



EXPLORER



US FOREST SERVICE, ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESEARCH STATION

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Deputy Under Secretary Bartuska Visits Albuquerque Lab



(L-R) Megan Friggens, Rose Pendleton, Sharon Coe, Ann Bartuska, Deborah Finch, Paulette Ford.

Dr. Ann Bartuska, Acting USDA Deputy Under Secretary (and formerly Forest Service R&D Deputy Chief), visited our Albuquerque lab on August 11. She discussed priorities she has in her current position, including enhancing rural health, conservation and restoration of national forests and working lands, and children's nutrition. Ann is currently involved in preparations for the FY11 budget and thought the Forest Service budget for FY10 was reasonably good. Budgets are still being held to the 10-year rolling average according to Ann. She

indicated that FY09 and FY10 do not look to be fire-transfer years. The revised Flame Act is going through Congress and, if renewed, will put fire funding in a separate account.

Ann was presented with a packet describing the RMRS organizational structure and individual research by local scientists. Research and partnerships at Sevilleta Long-term Ecological Research Site and Valles Caldera National Preserve were also highlighted, as well as new studies and proposals on climate change, endangered species, fire ecology, riparian restoration, and urban communities.

RMRS attendees included: **Deborah Finch, Megan Friggens, Paulette Ford, Dave Hawksworth, Kal Louks, Rosemary Pendleton, Carol Raish**, and cooperator **Sharon Coe**, along with R-3 Deputy Regional Forester Faye Krueger and Director of Watershed, Fish, Wildlife and Rare Plants Don DeLorenzo.

Ann also visited the R-2 Regional Office last week for a "fireside chat." Quantitative Ecologist **Linda Joyce**, Fort Collins, represented RMRS. Linda says the discussion was lively and focused on the challenges of resource management in Colorado.

LT Meeting Update

The RMRS Leadership Team met last week in Fort Collins. Topics of discussion included: 1) workforce planning - including the filling of the ASD for Strategic Management and Accountability position; 2) budget - both current and future; 3) facilities - projects selected for FY 2012; 4) increased collaboration with R-2; 5) administrative restructuring - concerns and opportunities; 6) roles and responsibilities of Director's Representatives; 7) safety issues; and 8) civil rights briefing. Additional details are available in the summary document attached to this week's mailing of the *Explorer* newsletter.

Ayer Selected as Acting ASD

Program Manager for the National Forest Service Library, **Carol Ayer**, Fort Collins, has been selected to serve as the Acting ASD for Communications and Marketing. Carol's appointment began August 16 and will run for 120 days.

Carol has worked for the Forest Service since 1972. She has been with RMRS and the former Intermountain Station for over 20 years, with the last three as National Library Program Manager. She recently completed the Senior Leader Program. Carol can be reached at 970-498-1310.

Page-Dumroese Represents RMRS at Biochar Conference

Research Soil Scientist **Deborah Page Dumroese**, Moscow, has returned from the North American Biochar Conference, held August 9-12 in Boulder, Colorado, where she presented a paper on “Portable In-woods Pyrolysis: Using Forest Biomass to Reduce Forest Fuels, Increase Soil Productivity, and Sequester Carbon.” She was also a member of a Forest Systems panel. **Nate Anderson**, Missoula, also attended as a collaborator on the paper/panel.

The keynote speaker was Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, who spoke about the Administration’s commitment to taking international leadership on climate change and the potential to create rural jobs and opportunities for landowners through the use of biochar.

This conference was the first biochar conference held in the United States. It focused on issues surrounding large-scale usage of biochar as both a sequestration agent and soil amendment. Biochar, charcoal created by burning biomass, is a form of carbon capture and storage and is of increasing interest because of concern about climate change caused by carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases.

Field Trip Showcases Fire-related Studies



Civil Engineer Louise Ashmun, right, demonstrates a duff moisture meter to the YCC students.

Engineers **Sarah Lewis** and **Louise Ashmun**, Moscow, recently led a field trip to an area burned by the 2005 School Fire in southeast Washington on the Umatilla National Forest. They were joined by six Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) members and Pomeroy District Ranger Monte Fujishin. The students learned about fire ecology, post-fire rehabilitation, prescribed fires and salvage logging. They examined active erosion monitoring and vegetation recovery research sites within the School Fire area, and used field research equipment to take soil measurements. “This field trip provided a great opportunity to share research findings as well as enthusiasm for natural resource science and management careers with future forest stewards,” said Sarah.

RMRS Partners Use Cameras to Monitor Fires



Program Manager **Colin Hardy**, Missoula, sends word that RMRS partners at the University of Montana, National Center for Landscape Fire Analysis (NCLFA), have developed a system using two cameras that are keeping watch on strategic areas of a wildfire (photo) that are difficult to access by foot and expensive to monitor by helicopter. The video is transmitted via line-of-sight radios from two mountaintops back to the ranger district office on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest (WA). The equipment links to the Internet and ranger district staff can control the cameras from town. The data is streaming live at <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf> (click on Langille Fire – Fire Cam). According to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, this effort highlights the role that remote monitoring technology can play in helping managers make more informed, real-time decisions about fire.

Safety DVD Available for Border Work

The Missoula Technology and Development Center has developed a personal safety training program to help land management employees who work along the U.S.-Mexico border. Drug smuggling and illegal immigration are just two of the issues employees face in this region.

The 90-minute DVD, "Working Along the United States-Mexico Border," captures the knowledge and skills of Federal and State employees who have years of experience working near the border. It has three modules: 1) Understanding the Situation; 2) Protecting Yourself; and 3) Fighting Fire. Employees can order the DVD online at <http://fsweb.mtdc.wo.fs.fed.us/search> (search for "border"), or by calling 406-329-3978, or email your request for DVD #0823-2D11 to wo_mtdc_pubs@fs.fed.us.

Forming Sustainable Habits (from the RMRS Green Team)



Whether it's riding your bike to work, using less water, or recycling, these tips can help you start making sustainable choices part of your routine.

- What's your plan?

◆What do you want to do? Write it down and post it. This will help you form a clear goal and act as a reminder.

◆Why you want to do it? What are the benefits of the change? What are the downfalls of your current routine? The answers can help motivate you.

◆What do you need to start? Address these items quickly. It will prepare you and reduce potential excuses.

- Create a cue: Remind yourself by creating context. Some examples include turning everything off in your house after you grab your car keys, or checking the back side of a sheet of paper to see if it is blank before dropping it in the recycle bin.

- Take small steps: Decrease the amount of waste, miles driven, or power consumed incrementally. The contribution of initial steps to obtaining your ultimate goal can be great motivation and provide important learning experiences for later steps.

- Trial period: Try it for 30, 60, or 90 days. You may decide to extend the trial or commit to a permanent change. For some people this length of time can be long enough to make the new behavior habitual. According to [one study](#) it takes an average of 66 days for a new habit to become automatic, and the more consistently the behavior is performed, the sooner it becomes habit. Even if you don't stick with it, you'll learn things that could be applied to future attempts.

- Keep trying: Making changes in your behavior and routines can be difficult. If it doesn't stick on the first try or the fiftieth, use those experiences to improve your odds on your next attempt. The more you try, the better your chances of success!

