



The Dixie Ranger

Published quarterly by the Southern Forest Service Retirees Association
\$8.00 per year Vol. XXIX No. 4 November 1999

The Preacher Was My Teacher

By Don Blackburn

My formal education was ending that spring day in 1957. Leaving Oklahoma, forestry degree in hand, I headed for Robbinsville, North Carolina, by way of Florida (fishing trip), Chattanooga, Murphy, Andrews, and Red Marble Gap, where some folks would say I was leaving the civilized world. Time would prove how wrong they were. Graham County was to become my favorite place to live, its people as fine as you would find anywhere. I drove through a blinding rainstorm that early June day, Red Marble Gap to Robbinsville. Found my room and board at the Phillips Rooming House. Reported to the Cheoah Ranger District the next morning. Met District Ranger Earl "Preacher" Parsons and Assistant Ranger Jim Froula. And that began my real education.

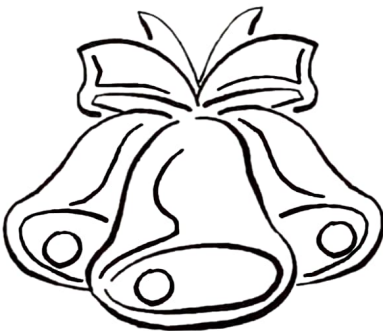
Completed a bit of paper work, then Preach loaded me in his rig, and off we went through Santeetlah Gap, up Santeetlah Creek to Wolf Laurel, the site of a logging operation in old growth Hemlock. Bemis Lumber Company had a market up north, Hemlock lumber being in demand for the manufacture of commercial refrigeration units. This old growth timber had withstood the winds of time, but over time, the boles had sustained damage from separation of the wood between the annual growth rings. These old trees were rightfully called shaky Hemlock, requiring scaling each log on the log deck. A skilled scaler determined the amount of defect in each log, and adjusted the board foot volume to be paid for by Bemis. Preach hauled out a scale stick (Scribner) and spent the remainder of the morning teaching me the finer points of scaling shaky Hemlock. After lunch, I was on my own. Wolf Laurel, with its huge pile of hemlock logs, became my home for the next several weeks.

Anyone familiar with the mountain people of the Southern Appalachians knows how self-reliant these folks are, and how suspicious they often are when the government offers them help. Preach had developed excellent relationships with these people, often using innovative methods to help them understand and accept National Forest regulations. An example I will always remember was his way of handling an incendiary fire problem we had on Yellow Creek where a certified fire bug was accustomed to plying his trade. Little Eddie lived on the

head of 'Yeller Cr.' with his father, Noah. Little Eddie was a young man probably in his mid-twenties and several cards short of a full deck. When the March winds began to blow through the sage grass along the road up 'Yeller Cr.', Little Eddie just could not resist the temptation. As a result, several fires would start each year and spread uphill to National Forest lands.

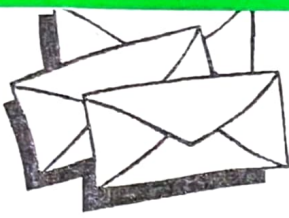
One windy, dry spring day, 1959 I think, Preach invited me to take a ride with him. We headed down that winding highway around the north side of Santeetlah Lake, turned up 'Yeller Cr.', and proceeded up the creek until we found Little Eddie walking along the road. He had that look in his eyes, and Preach asked him if he would like to take a ride down to the country store and get a banana. Little Eddie loved bananas. I slid over and he climbed in the cab with us. We turned around, went back to the store, and to Little Eddie's delight Preach bought him a bunch of bananas, and a new pair of overalls. We got back in the truck and spent the rest of the afternoon driving a banana eating Little Eddie up and down the 'Yeller Cr.' Road until the wind laid and the humidity began to rise. For the remainder of that spring fire season, my fire prevention job was to pick up Little Eddie when he had that look in his eye, buy him a bunch of bananas, and drive him up and down 'Yeller Cr.'

Forestry School did not teach me how to scale shaky Hemlock, or how to deal with the kind of fire problems the Cheoah often had. Preach Parsons taught me those lessons. They were just a couple of the real life forestry lessons I learned under Preach the 3 years I spent on the Cheoah. Preach was one of the finest men I worked for in the Forest Service. The Preacher was my teacher.



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON DECEMBER 9TH

Our Christmas luncheon is December 9th at the Petite Auberge restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center on North Druid Hills Road. We meet at 11:30 a.m. for a time of fellowship before lunch. Lunch is served at 12 noon. The cost of the luncheon is \$10 per person. Reservations are required, so please call either the Bray's at 770.253.0392 or Peaches Sherman at 770.253.7480. Reservations should be made no later than Tuesday, December 7th. Looking forward to seeing you there.



LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Don Blackburn, Roanoke, VA - I'm taking Betty's note (August Issue) seriously. If you can use the Preacher article, feel free to do so. There must be millions of memories of events out there in the minds of our members. They would make interesting reading if put on paper for use in *The Dixie Ranger*. Heard last week of the passing of Jack Kirby. What a legacy of stories he left behind. Maybe Phil Etchison will write about some of them.

Mary Ann Nicholas, Acworth, GA - Betty, notice you need news for next issue so here 'tis. Hurston, retired from Regional Office '92 as Regional Training Director for Fire and Aviation, and son, Allen, O.R.A. on Edgefield District, Edgefield, SC, flew to Wrangell, Alaska, July 1-5 to revisit the island, having lived there from 1960-1962. Saw ice on Stikine River as they went up to see a glacier and whales, seals, bear with cub, too. The next day they fished and caught about 40 pounds of halibut and cod which they proudly brought home! It was a lifetime dream for "Nick" to take Allen back to that area where they caught salmon so many years ago. Allen was almost four when we left Wrangell. I taught there my first two years and am teaching in Cobb County at Baker Elementary now. Nick has recovered quite well from a stroke in 1991 and enjoys life in general, grandchildren in particular, and also going to the deer camp. We were in Oregon visiting our youngest daughter this summer and Nick had the opportunity to visit his old stomping grounds on the Willamette National Forest, Sweet Home, Oregon, where an old friend drove him back up in the high country to see those majestic Douglas Fir!

O. D. Smith, Russellville, AR - Thank you for the great job you are doing with *The Dixie Ranger*. I always enjoy reading it although as time goes on there are fewer and fewer mention of folks I actually knew. Guess that is life.

The note in the August 99 issue from Don Ashworth reminded me of an instance that occurred on the Mena district of the Ouachita some years ago. I was the "green-as-a-gourd" young TMA (following Don Ashworth by the way) and Ray Hooper (one of the best I ever was privileged to work with) was the long-time Timber Technician. We were inspecting a timber sale and I was driving the pickup. In attempting to turn around in a log deck I managed to put one of the front wheels in a stump hole that had filled up with silt and bark and was not readily visible. We were stuck and stuck good, but did have a hand-operated "come-along" and enough cable to reach to a tree. Since the truck was down on the axle it took the best efforts of both of us using a pipe "cheater" to move the truck. The sun was hot and we were both sweating like mules and Ray was cussing. He just could not understand how anybody could be so stupid as to

drive off into a stump hole like that. I was not saying much because I felt pretty dumb about then. Finally we got out and I told Ray that he better take over the driving. We got in the truck and by golly Ray drove right back into the same hole! Man, did I enjoy winching out of it and pouring contempt on Ray for being so dumb!

Another time, shortly after Dave Jolly showed up as District Ranger, I almost ended his career. We were heading down a dim logging road and approached a long flat mud hole with standing water in it. I said, "Looks like one of those old Mississippi mud holes to me", threw the transmission up into third gear and showered down on the accelerator. About halfway through the hole we encountered a large submerged rock and the pickup took a humongous bounce. Dave's seatbelt buckle flew open and his head whacked the top of the cab. Dave said, "You and those GD Mississippi mud holes." He had a sore neck for several weeks.

Well, enough reminiscing for today. Maybe another time I will relate the story about the time I dropped the cake at the work center.

Joel Nitz, Hot Springs, AR - Thought I'd share with you an interesting sequence as a result of my story "A Wild Ride on the Rio Rollercoaster", ending with the solicitation to anyone interested in trading foreign coins. Out of the blue, I received the following response from Dave Scott. With his permission, I quote:

"Joel, I read in *The Dixie Ranger* about your trip to Mexico and had a good laugh. I've wondered over the years what to do with these old coins and now I know. I don't want anything in exchange. Just happy they found a good home. There's a couple over 100 years old. I know you are not a Norwegian but there must have been a lot of them around your home country in Minnesota.

"Hope you are having a good a time in retirement as we are. I am a partner in a small time construction business and what with travel, 3 kids and 6 grandkids, I manage to stay out of mischief. Hope you can use the coins for your collection or for trade."

Dave sent me a number of coins from Norway , Costa Rica, Mexico and Austria. If anyone wishes to exchange coins, please contact me at 139 San Juan, Hot Springs, AR 71913.

Norman D. Brown, Paul, ID - Thank you for sending the membership application and directory. Pam and I were on the Jessieville District of the Ouachita with John M. Archer in the early 1970's. Our daughter "Tammy Sue" got her middle name from Sue Archer, John's wife.

I was a zone engineering technician there, and we lived at Jessieville for a couple of years. Then I transferred into the S.O. as a Trainee Contract Specialist for about 1 ½ years. I ultimately retired on the Bridger Teton in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Our daughter, Tammy Sue, who was born in Hot Springs is now a resident of Sharpsburg, GA, and works in Peachtree City. We plan to visit her there at Thanksgiving time. Our other four kids are all in Idaho.

Pam is the concessions manager for the Bureau of Reclamation's Snake River Office in Burley, Idaho.

We would sure like to see and visit with some of our R-8 friends, when in Georgia, or anytime they are here. Best regards to all.

Howard Burnett, Deale, MD - On a recent trip to Pigeon Forge, TN, and Chatsworth, GA, I recalled some days on the Chattahoochee and the Nantahala. There were always some "old-timers" out in the woods gathering this or that, and I never knew just what for. Recently, I ran into a booklet about "making-do" during the Civil War, and some of the things mentioned rang a bell. For instance:

- Coffee can be made from acorns.
- Teas are produced from spiceberry, other berry leaves, sumac berries and sassasfras.
- In lieu of quinine, malaria and other fevers were treated with dogwood berries, wahoo or poplar or willow bark, or the boneset plant.
- Laxatives were derived from butternuts and mayapple, among other things.
- Wild cherry bark was used to relieve coughs and congestion.
- Coltsfoot was added to food to give a salt-like flavor.

Of course, some local people have a whole pharmacopeia-like knowledge of herbs and other wild plants, and gather a supply every year. When I read about the Civil War substitutes, I couldn't help but wonder whether some of those same uses survive today.

While visiting Chatsworth, I chatted with both Ray and Robert Tankersley, who both worked for the Forest Service for many years. They are both well and active, which is good for our age class! They reported that Chris Boatwright, retired Forest Worker, recently celebrated his 100th birthday. They also told of an event that we used to joke about: a horse had died on a trail ride in the Cohutta Wilderness. It was always a standing joke that the reason we didn't use horses in the South, like our peers in the West, was that what we did would kill a horse! How about that—vindicated, at last!

While in Pigeon Forge, I smelled pine smoke, and discovered the Park Service was watching a small lightning fire of some 80 acres or so, on the south end of the Smokies. This is one of their first "let-burn" fires. They got good newspaper coverage, and they have published a good "white-paper" type of handout, which they sell for 25 cents at Park stores. The white paper explains the let-burn policy quite well. I'm sure a lot of people my age are not wholly comfortable with this policy, but the younger age-classes are dedicated to make it work, so more power to them.

• • •

REUNION 2000—The Northern Rocky Mountain Retirees move their plans along for the Forest Service reunion in Missoula, MT, September 5, 6, & 7. Historian Stephen Ambrose will be the featured banquet speaker, and action is afoot for including tours, events, and schmoozing time. Registration packages are scheduled for distribution around the first of March 2000. Should you have any questions, contact Jim Freeman at: jfreeman@bitterroot.net.

• • •

IN MEMORIAM

Millie Jones, Fiscal Section, SO, Kisatchie NF, passed away September 5.

John O. "Jack" Kirby, 87, died August 22 at Franklin Memorial Hospital near his Meadville, MS, home. Jack retired from the RO, Atlanta, from the Division of Lands. He got his start on the Homochitto National Forest in Mississippi. At the time of his retirement (1987-88?) he held the record as the longest career tenured employee in the Forest Service, if not in the nation. Jack was born the night the Titanic hit the iceberg, April 14, 1912. Jack was noted for his ability to develop CCC workers and participants into productive skilled forest technicians, in spite of their lack of college degrees. He was also an avid big game hunter, and for years held membership in the Sam Newman Hunting Club on an island between the Yazoo and Mississippi Rivers. He is survived by his wife, Agnes Kirby of Meadville; one stepson and one stepdaughter, three grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Lewis Henry Mielke, 95, died August 23 in Greenville, SC. He was a Pennsylvania native. He retired in 1970 as Forest Engineer of the NFs in North Carolina after 42 years of service. Pete Hanlon writes about his good friend and co-worker: "He was a role model and mentor to young engineers coming on board. He was a producer, honorable, respected and admired—a true leader." He is survived by his wife Helen, son Charles, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Dr. Laurence C. (Larry) Walker, 75, died July 29 in Nacogdoches, TX. In 1998, *The Dixie Ranger* ran Dr. Walker's memoirs of a junior forester on the Sabine where he began his Forest Service career after graduating from Penn State University. In 1963, Dr. Walker was appointed Head of the Forestry Department at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College. When he arrived at SFA, there were less than 100 students, only six faculty, and no graduate program, no national accreditation and classes took place in the basement of the Austin Building. Within five years, 500 students were enrolled, there were 15 faculty, and a graduate program was initiated, and the Forestry Department became the School of Forestry and national accreditation was achieved. In 1970, a new spacious Forestry Building was completed. Dr. Walker retired in 1989, but continued to write books and teach. He became a minister pastoring the Trawick Presbyterian Church, Rock Springs Presbyterian Church and Tennessee Presbyterian Church.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Norman D. Brown (Pam), 862 W. 100S, Paul, ID 83347
Phone: 208.438.2682 E-mail: nbrn@cyberhighway.net

Barbara Quisenberry, 1001 South Erie, Russellville, AR 72801
Phone: 501.968.5831

• • •

Bus Trip Cancelled—President-elect Bob Bowers cancelled the bus tour of the Cherokee and NFs in North Carolina due to the small number who signed up for the trip. It will be rescheduled for next year with full details in the February issue of the DR.

• • •

Restoring Managerial Accountability in the U. S. Forest Service—

The House Committee on Appropriations instructed the Forest Service to have the National Academy of Public Administration produce a report on financial and program accountability in the Forest Service. Here is the Academy's Executive Summary:

The U. S. Forest Service has lost credibility because of persistent management weaknesses, financial accounting deficiencies, problems with the relevance and veracity of its data, and the poor quality of its strategic planning. The Forest Service, at the direction of Congress, contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration for an independent assessment of changes it is making to its business and fiscal systems and for recommendations on ways to strengthen its budget and planning processes. The Academy necessarily had to examine two collateral issues:

the Forest Service's organizational structure in light of the study's recommendations and is performance measurement system.

To address the problems with its current accounting system, the Forest Service is changing over to the modern Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS). The Chief Financial Officer expects to bring the system on-line October 1, 1999. Successful implementation of FFIS will provide the Forest Service with a standard general ledger that meets government accounting standards, accurate accounting reports, project accounting consistent with a project-oriented performance measurement system, automated allocation of indirect costs, improved property accounting and accountability, and positive funds control. Improved financial accountability may in turn lead to an acceptable audit.

To realize the full benefits of the FFIS, the Forest Service needs a revised budget structure. The current budgeting system, which is consistent with the structure of congressional appropriations, is based on resource-specific line items, and not on the multiple-use, ecosystem-based work the Forest Service actually performs. Under this system, it is now virtually impossible to relate expenditures back to the budget and to track performance accurately. Although meaningful performance planning and measurement are fundamental requirements of both Congress and the Administration, and despite the mandates of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Forest Service has been unable to develop adequate performance measures. None of the several attempts to date to simplify the budget has addressed this problem of the fundamental mismatch between budget structure and work performed.

The Academy panel recommends the following reforms:

- A budget structure for the National Forest System appropriation that consists of five Budget Line Items: Planning and Assessment, Multiple-Use Ecosystems/Watershed Management Projects, Recreation, Fire Pre-suppression and Suppression, and Law Enforcement.
- Congressional elimination of the Wildland Fire Management appropriation and transfer of the related funds to the National Forest System Fire, Pre-suppression, and Suppression Budget Line Item, so that all funds associated with fire are in a single Budget Line Item.
- The Academy panel recommends no changes to the State and Private Forestry, the Public Asset Protection and Management, the Land Acquisition, and the Forest and Rangeland Research appropriations. However, it does recommend that the Forest Service develop a formal management process to give regional foresters means of providing meaningful input in the development of the research program.

The structure of Congressional appropriations drives the Forest Service's budget structure. In line with the recommended revised budget structure, the Academy panel recommends adoption of a revised appropriation structure for the Forest Service as shown below, to be effective in FY 2001. Assuming Congress accepts the proposed structure, it should instruct the Forest Service to submit its FY 2001 budget request according to the revised structure (with cross-walks between the budgets for FY 1999, 2000, and 2001). The Congress should also require a follow-up report by June 2000 of the implementation plans the Forest Service is putting in place to assure use of the new structure in FY 2001. The report should include the specific outcome-based measures the Forest Service will use to assess performance.

National Forest System

- Planning and Assessment
- Multiple Use Ecosystems/Watershed Management Projects
- Recreation
- Fire Pre-Suppression and Suppression
- Law Enforcement

State and Private Forestry

- Forest Health Management
- Cooperative Fire Protection
- Cooperative Forestry

Land Acquisition

- Acquisition Planning
- Land Purchase
- Acquisition of Lands to Complete Exchanges
- Special Acts Associated with the Acquisition of Lands for National Forests

Public Asset Protection and Management

- Reconstruction/Construction
- Maintenance

The Academy panel further recommends that Congress direct the Forest Service to provide it with an operating plan, at a mutually agreeable level of detail below the Budget Line Item, within 30 days after enactment of the appropriation. The operating plan should explain any conditions during the fiscal year that warrant a change in funding in a budget Line Item. At the midpoint of the fiscal year, the Forest Service should provide the Appropriations Subcommittees an updated operating plan with a review of its current plans, including explanations for any changes.

If the Forest Service is to realize the full benefits of an improved accounting system and a new budget structure, it also needs to change the process for developing funding requirements and allocating budget obligation authority. The Academy panel recommends that the Chief of the Forest Service task the Chief Financial Officer with developing and implementing a budget process that requires:

1. Publishing annual sets of programs and projects derived from the Forest Service's strategic plan, against which budgets and allocations will be developed. Each major field unit (such as the regions and research stations) should provide similar guidance to its subordinate units.
2. Instituting a process whereby each field activity develops and prioritizes its budgetary requirements and submits them up the organizational hierarchy to the Washington Office.
3. Organizing the budget submissions in the Washington Office according to overall priorities as reflected in the strategic plan.
4. Providing feedback to the submitting organization when budget decisions are made.
5. Providing a process for regional foresters to make inputs on their research needs in the national forests.

The Academy panel has recommendations relating to two further issues related to the Forest Service budget:

1. A significant part, approximately one-fifth, of the Forest Service budget comes from funds provided through as many as 23 trust funds and special accounts. The Academy panel recommends that the Forest Service and Congress evaluate these appropriations to determine if they are achieving the desired results.
2. The Academy panel recommends that the Forest Service adopt the definitions it submitted in the FY 2000 Forest Service budget justification. Further, the Academy panel recommends that the Forest Service present the indirect budget by cost element and by location in its FY 2001 budget justification. Because the definitions will be new to Forest Service personnel, an audit should be made after the end of the fiscal year to identify problems and form the basis for corrective actions.

Changes in the Forest Service's organizational structure and design are needed if the agency is to get the most benefit from the new financial accounting system and revised budget structure and achieve related improvements in managerial accountability. The Academy panel suggests several organizational changes:

- Creation of the position of Deputy Chief under the Chief of the Forest Service, with principal responsibility for day-to-day internal operations.
- Creation of the position of Director of Administration, with responsibility for non-financial administrative activities (such as personnel and procurement). The Chief Operating Officer position should be eliminated.
- A line of reporting to the newly titled Associate Chief, National Forest System for the following groups, consistent with the recommended budget structure: regional foresters; planning staff; ecosystem/watershed management staff, recreation management staff; assets management staff; wildland fire management staff; and law enforcement staff.
- A direct line of reporting by the Chief Financial Officer to the Chief/Deputy Chief, to elevate programmatic and financial analysis to a level that assures independence and fulfills the fundamental intent of the Chief Financial Officer Act of 1990.
- The addition of an independent program analysis capability under the Chief Financial Officer, to focus principally on program development, analysis, and review, while keeping the accounting function viable and accurate. The Chief Financial Officer should stress the development and use of a policy analysis capability not only in his or her organization, but also throughout the Forest Service. Hiring in the Chief Financial Officer's Office should be heavily weighted toward program analytical skills, rather than accounting skills.
- The Forest Service should consider renaming the proposed Budget Staff the "Program Analysis and Budget Staff" to emphasize the unit's responsibility for independent program analysis and development of the agency's annual budget. The Program Analysis and Budget Staff should be organized programmatically into three primary appropriation areas: National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, and Forest and Rangeland Research; and two specialized staffs, Special Studies Group and Budget Group. The Special Studies Group would provide analytical support on agency-wide issues, requirements, and initiatives to the Chief Financial Officer, as well as the Chief and Deputy Chief, and to the three appropriations groups. The Budget Group would handle technical preparation of budget submissions and funding allocations to the Washington Office and the field. It would assure that all allocations comply with the laws and Congressional limitations and/or earmarks.

The Academy panel believes the same staff unit that is responsible for developing the budget should also have responsibility for program analysis, rather than placing it in an organization whose chief focus is accounting cost analysis, as called for in the Chief Financial Officer's current plan.

The Academy panel urges the Chief Financial Officer and senior managers to begin implementation, particularly hiring, of this new capability as quickly as possible.

In recent years, the Forest Service has attempted to produce a strategic plan linked to outputs and outcomes, as mandated by the Government Performance and Results Act. At this stage the strategic planning process is not advanced enough to clarify the Forest Service's choices or firmly establish its direction. The Academy panel fully endorses the need for the Forest Service to develop a strategic plan to provide a road map for management of the Forest Service and a basis for defining roles and responsibilities, delegating authority, and determining resource requirements.

The strategic plan should be linked to unit plans and program and project measurements at many levels: national, state, regional, community, and individual site. It should provide useful information to different stakeholders. Other Forest Service plans should be organized in a program/project framework at the forest level, based on identification of specific planning requirements for a particular forest in a set of specific documents within the Planning and Assessment Budget Line Item. Forest Service programs should be defined in a hierarchy under each Budget Line Item.

Programs are the long-term, central priorities of the agency that carry out the agency's mission. Examples are aquatic ecosystems management or forestlands health management. Projects define a specific unit of work at a specific location, an initial cost, schedule, and performance criteria that define outcomes or benefits in quantitative or qualitative terms. The projects form the substructure of the programs. The project criteria would be used at the forest and region levels to evaluate progress. Funding for each project would come wholly from the Budget Line Item for the particular program/project effort.

The Forest Service may want to consider the publication of a manual, as a companion to the strategic plan, that describes its management structure and extensive systems of plans that are needed to implement agency programs, and that discusses how all parts of the agency, down to the field and project levels, are involved in the planning and performance cycle.

The Forest Service's management needs to assure the planning and design of a hierarchy of performance measures from the lowest practical project level to the national level. The proposed budget structure lends itself to results-oriented management because it is compatible with performance assessment at both a low and high level of detail. Managers will have to employ "systems thinking" as their approach in order to incorporate site-specific projects and multiple ecosystems and to recognize their interrelationships. The performance measurement criteria should include costs and other measures, such as adequacy of performance, effort, and effectiveness.

In the end, the source of the Forest Service's problems is not the lack of financial accountability or a budget structure that does not match work actually performed. Rather, it is the lack of managerial accountability. Attaining a clean audit opinion by itself will not restore the agency's credibility and trust with Congress and other external groups, nor will a reliable financial accounting system and rational budget structure. These are only management tools. Merely appreciating the value of these tools is not good enough. Managers must want to use them because they believe the tools will help them make better decisions. They must, for example, value strategic plans and the linking of budgets to performance because the tools help them do their job effectively. A shift toward this way of thinking must start with the Forest Service's top leadership, who must in turn have full support from the leadership of the Department of Agriculture. Successful implementation of the new management tools and other changes will require significant involvement of the Forest Service Chief and senior managers.

The Academy panel is optimistic that the Forest Service has the capacity to fix the problems with financial accounting, although it questions the short timeframe designated for doing so. Similarly, the Forest Service should be able to improve the budget structure and process. However, based on past failures of leadership to carry through fully on reforms, the panel is concerned whether the Forest Service will do what needs to be done. It is also concerned that there is inadequate recognition that the real issue is the lack of managerial accountability and, underlying that, insufficient proactive, consistent, and focused leadership. These are the true sources of the accounting and budget problems. Leadership must recognize and be willing to tackle the absence of managerial accountability and to establish a standard of excellence in performance.

PLAYING SQUARE WITH THE FISCAL REGULATIONS

By: W. B. Greeley

August 21, 1922

The most distressing duty which has fallen to my lot in the Service has been dealing with men, sometimes old associates on the trail, who have not played square with the fiscal regulations. I do not mean grafters; to the honor of the Service, they have been few and wide apart. I mean honest men, zealous men who put their names to vouchers or certifications that are not true. I call these men honest and zealous advisedly. Their false returns are not made for personal gain. Almost invariably they seek this means to accomplish some cherished plan for advancing the interests of the Service in their charge, to put through some common-sense betterment or economy on a National Forest, or to pay for something which the Government in all fairness should pay for but which the auditor cannot pass under its right name.

Two things hurt particularly in these cases. The first is that the starting point is often a desire to get results of benefit to the Service and the public. For years we have preached resourcefulness, initiative, that results are what count. The very zeal to get results that count has lead some men to justify wrong ways of getting them, when square compliance with the fiscal rules stood in the way. The second sting in these cases is the plea that lots of other Service men are doing the same sort of thing. Can it be that we have developed a hardened fiscal regulations "conscience", like the old public land conscience, which leads men who never knowingly tell untruths in other affairs of life to sign their names on a certain lot of office forms to things that are not so? We call them "fiscal irregularities", but every one of them gets down in the end to a lie, a lie with a name written under it.

I do not believe for a moment that this thing is common in the Service, but I do want to say, whether it hits many or few, that we must nail the lie in accounts with the Government, just as we would nail it in dealings with private citizens. We must nail the fiscal lie, black, white or gray, a hundred dollars in a supply voucher or thirty cents padded in a subsistence account. The standing of the Forest Service depends upon public confidence in our integrity, and integrity must be just as clean toward the Government as toward the public whom we serve. Besides, lies are lies and Satan is the father of them all. We can take no chances with the good name of the Forest Service. Men who do not play square with the fiscal regulations, however laudable or disinterested their motives, however fine their records in other respects, cannot be retained.

The rules which govern us are not perfect by any means. They are not always fair to the employee. But the way to meet a bad rule is not to find a devious and untruthful way around it. We will get it changed if we can; but if we cannot we must accept it with such cheer as we can muster as one of the rules of the game. It must be one of our traditions, a part of the fine honor of the Forest Service, to play square with the Fiscal Regulations.

(Submitted by Bob Larkey prior to Editors receiving the National Academy of Public Administration's Executive Summary on ways to strengthen the Forest Service budget and planning processes).

Special Note from Editors— Thanks to all of you who sent in articles. We used a couple and will hold the rest for future issues. This issue includes a new Directory. The last one was issued in February 1998. I used the database for the labels and added the name of the spouse after the name of the retiree. The phone number is after the address, then e-mail is on the next line. The report feature in Microsoft Works did not respond as directed and when my frustration hit the ceiling, I took the easy way out and used the label layout for the Directory. I hope you don't mind. If there are errors, please let me know — Betty

• • •

New Forest Service Heritage Book— Ranger Walt Perry returns to the American West in a new book. Walt shares his life in the Forest Service in **Walt Perry: An Early-Day Forest Ranger in New Mexico and Oregon**. This memoir, penned in 1938 and skillfully edited by Les Joslin is available from Wilderness Associates.

Forty years after his death in Bend, Oregon, at age 86, Forest Service pioneer Walt Perry returns in a new book that's nothing short of a legacy for all who treasure the history and values of "the outfit."

Walt lived an amazing life. He worked at many jobs—most notably mining and logging in Mexico—before he found his "real life's work" in the U. S. Forest Service. Recruited in 1910 by the legendary C.C. Hall (then supervisor of the old Alamo National Forest and from 1916 to 1932 of the old Santiam National Forest), Walt was soon working for Aldo Leopold on the Carson. After 15 years as a ranger and timber manager in New Mexico, he transferred to the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon to put its timber management program together. He did the same job on the Fremont before he retired in 1936.

Copies of this book at \$15.95 (includes postage and handling) are available from Wilderness Associates, P. O. Box 5822, Bend, Oregon 97708. Submit your order by check or money order including your name and address.

WOODY'S LAMENT

One day in late summer of 1954, Forestry Aid J. D. Gay and Ranger John Courtenay in routine district travel noticed some fresh timber cutting on a hillside near Melton town. Melton town was a black community on the Oakmulgee Ranger District of the Talladega National Forest in Alabama. Nearly everybody in Melton town was named Melton or was married to a Melton. The Oakmulgee has a real scatter-gun pattern of ownership with many small tracts intermingled with private land. A little research proved our suspicions correct—the cutting was on an 80-acre tract of National Forest land. In fact, the whole 80 acres had been cut over. Our next step was obvious—go ask Woody Melton who cut it. Woody was a good, solid citizen who bought some National Forest timber from time to time and whose word was reliable. Woody answered quickly “Yes, I cut that timber. Took me nearly all summer but the land joined my place and the man deeded me the land as pay for cutting the timber and hauling it to his sawmill.”

As it turned out, the United States had acquired the 80 acres in the 1930's from a man who owned many scattered tracts in the area. After his death, his widow sold most of these tracts to others and this 80 acres was inadvertently included in several sold to the sawmiller. The sawmiller then arranged for Woody to cut and haul the timber in exchange for the cut-over land. All without any intent to defraud by anyone involved. Sloppy title searching, but an innocent trespass. All parties accepted the Forest Service ownership claim and agreed to make restitution. In the title searching, however, it was discovered that there was a one-acre exception for a cemetery that had been conveyed to a small country church prior to National Forest acquisition. That conveyance provided that if the church was ever disorganized and no longer existed, the one acre cemetery would revert to the previous owner. This had occurred. The man's widow was the legal owner of the cemetery when she sold it to the sawmiller and it had been legally conveyed to Woody Melton.

When told of this, Woody's soulful comment was “That's all I need is a white folks graveyard!!!”

Submitted by John Courtenay, Retired,
Forest Supervisor, NFs in Texas

• • •

What I've Learned —

I've learned that it takes years to build up trust, and only seconds to destroy it.

Submitted by Howard Burnett

WHAT GENDER IS A COMPUTER?

A language instructor was explaining to her class that French nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designated as masculine or feminine. Things like 'chalk' or 'pencil,' she described, would have a gender association although in English these words were neutral.

Puzzled, one student raised his hand and asked, "What gender is a computer?"

The teacher wasn't certain which it was, and so divided the class into two groups and asked them to decide if a computer should be masculine or feminine. One group was composed of the women in the class, and the other, of men. Both groups were asked to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The group of women concluded that computers should be referred to in the masculine gender because:

- In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
- They have a lot of data but are still clueless.
- They are supposed to help you solve your problems, but half the time they ARE the problem.
- As soon as you commit to one, you realize, that, if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

The men, on the other hand, decided that computers should definitely be referred to in the feminine gender because:

- No one but their creator understands their internal logic.
- The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
- Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval.
- As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

♦ ♦ ♦

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

Forest Supervisor Takes Chief to Task for Comments

The Man Who Outfoxed the Corporation by Larry Trekell

SOUTHERN FOREST SERVICE
RETIREES ASSOCIATION
70 WILKES COURT
NEWNAN, GA 30263-6124

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEWNAN GA
PERMIT #34

Directory Enclosed

Note: Please make your luncheon reservations by December 7th. See page 2 for phone numbers.

In This Issue:

- Luncheon 2
- Letters from Members 3
- In Memoriam 6
- New Members 7
- Restoring Accountability . 7
- Playing Square 12
- Woody's Lament 14
- Directory 15

* * * *

OFFICERS: Jerry Edwards, President (770.998.1969); Robert Bowers, Vice-President (770.205.1902);
Betty Bray, Sec.-Treasurer (770.253.0392)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Dan Sims (1999), Peaches Sherman (2000), Robert Johns (2001), Ex-Officio, Robert Erickson

EDITORS: Bert and Betty Bray E-mail: brayira@aol.com Phone: 770.253.0392

Published quarterly in February, May, August, and November. Dues are \$8 per year, payable in January. Mailing address:
Southern Forest Service Retirees Association, 70 Wilkes Court, Newnan, GA 30263