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## Keeping You Informed

### Season's Greetings!

As the Hiawatha's Centennial Year draws to a close, the snow is piling up outside. Forest visitors are loving it, passing the time on our outstanding groomed ski trails and snowmobile trails, testing the new ice with ice augers and fishing gear, or silently snowshoeing in our Wildernesses. Ice shards are piling up on the shorelines beside the Hiawatha's six lighthouses, and with gale winds in the forecast for the next two days, I expect those ice piles will continue to grow. ☼ The past three months have been busy ones as Forest staff worked on a variety of projects—closing up summer facilities and opening winter ones, finalizing plans for and beginning the 2010 program of work, initiating contracts for next summer's work, managing ARRA projects, compiling data collected last field season, and so on. ☼ As you reflect on 2009 and look ahead to 2010, join me in taking a moment to read about fall and early winter on the Hiawatha. Think about how much your National Forests mean to you, whether in terms of clean water & clean air, sustainably managed forests, contributions to the economy, or quiet places for recreation or solitude. Our Forests are valuable in so many ways. In this season of thankfulness, let us for our nation's foresight in designating National Forests, and give one round of applause for the Hiawatha's Centennial year.

Sincerely,  
 Thomas A. Schmidt  
 Forest Supervisor



## Human Resources Highlights

**Elizabeth Funderburg** has been selected for the position of Writer/Editor on the St. Ignace Ranger District.

**Nita Housey**, Safety Coordinator, will be retiring December 31, 2009.

**Phil Kinney**, Forestry Technician, will retire December 31, 2009

**Don Howlett**, Partnership Coordinator, will be retiring January 1, 2010.

## Recent Success Stories

### Annual Forest Safety Award

Rapid River/Manistique Ranger District employee and safety team member, Tom Desy, was recently awarded the annual Forest Safety Award for his outstanding leadership on the district safety team and his dedication to designing safe work.

In addition to his safety duties, Tom is currently a forester on the Hiawatha National Forest.



[For more details on this story, click here & visit our Success Story Reporting System](#)

### CLEC and Fine Arts Center Partner

Clear Lake Education Center and the William Bonifas Fine Arts Center have partnered to present an ongoing series of "Nature-Art FUNdamentals" workshops designed to help students connect science and art. The workshops bring "hands-on nature" to future scientists and artists.

[For more details on this story, visit our Success Story Reporting System website.](#)

## Protecting Across Boundaries:

# Economic Recovery Projects on the Hiawatha



### Hiawatha ARRA at a Glance:

**Projects**—14 (plus two projects awarded to Northern Research Station) will occur on Hiawatha NF lands.

**Funding**— \$10.8 million available (plus \$800,000 for Research projects)

**Active on the Ground** — Currently 2 projects have been active on the ground. More will begin during the next snow-free season.

## FOCUS on Land Acquisition

### Did you know ... ?

About 700 acres of private land remain to be acquired within the Hiawatha's Wildernesses & National Recreation Area. The biggest chunk, 550 acres, lies within Rock River Canyon Wilderness. Meanwhile, 3 of our Wildernesses are now 100% federally owned. Congress deems consolidation in these special areas a priority.

### ROAD MAINTENANCE AND WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECTS

#### **County Road 513 Resurfacing/Reconstruction**

(\$3,500,000) - Project #CIM-0904/0907/0910-424-1R will resurface 11 miles of Delta County Road 513 (Forest Highway 29) from Highway US 2 to the

**Signing** (\$250,000) - Forest-wide project #CIM-0900-

retro- they can legally ride off-road vehicles as well as locations their activities may be restricted in order -wide)

(\$900,000) - Project

#CIM-0904-0907/0910-400-1R will resurface portions of Country Road 550/FR2276 and County Road 596/FR2596 from the AuTrain River Road to the AuTrain Lake campground. (Alger County). *Project is active on the ground.*

#### **Mackinac Trail Reconstruction** (\$1,000,000) -

Project #CIM-0904/0907/0910-404-1R will complete the resurfacing of the final 4 miles of Mackinac Trail/Forest Highway 26(Mackinac County)

#### **Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) culvert**

**replacement** (\$341,000) - Project #CIM-0901/10-05E will replace two existing drainage structures with new. (Alger County)

#### **AOP Watershed Restoration design** (\$500,000) -

Project #CIM-0910-13EW will result in the design of 10-15 AOP structures by a contract engineering design firm. (Multiple counties)

#### **AOP Watershed Restoration construction**

(\$2,000,000) - Project #CIM-0907/10-15E will replace multiple existing culverts with new, eliminating deferred maintenance and improving the crossings to AOP. (Multiple counties)

### HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION AND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECTS

#### **Fuel Break Maintenance/Savannah Restoration**

(\$200,000) - Project #WFM-0900-09HFR is

designed to reduce hazardous fuels through fuel break maintenance, treatment of activity fuels for reforestation, and removal of encroaching vegetation. (Chippewa, Alger, Delta and Schoolcraft Counties)

#### **Barren/Savannah Restoration** (\$100,000) -

Project #WFM-0900-09HFR will cut and masticate vegetation in order to reduce wildland fire risk and restore barren/savannah habitats. (Alger, Delta and Schoolcraft Counties).

#### **Hazardous Fuels Treatment** (\$171,000) – Project

#WFM-0900-01HFR will reduce hazardous fuels, site preparation and reforestation, including hazardous fuels removal and site preparation and planting. (Delta County). *Project is active on the ground.*

### FACILITIES AND TRAILS PROJECTS

#### **Michigan Toilet and Storage Building**

**Reconstruction** (Hiawatha NF portion \$419,000) - Project #CIM-0900-7F will provide funding to replace toilet buildings and site furniture at various recreation sites forest-wide, reducing “deferred maintenance: and providing accessible facilities. (Multiple Counties).

#### **Grand Island NRA NL Creek Bridge Replacement & Rim Trail Culvert Replacement** (\$500,000) -

Project #CIM-0910-5T has two components. 1) The first portion will replace a condemned bridge which serves as a critical east-west trail link at Grand Island National Recreation Area in Alger County. (Alger County)

#### **Clear Lake Education Center - Site erosion control, Water & Wastewater Rehabilitation, A.D.A. accessible walkway construction**

(\$620,000) - Project # CIM-0900-24F will fund multiple projects at the Clear Lake Education Center. (Schoolcraft County).

#### **Grand Island NRA Building Design & Renovation and Dock Rehabilitation**

(\$300,000) - Project #CIM0900-28F will fund design and implementation of visitor info station and dock renovations for Grand Island NRA.



Employee Awards Potluck, giving her the chance to meet East Unit employees, witness the debut performance of "The ARRA Blues," and sample the delicious potluck table!

### Deputy Regional Forester's Visit

We were delighted to spend a couple of days with Lee Nightingale in early December. In addition to attending the Regional Partnership Council Meeting, Lee made time to visit with employees at the S.O. and at the Districts and to tour several ARRA projects and recreation sites on the west side. We were fortunate that Lee's visit also coincided with our annual

### FOCUS on Law Enforcement

#### Hunting Season 2009

On the Hiawatha, deer hunting season (Oct 1-Dec 31) is an extremely busy time of year for our Forest Protection Officers and Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs). As visitor use increases, unfortunately so does resource damage. Part of the challenge for LEOs is trying to juggle the increasingly demanding workload associated with "marijuana season" along with hunting season issues.

The following Hiawatha statistics include only law enforcement incidents directly related to the 2009 Michigan hunting season on the West Unit alone:

- ◆ 117 total documented incidents (these are violations of the law that are unsolved or referred, as well as public and agency assists)
- ◆ 84 violation notices and/or written warnings issued



situation with high risk of wildland fire.

Presently, the project employees one contract machine operator who, not being from the local area, is utilizing local lodging and restaurants, and procuring supplies and materials locally. Work is scheduled for completion by September 2010.

## Economic Recovery: Equipment rolls on Stockyard Hazardous Fuels Project

On-the-ground activity began in early December on the ARRA-funded Hazardous Fuels Treatment (WFM-0900-01HFR) project. The project will remove 187 acres of hazardous fuels in the Stockyard area of the Rapid River/Manistique Ranger District.

"We are excited about this project," said Wildlife & Botany Program Manager Kirk Piehler, "because it benefits the community, the economy, and an endangered species.

The project will reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland/urban interface in the Stockyard area of the Stonington Peninsula, where fire-dependent jack pine habitat lies adjacent to homes, schools and businesses. In addition the project will, over time, improve habitat conditions for many wildlife species including the endangered Kirtland's Warbler.

Located in proximity to the US 2 corridor, the project area borders the primary east-west route in the U.P., providing a high visibility opportunity to show how fire risk can be lessened while improving habitat for wildlife. After a



Vegetation cutting has reduced the thick jack pine to chips and stubble. Although now covered in snow, vegetation cutting can continue through the winter provided snow cover doesn't get too deep. The island of jack pine trees in the center was left to provide structure for wildlife.

wildfire in 1988, the project area responded by developing into a very dense stand of jack pine. Kirtland's warbler, a federal endangered species, used the area in the mid-1990's. Predictably, the species only used the site for a few years before moving on. Since then, dry weather and insects have caused the jack pine to die, creating dry, continuous fuels — a

## Connecting Citizens to the Land:

# Friends Explore Dukes Experimental Forest Projects



## FOCUS *on* Soo Office Conveyance & Raco Redesign

### Employees Embrace Change

We all know that moving office locations can be a stressful and challenging process. Surviving, or better yet, thriving, with change requires first and foremost a **willingness to get involved and take a stand for individual and collective well-being.** Employees of the Sault Ste Marie District and Raco Work Station are putting this proactive concept to work as they anticipate closure of the former office and expansion of the latter.

In response to employee interest, District employees, management, engineers, and architects will work together to finalize designs for the revamped Raco workspace.

“By channeling the stress of change into constructive efforts that help shape our future, our employees are making the most of change,” says District Ranger Steve Christiansen. “I’m proud of that.”

### Research Leads the Way Toward Better Northern Hardwoods Management

Each spring and fall, a wonderfully diverse group of individuals gather to learn more about the latest happenings on the Hiawatha National Forest. This informal group, known unofficially as “the Friends,” began in the late 1980s as a group of appellants to the 1986 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Since then, the group has expanded to include an ever-changing array of people interested in the Hiawatha. Attendees may represent organizations or clubs; universities; industry and recreation; local, state, and national government; or simply themselves. But all share a passion for the Hiawatha.

In addition to round robin updates by all attendees, the semi-annual meeting usually includes updates on Forest happenings, brief “success story” presentations by Forest personnel, and a special “about us” presentation by one invited attendee. The format allows for lots of information sharing.

Friends meetings usually include an afternoon field trip aimed at providing an in-depth look at a project or issue. Recent field trips have addressed beech bark disease



*Friends of the Hiawatha listen as Forester Tim Baker answers questions about the Hiawatha’s latest efforts in support of ongoing research projects at Dukes Experimental Forest.*

management, Kirtlands warbler, hazardous fuels management, aquatic passages, and most recently, northern hardwoods management research in the Dukes Experimental Forest near Skandia, MI. On that field trip, foresters and participants visited several sites within the Experimental Forest, gaining understanding of the research goals, methods and findings.

“We really appreciate the participation and enthusiasm of our Friends meetings,” says Forest Supervisor, Tom Schmidt. Typically, participants ask insightful questions and offer thoughtful comments that add a lot of value to the learning atmosphere.

Schmidt believes that the agency and the attendees all gain insight from gathering and sharing information and ideas.

“Gatherings like the Friends meeting are a win-win proposition,” says Schmidt, who values involvement by local citizens and organizations.

## RF Honor Awards: Congratulations to Local Winners

**Deb LeBlanc**—Connecting Citizens to the Land

**Martha Sjogren**—Employer of Choice

**Kirtlands Warbler Team**— Protecting Ecosystems Across Boundaries

### Kirtland’s Warbler Team members:

**Hiawatha employees:** Jean Perkins, Tim Baker, Doug Born, Eric Henderson, Kirk Piehler, Steve Sjogren, Matt Cole, Chuck Schwartz, Luke Langstaff, Gerred Carothers, Janet Ekstrum, Marjorie Allmaras, Martha Sjogren, Don Mikel, Tracy Anderson, Bill Gimler, Derek Huebner, Mike Peterson, Gary Olson, Laurie LaBumbard, Tom Desy, Jon Burk, Mike Thibodeau, Sam Barnes, Phil Kinney, Mark Vonderwerth,

(Continued on page 5; see RF Honor Awards)

## Protecting Ecosystems Across Boundaries: Hiawatha Employee Returns from Detail in Africa

### **Developing Fire and Reforestation Strategies**

Hiawatha National Forest Ecosystem & Fire Team Leader, Dave Maercklein, recently returned from his second International Forestry (IF) detail to Africa, where he served on a team focused on fire management and reforestation recommendations for selected areas in the Congo river basin.

The team traveled to the Republic of Congo (RC) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), navigating challenging infrastructure conditions visiting villages in the Savannah and gallery forest mosaic landscape where human-caused brush fires and fuel wood demand has resulted in increasing deforestation and forest degradation threatening wildlife populations and carrying capacity of the land.

The team came at the invitation of United States Agency of International Development (USAID), which is interested in promoting sustainable natural resource development and protecting biological diversity. USAID works in cooperation with developing countries governments and participating nongovern-

mental organizations on project proposals and seeks US Forest Service employees expertise as consultants for assessing the feasibility of these developmental proposals.

Maercklein, a mid-1970's Peace Corp volunteer in West Africa was selected for the detail because of his forestry and planning experience, previous experiences in Africa (including a previous IF detail to Madagascar), and familiarity with French. Other members of the detail team were Scott Posner, Wildlife Biologist, Washburn Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF providing fire management expertise and Ronald P. Overton, Area Regeneration Specialist, Northeastern Area, State & Private Forestry providing nursery and reforestation expertise.

The final product of the mission is a report with strategic recommendations on fire management and reforestation proposals for the Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo by participating nongovernmental organizations conducting natural resource management activities in the Congo basin at the re-



*Above: Maercklein (far left) poses with team and hosts amidst gallery rainforest vegetation.*

*Left, behind text: Traveling on National Highway 2 in the Congo.*

quest of the governments.

Summing up his experience, Maercklein said, "It was a great experience. I continue to learn from Africa, and each experience reinforces the importance of sustainable natural resource management."

[For more details on this story, visit our Success Story Reporting System website.](#)

## Employer of Choice:

## 2009 Hiawatha National Forest Supervisor Honor Awards

### **Forest Recognizes Outstanding Projects**

Each year, the Hiawatha's forest leadership team develops a list of praiseworthy forest accomplishments, in addition to any that might receive a Regional Forester's Honor Award. Last year, Forest Supervisor Tom Schmidt began presenting "Forest Supervisor Honor Awards" to these projects at the annual Hiawatha Employee Awards Potluck.

This year, Forest Supervisor Tom Schmidt recognized two outstanding projects.

**Revolutionizing Effectiveness & Efficiency: Moss Lake Off-Road Motorcycle Trail Team**  
Designed to recognized our partners, this award goes to representatives of the

Michigan DNR and the UP Sandstormers Club for their leadership and assistance in the development of the 27-mile Moss Lake Off-Road Motorcycle Trail. The DNR provided \$50,000 for the USFS to conduct the EA, and provided additional funding to oversee construction and monitoring of the trail. The UP Sandstormers constructed the trail and has committed to maintain the trail into the future.

**Walk the Talk for Sustainability: Whitefish Bay Scenic Byway Team**

This award goes to the team of Hiawatha NF staff who worked collaboratively and innovatively to accomplish this impressive project efficiently and with the support of the local community.

### **RF Honor Awards, (continued from p. 4)**

**RO Employees:** Becky Ewing, Bill Bartush

**Volunteers & Contractors:** Mike Berg, Petra Krehel, Matt Vance, Scott Hickman, John Probst, Holli Forest Products, and T&S Contracting.

**USFWS:** Christie Deloria and Chris Mensing

**MI DNR:** Sherry Mackinnon  
**NGOs:** Brad Brandt (NADF), Todd Hogrefe (NFWF), and John Ries (MSGA)

# Hiawatha National Forest



2727 North Lincoln Road  
Escanaba, MI 49829

# Calendar

Date	Event
Jan 5	MICHNet call
Jan 9	Winter Trails Day Event @ RR Ski Trail
Jan 9	Valley Spur Ski Bash
Jan 9	Winter Trails Day Event @ Soldiers Lake
Jan 19	Forest Leadership Team Meeting
Feb 2	MICHNet call (tentative)
Feb 19-20	Midnight Run and UP200 Dogsled Races
Feb 24-25	Forest Leadership Team Meeting
Mar 2	MICHNet call (tentative)
Mar 6	Taste & Glide Event @ Valley Spur
Mar 24-25	Forest Leadership Team Meeting

# Parting Shots



The landscape of the Congo basin area varies from rainforest to grasslands.

## 2009 Lake Superior Magazine Achievement Award

Hiawatha National Forest and other members of the Great Waters Initiative recently received honors for their collaborative efforts to develop profitable, eco-friendly tourism in the eastern U.P. HNF personnel involved include Ted Schiltz, Dick Anderson and Don Howlett. Way to go, team!

### Questions? Contact us!

Tom Schmidt, Forest Supervisor, 906-789-3339  
Janel Crooks, Public Affairs Officer, 906-789-3329

# Get Outdoors this Winter!!



REGISTRATION FORM — VALLEY SPUR SKI BASH  
January 09, 2010

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (As of January 9, 2010)  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_



Where did you hear about the race?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ENTERING

Snow abounds on the Hiawatha National Forest, so if you're looking for "Great Snow," we've got lots of it! Winter is a great time of year to get outdoors and explore — Whether you snowshoe, cross country ski, snowmobile, downhill ski or ice fish, we've got plenty of opportunities for you!

Lake-effect snow is a way of life in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and the Hiawatha is known for harnessing that winter resource to provide outstanding winter recreation opportunities. Six groomed cross country ski trails, miles of snowmobile trails, and a ski hill are all located on the National Forest.

"Our partners and volunteers are key to making these winter recreation opportunities available for all to enjoy," notes Forest Supervisor Tom Schmidt. "We really appreciate their enthusiasm and effort."

For more information about ski trails, ski races, dogsled races, snowmobile trails and other winter recreation on the Forest, see the above calendar and contact one of our local ranger district offices.

The Hiawatha Shore to Shore Chapter of the North Country Trail present

## Winter Trails Day

Saturday, January 9, 2010  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Soldier Lake Day Use Area  
Located off M-28, west of Raco

Free snowshoe rental!  
Guided snowshoe hikes!  
Enjoy refreshments around the fire!  
Cross country skiing!

Enjoying a snowshoe hike  
Harnessing dogsledding!  
Reaching hot dogs!

For more information visit: [www.northcountrytrail.org/us](http://www.northcountrytrail.org/us)

