



## Thoughts from the Regional Forester

### Fiscal Year 2007 Accomplishments

I love this time of year! It affords us an opportunity to look back, reflect on our efforts, and take time to celebrate our many accomplishments. Once again, you have given us much to celebrate!

- Within the framework of our Central Priority, we treated more than 240,000 acres to reduce threats to communities and restore ecological health using a variety of funding and treatment methods.
- We used stewardship contracting as a tool to improve conditions on nearly 12,000 of those acres.
- Some 154 rangeland NEPA decisions were signed, putting the Region well ahead of all other Regions in meeting agency commitments to Congress.
- Arizona and New Mexico forests have completed evaluations that will provide the social and economic foundation for forest plan revisions and are on the way to completing ecological sustainability assessments.
- Nearly 8,850 acres of noxious weeds and invasive plants were treated.
- With limited resources, we substantially exceeded our targets for land adjustments, helping to secure public access and conserve open space.
- Some 21,729 acres of T&E species habitat were enhanced.
- Four mine sites were cleaned up, restoring 43 acres and resulting in significant improvement to the affected watersheds.
- Some 84 adits and mine shafts were closed providing a safer environment for the visiting public.
- Many forests engaged in public involvement and collaboration efforts in travel management planning, which should result in quality decisions in the upcoming year. Cibola NF published the first Motor Vehicle Use Map in the Region (for Black Kettle NGs). The Region developed guidelines to assist forests in the travel management process.
- Forests are nearing completion of the Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA) process which, in collaboration with the public, identifies sustainable developed recreation facilities and programs to meet current and future public needs.
- Regional Office Recreation staff actively worked with the Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Committees (BLM-RACs) in both Arizona and New Mexico. We were the first Region to bring fee proposals forward for review according to the new process required by the Recreation Enhancement Act.

- During FY 07, nine forest-level fee proposals were presented to the BLM-RACs and eight were recommended for approval and implementation.
- As part of "Service First," Coronado NF and BLM are sharing an historic preservation position. Together with volunteers, tribes, and other partners, historic buildings are being rehabilitated and/or restored. The Region took on grants and agreement support for the 14 national enterprise units.
  - The Regional Civil Rights and Diversity Strategic Plans were finalized.
  - Ninety-eight percent of the disputes mediated through the Alternative Dispute Resolution were successfully resolved.
  - For every wildlife Forest Service dollar spent, partners contributed \$5. There were 191 partners involved in over 500 wildlife and fisheries projects.
  - With our help, the State of Arizona completed and adopted a comprehensive Forest Health Plan that furthers implementation of our Central Priority.
  - Once again, the Region captured a majority of the Forest Product Lab utilization grants – helping small mills expand and increase their processing capacity and reduce our treatment costs.
  - Motor vehicle accident rates were down for the second year in a row.
  - Past mining operations at the Golden Turkey and Golden Belt mines, in Prescott NF, left behind over 300,000 cubic yards of tailing piles and waste rock containing elevated levels of arsenic and lead, as well as 16 open mine shafts and adits. Under the Region's Environmental Engineering program, the mines were remediated by removing hazardous materials, then consolidating and capping them in an onsite consolidation cell located outside the flood plain. The environmental cleanup restored 12 acres of National Forest land and over 3 miles of natural stream channel and closed dangerous mine openings.
  - In 2007, the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) provided \$4.11 million in federal grants to 13 projects. These projects promote healthy watersheds, reduce the threat of wildfires, and improve the functioning of forest ecosystems by reducing the number and density of small-diameter trees on public forest lands in New Mexico. Since it was chartered in 2001, the CFRP Technical Advisory Panel has met, reviewed 249 proposals, and recommended that the Forest Service fund 102 projects worth \$30.3 million. Over 270 partners in 17 counties have been involved in CFRP projects.
  - Over 98% of all new fire starts in the Southwest Area this fire season were suppressed through initial attack. Of 3,022 new starts that were suppressed, only 53 fires escaped initial attack and grew to 100 acres or larger.
  - The Region contributed approximately \$100,000 to the Combined Federal Campaign!

All of that...and more...at a time of many changes in how we get business done. Thank you for your dedication and perseverance. You make us proud!

Harv Forsgren  
Regional Forester

# **Valle Vidal Breathes New Life into Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout**

By Kathy DeLucas, Public Affairs Officer, Carson NF

One of New Mexico's most prized land treasures resides in Carson NF. Pennzoil Corporation donated the Valle Vidal, to be managed by the Forest Service, with the intention that its rich and varied wildlife habitat be preserved.

The Valle Vidal unit consists of forests and high alpine meadows and streams that can be raging torrents during wet summers. Ranging in elevation from 7,700 to 12,584 feet, Valle Vidal is home to 200 species of birds and 60 species of mammals. Species include elk, buffalo, deer, wild turkey, osprey, golden eagle, black bear, mountain lions, and the Rio Grande cutthroat trout. The area contains the headwaters of the Costilla watershed, which plays an important role in the largest native fish restoration project in the country.

In August as part of that effort, Carson NF personnel teamed up with New Mexico Game and Fish to begin the decade-long project of restoring the native fish populations and removing non-native fish that compete for resources and habitat.

Recent estimates suggested that the Rio Grande cutthroat trout is now restricted to about 7 percent of its historic range. A review conducted in 2002 determined that there were only 13 populations of genetically pure Rio Grande cutthroat trout.

Despite these low numbers, the Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that these populations are secure enough not to be listed as threatened and endangered largely because of the restoration efforts. If the fish were listed, that would severely limit recreational revenue in northern New Mexico and close many of the streams to angling. The listing also would have placed strict limits on grazing, water diversions, and other land-use practices that impact trout habitat.

The fish restoration is a collaboration of many government and non-government agencies. Members of the collaboration include: New Mexico Game and Fish, Trout Unlimited National and Trout Unlimited Truchas Chapter, Turner Enterprises/Vermejo Park Ranch, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and Carson NF.

If successful, restoring cutthroat trout in the Costilla watershed, a process that may take as long as 10 years, will create one of the most extensive interconnected populations of cutthroat trout in New Mexico

The breadth of this alliance and cooperation and continuity of its work are positive indications that people from seemingly divergent interests can unite for a common purpose and realize a common goal through hard, physical labor.

## **When It Rains, It Pours...Mudslides an Unwelcome Visitor**

By Kathy DeLucas, Public Affairs Officer, Carson NF

Carson NF employees responded to an emergency in Red River late this summer when thousands of tons of mud and rock closed the main highway in and out of the resort town. In only three days, Red River and vicinity received more than 1.5" of rain, sending heavy debris flow from high above the town near Sulfur Gulch. Officials estimate that during the three separate mudslides that occurred, crews from MolyCorp, New Mexico Department of Transportation, and the Forest Service removed more than 5,000 tons of rocks, mud, and debris that blocked NM 38 into Red River. The mudslide also dammed the river and caused water levels to rise about 15 inches. That prompted Questa RD to evacuate and eventually close Fawn Lakes and Junebug Campgrounds that sit on the banks of the Red River. The incident also proved that a unified area command was effective among the various government and non-government responders. No one was injured in the incident.

## **Volunteers Rebuild Part of Fence around Franks Lake on Kaibab NF**

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Officer, North Kaibab RD

About 15 volunteers from the Buckskin Chapter of the Arizona Deer Association and Grand Canyon Trust came to the Franks Lake Geologic-Botanical Area this summer to rebuild part of its enclosure fence.

The 145-acre area includes 3 relatively undisturbed Kaibab limestone sinks, as well as drainages, plants, and soils that are excellent examples of the different stages of ecological development of the Kaibab Plateau. For those reasons, the Kaibab NF land management plan calls for preserving the area's natural features and processes as much as possible.

The 2.5-mile fence surrounding the area helps do that by keeping out cattle and motorized vehicles. "Grand Canyon Trust is grazing cattle in this area this summer, so rebuilding this fence is a priority," said Dustin Burger, North Kaibab RD, rangeland management specialist.

The volunteers focused on rebuilding the aspen pole portion of the fence, as well as part of the wire fence that branches off from it. A falling tree had broken a couple of the aspen panels, and retired Forest Service employee and Arizona Deer Association volunteer Roger Hoverman of Kanab, Utah, said that the wire portion of the fence was in even worse shape. "This fence was my first project when I came to the district in 1990,"

Hoverman said. “Now all 4 corners need to be rebuilt, and I counted 60 breaks in the wire on 1 side alone.”

Burger said that the volunteers rebuilt about half a mile of the worst sections during the work session. He expects the remaining 2 miles to be much easier and faster to rebuild.

In a 2001 environmental analysis, North Kaibab RD identified Franks Lake as one of 17 natural lakes that needed better protection from cattle. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Buckskin Chapter of the Arizona Deer Association have provided manpower, materials, and money to repair or replace fences around seven of those lakes.

In 2006, Grand Canyon Trust became the livestock grazing permittee on the southern part of the Kaibab Plateau, including the area around Franks Lake. The Trust is authorized to graze up to 800 head of cattle on the Kaibab Plateau during the summer months. The Trust is designing and participating in a number of volunteer projects like the Franks Lake fence reconstruction to help North Kaibab RD achieve range improvement goals that would otherwise have to wait for funding.

For more information about volunteer opportunities on the Kaibab Plateau with the Arizona Deer Association or Grand Canyon Trust, visit their websites at [www.azdeer.org](http://www.azdeer.org) and [www.gcvolunteers.org](http://www.gcvolunteers.org).

## **Specialists and Dollars Improve Habitat Projects on Lincoln NF**

By Joe Garcia, Public Affairs Officer, Lincoln NF

In 1985, Congress enacted the Sikes Act, which authorized collection of a state user fee for hunting, fishing, and trapping to fund habitat improvement projects within the state. New Mexico was the first state in the United States to implement the program and Lincoln NF was the second national forest to get involved with the program.

Lincoln NF began Sikes Act wildlife habitat improvement projects in 1988 when the State of New Mexico started collecting user fees for hunting, fishing, and trapping on the Lincoln. Since then, the Forest has accomplished many on-the-ground projects such as vegetation treatments, wildlife waters, and riparian improvements. These Sikes Act projects have been accomplished through matching funds from the Forest Service, New Mexico Game and Fish Habitat Stamp Program (HSP), Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Quail Unlimited, and the National Wild Turkey Federation. The Mule Deer Foundation has also provided grants for habitat improvements.

Volunteers play a big part in accomplishing these projects. Volunteers from the various wildlife organizations and individual volunteers donate their time and efforts when asked

to participate on project workdays. Without volunteer assistance, the Forest would not be able to accomplish the habitat improvement projects it does every year.

Recognizing wildlife habitat is the key to increased healthy wildlife populations. In 1991, the New Mexico State Game Commission approved the statewide implemented a statewide the Habitat Stamp Program (HSP). The program collects a mandatory \$5 fee that has made available annually approximately \$1 million for wildlife habitat improvements throughout the state. Major contributors to the program are sportsmen who access public lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

In Fiscal Year 2007, Lincoln NF received \$190,295 from the New Mexico HSP; \$40,000 dollars in grant money from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; \$7,500 from the National Wild Turkey Federation; and \$8,000 from Quail Unlimited. Vegetation treatments in Fiscal Year 2007 for wildlife include the 800-acre Sombrero Wildlife Openings and the 500-acre Unit 34 Antelope Herbicide Maintenance on Sacramento RD, the 800-acre Frijoli Wildlife Openings on Guadalupe RD, and the 800-acre Cook/Dogtown Wildlife Habitat Improvement on Smokey Bear RD. Along with the vegetation treatments, there were three 3,500-gallon trick tanks strategically placed on each district. These projects include enclosure fences and drinkers in or near the wildlife vegetation treatments. Wildlife is currently using all of these drinkers.

In addition to the \$190,295, the Forest requested and received \$153,456 from the Habitat Stamp Program (HSP) for a landscape-scale project. These funds were used to improve mule deer habitat by burning for a 10,500 acres on Guadalupe RD.

Another example of Sikes Act habitat improvement is the work of Staff Biologist Larry Paul and Guadalupe RD. Larry developed plans for turkey habitat improvement and carried out some of that work while working with the New Mexico Game and Fish Department and the Wild Turkey Federation to reintroduce turkeys to Guadalupe RD. Thanks to Larry's hard work, dedication, and passion, 25 birds were trapped in the Sacramento Mountains and released on Guadalupe RD back in March 2007.

## **FS Dodgeball Team Wins First Place Trophy in CFC Tournament**

The Forest Service, along with other federal agencies, competed in the first annual "Don't Dodge CFC" Dodge Ball Tournament. Besides having fun, the purpose of this sporting spectacle was to create awareness of the upcoming fundraiser, for the Central & Northern New Mexico Combined Federal Campaign.

Trophies were presented to the tournament winners at the 2007 Kick Off, September 18th at the VA Medical Center Courtyard in Albuquerque:

First Place: Forest Service, Regional Office

Second Place: Natural Resource Conservation Service

Tied for Third Place: National Nuclear Security Administration/DOE and US Attorney's Office (USAO)

Thanks to the commitment and generosity of CFC donors and volunteers, millions of people in our community, across our nation, and around the world will be infused with new hope and dignity for years to come.

## **Wellness Corner: "Are You Prepared for an Emergency?"**

By Bequi Livingston, Regional Fire Operations Health & Safety Specialist

September 2007 was designated National Preparedness Month and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The goal is to increase public awareness of the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to be proactive. Don't wait until the emergency happens. Are you prepared for an emergency?

To prepare your family for a possible emergency, think first of the basics of survival, which include: Get a Kit, Make a Plan, Be Informed, and Get Involved!

Get a Kit: Recommended items to include in a basic emergency supply kit:

- Water (one gallon of water per day, per person for at least 3 days)
- Food (at least a 3-day supply of nonperishable food, including baby formula if needed)
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio w/NOAA weather options and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid kit & hand sanitizer
- Whistle to signal for help
- Cell phone with extra batteries
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food
- Medications and glasses
- Pet food and extra water for pets
- Important family documents
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Sleeping bag or warm blankets for each person
- Complete change of clothing

- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper to dilute in water (9 parts water to 1 part chlorine)
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits (paper and plastic)
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, cards, puzzles and other activities

Make A Plan: Your family may not be together when emergency strikes. Prepare in advance. How will you contact one another? How will you get back together and what you will do while apart?

- Develop a Family Emergency Plan – Make sure that every family member has a list of emergency contact numbers including family members out of town. Identify a single contact source – maybe a family member from out of town whom everyone can contact to confirm their whereabouts. Have pre-paid phone cards or extra change if needed and extra batteries for cell phones. Where will you reunite? The worst thing in the world is not knowing where family member are or how to contact them.
- Emergency Information – Understand the process for emergency notification in your local area (reverse 911, sirens, TV/Radio broadcasting, door-to-door notification). Make sure to have access to emergency broadcasting equipment such as TV or radio.
- Emergency Plans – Make sure that your family practices emergency drills at home ahead of time. Know what plans are in place for your children’s school and work. Make sure that you understand how your family will react in an emergency when together or apart to ensure that everyone is taken care of and knows the plan by heart.

Be Informed: Emergency preparedness is critical in today’s society given what is occurring worldwide.

- Collect any information you can regarding emergencies in your locality, nationally, and worldwide so that you are fully prepared ahead of time.
- Make sure that all family members are informed of the emergency processes. Include a plan for your pets and elderly or disabled neighbors to ensure their safety and well-being. Ask your children’s school for copies of their emergency plan. Do you know the emergency plan in your workplace?

Get Involved: (Rather than waiting for the emergency to occur, be proactive and become part of the preparedness solution. There are several options to choose from which to get directly or indirectly involved and make a difference in your family’s preparedness:

- New Mexico Citizen Corps State Council, (505) 476-9690, [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov)

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Emergency Preparedness: [www.ready.gov/america](http://www.ready.gov/america)
- American Red Cross – [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- Human Society – [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)

The last step is to talk to your neighbors about developing a community plan that ensures everyone’s safety. This could include the following:

- Develop a list of elderly or disabled neighbors who might need special assistance during an emergency. Delegate who will take care of them during that time.
- Work together as a community to determine actions and delegated items. Identify “safe houses” where children can go if school is dismissed during an emergency. Have a back-up plan for children in case parents can’t make it home during an emergency. Where will they go and who will they contact to ensure their well-being?
- What about pets? Who has pets needing care of if the owner can’t make it home? Find out in advance how to care for pets and working animals when disaster strikes. Pets should not be left behind, but could be taken to a veterinary clinic, family member’s home, neighbors, or animal shelter during an emergency. Be sure to provide extra food and water for pets and any medication they need. Pets should have identification such as tags or implants to ensure they are reunited with their owners if lost.

We all are guilty of having the “It won’t happen to me” syndrome! If you talk to anyone who has been involved in an emergency, they will tell you that they wish they had been proactive. Preparedness for disaster is the best thing you can do to ensure your safety and the safety of those you love!

## **What’s New in Forest Service Mapping?**

By Cynthia Geuss, Cartographer, Engineering - RO

This spring, Geospatial Service and Technology Center (GSTC) released the Forest Service Print on Demand (FSPOD), a web-based mapping application that allows the user to generate and plot quad-based topographic maps over National Forest System (NFS) lands and adjacent areas in “pdf” format. The system allows the user to select and generate a 7.5-minute map based on a traditional quadrangle footprint or on a user-defined center point. The maps adhere to a cartographic standard similar to Single Edition Quad (SEQ) for content and symbology.

The digital cartographic map information available on FSPOD is derived from cartographic feature files (CFF) and is the same as any given forest’s most recent Primary Base (PBS) or SEQ mapping project. In addition, employees may access quadrangle base maps from other regions which can be useful for resource management functions that span administrative and political boundaries.

Map content will vary over NFS lands. Layers such as contours and text are currently being recompiled and reformatted for many existing quadrangles. Other quads are in work at GSTC as the tail end of the national SEQ program of work. Recently revised map data will be added to FSPOD as it is completed.

Tonto and Lincoln NFs are the most recently completed topographic mapping projects in Region 3. We expect to have the Coconino and Prescott NFs completely revised and posted on POD in FY '08. Also in FY'08, we will finalize the CFF data revision for Safford and Santa Catalina RDs on the Coronado NF.

Over time, FSPOD data will use FS field and national applications data rather than cartographic data. Updates to the FSPOD database will be triggered by changes in these data and will increasingly reflect current on-the-ground conditions. To reach FSPOD, click on the following link:

<http://mapster.esri.com/fspod>

User id: fspod  
Password: quads

User instructions can be found at:

<http://fsweb.gstc.fs.fed.us/>

Select "FS Print on Demand" from the menu at left.  
Select "User Instructions" from the items listed directly under the page title, near the top of the page.

For project information or help in accessing FSPOD, contact Cynthia Geuss 505-842-3850 or [cgeuss@fs.fed.us](mailto:cgeuss@fs.fed.us).

## **Manager Self Service (MSS) Resources Support Program**

On September 17, the Albuquerque Service Center, Human Capital Management (ASC-HCM) implemented the MSS Resources Support Program. This program is designed to help managers and supervisors initiate requests for Human Resource (HR) assistance while transitioning to the use of EmpowHR.

Fifteen temporary contractors were hired for this program to assist managers and supervisors. They do not have access to Forest Service computers and are not HR specialists. They answer phone calls and record HR requests related to filling a position, requesting a personnel action, or classifying a position on hardcopy forms. The forms are then given to a Forest Service employee who is designated to enter the data into EmpowHR. Once the action is entered into EmpowHR, managers and supervisors can

view the request using the Personnel Action Status Report to track the request's progress until completion.

This support program is temporarily in place while upgrades and fixes are made to EmpowHR to make it a more user-friendly system and as managers and supervisors transition to using EmpowHR.

Managers and supervisors can reach the MSS Resources Support Program by calling 1-877-372-7248, press 3, Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mountain Time.

For more information about the MSS Resources Support Program, visit the HCM Web site at: [http://fswweb.hcm.fs.fed.us/hcm\\_customers/mss\\_resources\\_support.php](http://fswweb.hcm.fs.fed.us/hcm_customers/mss_resources_support.php)