

Year End Party a Resounding Success

Everyone had a great time, which is why the picture is sideways.



photo by Don Rogers



MERRY CHRISTMAS! Pam Morey

HAPPY NEW YEAR! George Morey

Here we are at the end of our season. It seems we just got through training and opening the lookouts. We want to thank everyone for their time and support this season: all of you volunteers and the **great people** from the Angeles National Forest and their great support.

Our year end party was a great success. It all started up on the mountain and after we had things set up and looking fine the rain came. So, with the help of Ric, Kermit, Ked and Mike, we packed up and hightailed it down the hill to Arcadia. Thanks to everyone who followed us up the mountain and back down again. *From what we hear that was most of you!* Those who could not make the party were missed; especially Dick Wagoner of South Mt Hawkins (*see page 3: "South Mt. Hawkins' factoids"*) who stayed on the mountain and ate his chili. (*"Hey D.W.O.S.M.H.. Did you not want to share?"*)

South Mt. Hawkins will be closed on November 30 and Vetter on December 8; sooner if we have an earlier snow storm.

Our newsletter editor has his cave ready for hibernation, so this will be the last newsletter for the season. The website, www.anfla.org, will remain active as your source for current information, however, so be sure to check in regularly.

In the not-too-distant future we will be snail- and e-mailing information about 2002 reconnect dates.

We wish everyone a safe and Happy Holiday Season and look forward to seeing you all again in the Spring.



Woody McCauley's Vetter Mountain Visitor

On a recent Friday in the tower, I had a very interesting visitor. Things were slow that day so I had time to talk and my visitor seemed to want to do the same. After about 15 minutes,



photo by Betsy Adams

I asked him about the GPS that was hanging from a cord around his neck. He replied that he was using it for a search called **Geo-Caching**. I was familiar with the term but had never gotten any details.

Geo-caching is a modern day type of treasure hunt. Sites are selected and are published on the Internet with the Latitude/Longitude of the site and various other directions. Interested parties use this information along with their trusty GPS to try to locate the site or cache.

The cache consists of a container placed at this site and it usually contains a log and some interesting "treasures" left by previous visitors. The rule is that if you take something from the cache, you must leave something.

There is a cache on Vetter Mtn. (not at the tower). It is best to let the searchers locate the cache by themselves. After my visitor found the cache, I gave him one of our "Ancient Order of the Squirrels" Vetter Mtn. Achievement cards signed by the duly authorized "towerman" (me). He thought this was really cool and a terrific piece of trivia for the cache.

You can explore Geo-caching by logging onto their website at www.geocaching.com. I logged on and found 396 sites within about 100 miles of my zip code. The site names are made up by the originator and usually contain something about the site but not the name of the location. The one for Vetter Mtn. is called "Where there's smoke". How appropriate.

Now you have another item of interest to talk about with visitors. Please be careful to make sure that visitors understand that neither the ANFFLA nor the Forest Service are recommending this activity and that they assume all responsibility for their own safety. You never know how the chain of liability can be linked back to some unsuspecting comment.

**always at your fingertips:
www.anffla.org**

South Mt. Hawkins Factoids (thru 11/3)

by Bob Gregg



Since opening May 26th the tower has been personned 93 days. A total of 1,077 person hours have been spent in the tower. The visitor total though 11/3 was 242, surpassing last year's count of 231.

Top 5 people in tower:

Dick Wagoner -18.5 days Bob Gregg -12 days
Ed Peschke -10 days

Ric Opalka - 9 days Jim Fleming - 7 days

Days tower personned per month:

June - 14 days July -19 days
August - 18 days September - 22 days
October - 17 days

Big critters seen:

27 deer; 4 coyotes; 3 bobcats; 1 fox



South Mt. Hawkins Dusk



*Tree trimmers at Vetter Mtn.
Photo by Betsy Adams*

Evergreens Everywhere by Jane Strong

Now is the season when the conifers, the beautiful shapely evergreens, sparkle. Winter winds whistle through their swaying limbs. Misty clouds wreath their crowns. Snowflakes, when they come, decorate their branches. Rain drips. Icicles hang. The refreshing scent permeates the chill air. Small colorful birds twist and tweak at the seeds in their cones, chattering all the while.

Our forest has more than ten different kinds of cone-bearing trees. They include bigcone spruce, Coulter pine, incense-cedar, Jeffrey pine, limber pine, lodgepole pine, pinyon pine, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, western juniper, and white fir.

Pine needles are wrapped in light-brown papery sleeves like bouquets of cut flowers. Sugar and limber pines have five needles per bunch. Coulter, Jeffrey and ponderosa, (these two are sometimes grouped together and called yellow pines), have three long needles in each bundle. Lodgepole has two and our variety of pinyon pine, one.

Incense-cedar has yellow-green scale-like leaves on twigs that look like they have been ironed flat. Western juniper also has scale-like leaves, but they are round in cross section and the twigs encircle the branches.

Bigcone spruce, a relative of the more common Douglas-fir, and white fir are familiar to us as fragrant Christmas trees. Both of these have individual needles attached directly to the branch. Those of white fir have two white lines.

A little "Fix" to hold you over 'til next season.



photo by Woody McCauley

How well do you know our forest trees?

Take this simple quiz and see! (answers below)

1. What is the tallest tree in the Angeles National Forest?
2. What is the most common coniferous tree in the Angeles National Forest?
3. What is the oldest living tree in the Angeles National Forest?
4. Which tree has the heaviest pine cones in the world?
5. Which tree has the longest pine cones in the world?
6. Which tree has the longest needles in the world?
7. Which tree has only two short needles per bundle in the Angeles National Forest?
8. Which coniferous tree grows at the lowest elevation in the Angeles National Forest?
9. Which coniferous tree grows at the highest elevation in the Angeles National Forest?
10. Which coniferous tree had the largest diameter in the Angeles National Forest?



Answers:

1. sugar pine; 2. Jeffrey pine; 3. limber pine, about 2,000 years; 4. Coulter pine, up to 9 pounds; 5. sugar pine, 10 - 24 inches; 6. Coulter pine, up to 12 inches; 7. lodgepole pine; 8. bigcone spruce, 900 feet; 9. limber pine on Mt. Baldy; 10. western juniper, 15.15 feet in diameter

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A Visit to Charlton Flats with Bob Gregg

When one turns off the Angeles Crest Highway heading for Vetter Lookout, you enter the Charlton Flats picnic area. It was named for R.H. Charlton in 1925, one of the early Supervisors of the Angeles Forest from 1906-1920 and 1922-1925.

Prior to that it was called Pine Flat. A trail was built to the Flat from Sierra Madre in 1898. It was 25 miles long and was a hard days work. The trail was laid out by Jim Akin and George Islip (for whom Mt. Islip above Crystal Lake was named). A more direct route was laid out by Louie Newcomb (of Newcombs Ranch) via a well named Shortcut Canyon.

In 1902 the Forest Service built a 8x10 cabin with a loft at the Flat for Summer ranger duty. In 1908 a second, larger 12x14 cabin, was built nearby by a group of hunters. Hunting was excellent in the area until it became a game refuge in 1915. In 1927 a narrow fire road reached the Flat.

In 1931 the City of Pasadena acquired the Flat from the Forestry Department on a Special Use Permit to develop it for recreation. The City was unable to meet the requirements of the Permit and the Flat reverted back to the government in 1936. That same year the Ranger's cabin and the hunter's cabin were torn down. A CCC camp was established at the Flat in the summer of 1933 to help build the campgrounds and picnic areas as well as Vetter Lookout.

The Angeles Crest Highway reached the Flat in the summer of 1937.

Things to "look out" for in November

by Jane Strong

This month is one of transition, still warm and balmy with autumn one day, cold and rainy like winter the next. The first snowfall might happen. The earliest it has snowed at Chilao is September 19, 1989. Last year South Mt. Hawkins Lookout had a trace of snow on October 11th and three inches fell on the 29th. Another inch fell on November 11th. (Thanks to Diana Arthur and Bob Gregg for these data.)

Gold-fronted, silver-backed leaves of the arroyo willow map out the contours of the high country drainages.

Migrating orange-and-black monarch butterflies savor the last of the yellow rabbitbrush.

Evergreen clumps of mistletoe are easily observable now when leaves are off the deciduous trees. The small, sticky, white berries attract Cedar Waxwings, Phainopeplas, and Robins.

The Leonid meteor shower takes place between the 17th and the 18th. Experts predict that there may be at least two very intense activity peaks on November 18th between 10:00 and 18:00 Universal Time. As the moon will be only three days old, this may be a very good year for viewing Leonids.



Your newsletter editor is going to take a break for a few months. Be sure to check in periodically at

www.anffla.org

!!!Hey BOB GREGG!!!

??HOW WAS THE WEATHER UP THERE ??

	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Rainfall (inches) / Peak Wind (mph)					
<i>Hawkins</i>	0/35	0.37/25	0/20	0/28	0.29/30
<i>Vetter</i>	0/40	0.14/44	0/38	0/43	0.3/42
Temperature					
Average					
<i>Hawkins</i>	62.0	64.1	69.6	64.7	58.5
<i>Vetter</i>	70.7	71.7	76.8	72.3	65.2
Max / Ave Max					
<i>Hawkins</i>	76/69	86/71.5	84/77.4	78/72.4	76/65.6
<i>Vetter</i>	88/80.3	95/80.8	93/86.5	87/81.4	85/72.8
Min / Ave Min					
<i>Hawkins</i>	48/55	48/56.6	53/61.8	50/57	36/51.3
<i>Vetter</i>	48/61.1	55/62.5	55/67	58/63.1	44/57.6

Your all seasons source: www.anffla.org