delivery. Register and participate. For adventurous participants the tuition is a screaming deal - free!

[More information...](#)

Contact: Dr. Brett Roper, broper@fs.fed.us /435-755-3566

Registration: AgLearn or contact Shelly Witt (switt01@fs.fed.us)

Submitted by: Shelly Witt, USFS/WO/WFW

NR16 - Aquatic Ecosystem Monitoring & Evaluation - Western*

Still room available. **June 2 - 6, 2008**

Hood River, Oregon

Objective: Support today's efforts in watershed analysis, restoration, and monitoring requiring a critical understanding of aquatic ecosystems. If Forest Service employees have a keen interest in attending but tuition cost is a factor discouraging attending contact **Tom Horning** (503-808-2676).

[More information](#) (DOC 42 KB)

Submitted by: Shelly Witt, USFS/WO/WFW

Sharing Success:

WILDLIFE

White Mountain National Forest Woods In Winter



**By: Colleen Mainville
R09_White_Mountain**

Forest employees recently led a Junior Girl Scout Troop along the Forest Discovery Trail as part of a series of environmental education programs.

Visitor Information Specialist Lori Gale and District Biologist Clara Weloth led a Junior Girl Scout Troop from Manchester, NH, along the Forest Discovery Trail as part of the White Mountain National Forest's Woods-In-Winter environmental education program series.

The Woods-In-Winter Program offers a wonderful opportunity for school groups to gain hands-on experience while learning about the forest ecosystem, forest management practices, fish and wildlife habitat management, and hiking safe in the outdoors.

The 1.5-mile long Forest Discovery Trail (constructed via collaborative partnership under a Stewardship Contracting Pilot Program) is open to the public and is located along the White Mountain Trail Scenic Byway and the Kancamagus Highway. The trail leads through 85 acres of the 800,000-acre White Mountain National Forest and includes 11 self-guided interpretative stations of a working forest with multi-use messages.

Teachers are encouraged to use the Forest Discovery Trail and incorporate the action-oriented Project Learning Tree (PLT) environmental education activities at each interpretative station. The PLT activities are aligned with New Hampshire school curriculum standards in science, social studies, mathematics, language arts, and reading and writing.

Gale and Weloth used moose antlers, homemade moose call, fake bear tracks, and the other forest items during several PLT activities (Trees as Habitat; Nothing Succeeds Like Succession; A Forest of Many Uses) to help the girl scouts learn about forest management and wildlife habitat. The girl scouts were given magnifying glasses, note pads, pencils and at each interpretative station they recorded their observations, and they also completed a scavenger hunt in a wildlife opening.

"The girl scouts learned the differences between National Forests and National Parks as well as gaining a better understanding of forest management practices," Gale said. "The scouts learned

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that New Hampshire is the second most forested state in the country and that forests play a vital role in the state's economic well-being and the quality of life for all.

"We depend on our forests for many reasons, and our forests offer a wide variety of outdoor educational opportunities as well," she said.

The day ended with the girl scouts listening to a cassette tape, "Wild Sounds of the North Woods" and doing the PLT activity, "The Web of Life" that demonstrates how plants, animals and people are connected to each other in the forest ecosystem.

The scouts earned two Girl Scout Council merit badges (Your Outdoor Surroundings and Earth Connections) and they received a packet filled with handouts ranging from the Forest Service publication, "Tomorrow's Forests Begin Today; the how and why of good forest management"; "HikeSafe: There and Back" safety guidelines for hiking in the forest and mountains; along with "Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl" environmental education activity booklets.

Stewardship Contracting Stirs Interest in Vermont



**By: Kristi Ponozzo
R09_Green_Mtn-Finger_Lakes**

Foresters are working with contractors on creative wildlife habitat planning initiatives. The Green Mountain National Forest is taking the first steps to providing stewardship contracts to help improve wildlife habitat.

Partners of the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont are eager to learn about the nuances of Stewardship Contracting. With more than forty individuals in attendance this August, Dave Wilson of the National Wild Turkey Federation laid out a framework for stewardship contracting with the Forest Service and the reasons everyone should be interested in this new federal land management technique.

Stewardship contracting is a tool the Green Mountain and their partners had never used before; this training marked the first step toward promoting closer working relationships with local communities in a broad range of activities that improve land conditions.

"Stewardship contracting blends the needs of the community with the needs of forest management and can be a win-win situation for both parties," said Wilson, a former Forest Supervisor, who explained the NWTF has a long-standing and strong partnership with the Forest Service because of their shared interest in providing indispensable wildlife habitat.

Private contractors, state employees, federal employees and wildlife biologists were introduced to the basics of trading forest products, or goods, for resource restoration and enhancement, or services.

"A traditional timber sale contract lasts for a period of 3 to 5 years, whereas stewardship contracts can last longer and provide more opportunities for follow-up and evaluation," said Rob Hoelscher, the Wildlife Biologist for the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forest.

Hoelscher also explained another advantage of stewardship contracting: the idea of awarding contracts based on the concept of "best value."

Traditional timber sale contracts are awarded to the highest bidder. Best value can provide different incentives that facilitate providing locally experienced individuals with an opportunity to competitively participate in the contract bidding process. For example, a town may have a number of skilled individuals who could provide a labor force, interpretation, education, and a local market for a particular product but have little in the way of financial resources to purchase the resource up front.

On the other hand, a larger timber company contractor may have the financial resources to put up the money but little in the way of those other opportunities. Stewardship Contracting also allows for larger timber company contractors to subcontract out the service work, such as wildlife habitat restoration, to local or smaller companies with such experience.

"In a stewardship (contract) situation, we will consider the benefits of the local market, education, and interpretation as well as the financial resources needed to complete the project," said Hoelscher.

"We have reached an important milestone as a forest," said Forest Supervisor Meg Mitchell, referring to the first stewardship contract now being offered on the Forest just after the training.

The Beattie Road Stewardship Contract will improve forest health by thinning overgrown areas and offering remaining trees more nutrients. The project will restore wildlife habitat by making areas more open and improve old apple orchard conditions for wildlife forage in this once abandoned farm.

Guided by the helpful hand of experienced neighboring forest employees and the regional office, the Green Mountain is currently soliciting offers on this project. The Forest staff hopes the contract will attract groups who may never have been involved with a government contract before but have a strong interest in the future health of the area and its connection to the health of their community.

Vacancies/Employment Opportunities:

Federal job announcements can be found at: http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency_search.asp

WFW Newsletter Contact Information: Disclaimer – Non Discrimination Statement

WFW Newsletter is a monthly newsletter without a clever name and is provided by the National Forest System Watershed-Fish-Wildlife-Air-Rare Plants staff (including Soils and Meteorology) of the USDA Forest Service. Contributions are welcome and should be submitted to Netta Grant at agrant@fs.fed.us or your favorite Program Leader no later than the 20th of each month. We reserve the right to edit contributions for clarity and brevity. Emphasis on brevity. Links to detailed URLs or documents are great – include them in your information contribution. If photos are included in your submission please provide alternative text with each photo. Alternative text should not repeat captions but describe the scene shown in the photo.

If brevity and clarity are a struggle for you, we recommend the “[Plain & Simple! Document Writing](#)” workshop instructed by Dr. Jud Monroe.

Vacancy Positions listed are for outreach purposes only and are not full announcements. Interested individuals should contact the units referenced or consult the [USAJOBS website](#).

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