

Newsletter



Southern California Association of Foresters & Fire Wardens

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

2010-2011

OFFICERS

President Chris Childers—SBC
First Vice President Troy Whitman—SCE
Second Vice Pres.—Robert Michael—RRU
Secretary Gordon Martin—CNF
Treasurer David Leininger—LAC retired

DIRECTORS

Dan Snow—BDF
Vacant—ANF
Tom Plymale—LPF
Steve Griffin—SQF
David Allen—MVU
Don Forsyth—ORC
Mike Heffner—KRN
Rod Megli—VNC
Frank Vidales—LAC
Tim Ernst—LFD
Doug Lannon—BDU
Abigail Srader—CSR—Membership
Steve Reeder—SLU
Ed Shabro—Vendor Representative
Jim Neumann—Publicity
Paul H. Rippens—Newsletter Editor

We, the members of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens, do band together for the purpose of strengthening inter-agency cooperation, fire safety coordination, and fellowship.



The 1932 Matilija Fire - page 8



**An Association dedicated to the
Training and Safety of Southern
California Wildland Firefighters for
over 80 years.**

Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Southern California
Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens

February 4, 2011 - El Cajon, California

Foresters & Fire Wardens contact information:

Mailing—SCAFFW, c/o Gordon P. Martin, 1147 E. 6th Street
Corona, CA 92879

E-mail: SCAFFW@aol.com

Web Site: www.scaffw.org

FIRE WHIRLS

A Message from President Christian Childers - SBC

Your Board of Directors is actively planning for our 81st Anniversary Conference, and we just had a great February planning meeting, thanks to the excellent accommodations provided by Director Dave Allen (MVU). This year's program is coming together and will be fantastic.

With the combined efforts of 2nd Vice President Bob Michaels and our "Vendor Representative" Ed Shabro (AllStar Fire), we will have an extensive array of vendors. And, under 1st Vice President Troy Whitman's direction, the program is proving to be one of the best ever. In addition to meeting and listening to many of our fire service leader's presentations, we have again added an important historical component: the 1966 Loop Fire.

I'm sure you have all heard of the Loop Fire Tragedy. Forty-five years ago this November, a sudden "flare-up" of a spot fire below a "chimney" shaped canyon, claimed the lives of 12 and caused minor to severe burns to 10 additional firefighters on the Angeles National Forest.



Modern view of "Loop Canyon" in the San Gabriel Mountains, from El Cariso County Park.

You probably also know that the "Downhill Line Construction Checklist" and one of the "18 Watch Out Situations" were developed because of it. Research of it helped drive the development of the fire shelter, led to more use of handheld radios, an increased awareness of the need for fuelbreaks and prescribed burning, and caused "chimneys" to be added to the list of "Common Denominators."

However, after 45 years, how many of us know or can recall the details of the Loop Fire?

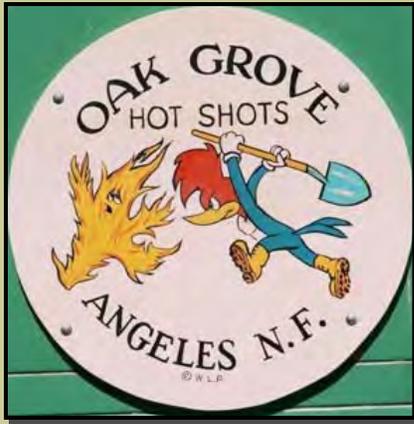


The El Cariso Hotshots "cutting fireline" on the 1966 Loop Fire

The Board, with the impetus of Director Rod Megli (VNC), has arranged for a presentation by three Loop Fire survivors. It is time we once again remember those firefighters we lost, and recognize and commemorate those who survived, as we learn from their experiences.

We have a great program scheduled. For a \$100 registration fee, (pre-registration) you'll also get four meals, overnight lodging, and several options for evening entertainment. I guarantee we're going to have a good time, get some great training, and leave with lasting memories.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you all at Camp Pilgrim Pines May 5-6th, 2011.



Attention!

OAK GROVE HOT SHOTS

The Oak Grove Hot Shots were stationed on the Angeles National Forest from 1950 to 1978. During that time, hundreds of good firefighters were proud members of this crew, and some of us have decided it's high time we had a reunion!

A website/blog has been created to capture the history of the crew and gather names and contact information for a reunion that is being planned. *If you were part of this crew, we are looking for you!*

Please register online at:

<http://oakgrovehotshots.wordpress.com>

Your crew photos and comments are welcome!

Or - you may contact Steve Arney at:

oghotshot@comcast.net

We look forward to hearing from you! If you know someone who was a member of the crew, please forward this information to them.



PRE-REGISTRATION FOR THE 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FORESTERS AND FIRE WARDENS

Work is already underway for the 2011 Annual Wildland Training and Safety Conference that will be held on May 5 & 6 at Camp Pilgrim Pines in Oak Glen, California. Work is also being done so that you will be able to register for the conference On-Line! Yes, we're finally getting there and we're doing this to make it easier for our members. Meanwhile, if you have any suggestions regarding our annual conference, please E-mail them to SCAFFW@aol.com.



Cover Photo: Wildland Firefighter in action on Catalina Island - May 2007

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FORESTERS AND FIRE WARDENS 81ST ANNUAL TRAINING AND SAFETY CONFERENCE.

May 5 & 6, 2011

CAMP PILGRIM PINES

Check our web site for further
information www.scaffw.org

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of
FORESTERS & FIRE WARDENS**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 4, 2011

The meeting of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens was called to order by President Chris Childers at 0915 hours at CAL FIRE's Monte Vista Headquarters, El Cajon, California on February 4, 2011. Mike Heffner was introduced as the new Director for the Kern County Fire Department

Officers and Directors Present:

Chris Childers - Santa Barbara County Fire Dept.
Troy Whitman - Southern California Edison
Robert Michael - CAL FIRE - Riverside County
Gordon Martin – Cleveland National Forest
David Leininger – Los Angeles Co. Fire Dept.
Dave Allen - CAL FIRE - San Diego County
Rod Megli – Ventura County Fire Dept.
Doug Lannon – CAL FIRE – San Bernardino Co.
Tim Ernst – Los Angeles Fire Dept.
Frank Vidales – Los Angeles County Fire Dept.
Mike Heffner – Kern County Fire Dept.
Dan Snow – San Bernardino National Forest

Officers and Directors Absent:

Jim Neumann - Publicity
Steve Griffin – Sequoia National Forest
Don Forsyth – Orange County Fire Authority
Abigail Srader – CAL FIRE – Southern Region
Paul H. Rippens – Newsletter Editor
Steve Reeder – CAL FIRE – San Luis Obispo Co.
Tom Plymale - Los Padres National Forest
Ed Shabro - Vendor Representative

Guests:

Ed Cosgrove - Loop Fire Survivor

Minutes: Motion by Director Whitman, second by Director Megli to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2010 meetings. The Motion was approved.

Treasurers Report: Treasurer Leininger presented his report covering the period from

December 3, 2010 to February 4, 2011.

Balance as of 12-3-2010	\$20,889.00
Receipts:	
Membership Dues	\$15.00
Disbursements:	
Total disbursements	\$83.40
Balance on hand	\$20,820.60
Last year at this time	\$16,718.17

Motion by Director Megli, seconded by Director Snow to accept the Treasurers report as presented. The motion was approved.

Committee Reports:

Arrangements: Chairman Lannon stated that Camp Pilgrim Pines is still there and doing good. Treasurer Leininger and Chairman Lannon will be going to the camp soon to meet with them to finalize the menu. Treasurer Leininger also reported that he has applied for the insurance for the conference but has not heard back from them as to the cost. Camp Pilgrim Pines and Camp Luther Glen have been added as loss payees on the policy. Chairman Lannon reported that he will continue to serve as the BDU representative until a replacement is found. Ventura County will provide the vans again this year. The Ventura crew will be available as a backup. Riverside County will provide its radio cache again this year.

Programs: First Vice President Whitman led a discussion on the proposed programs for the 2011 conference. The proposed programs, tentative speakers and assigned contracts are:

Color Guard: Kern County Director Heffner will check on availability and they will be the primary if available. LAC is available as a backup. VNC is the third alternate. Director Snow added that the USFS Color Guard is always available if needed.

Keynote Speaker: Ken Pimlot is available and First Vice President Whitman will serve as the contact.

Emcee: Bob Tinker will serve as the Emcee with Director Snow as the contact.

There was an involved discussion of which of the topics from December were worth keeping in the program. After much debate the following is the draft program,:

Program Topics:

- AAR's and their Benefits - Brad Mayhew - Childers - Friday - 30 minutes
- Command Posts of the Future - Thorpe/Clayton - Forsyth - Thursday - 60 minutes
- Loop Fire - Ed Cosgrove/Rich Leak - Megli - Friday - 90 minutes
- WUI Structure Survivability - Meskimen - Childers - Thursday - 30 minutes
- SIM Table - Brian Norton + Vendor - Forsyth - Demo only
- Campbell Prediction System - Doug Campbell - Megli - Thursday - 30 minutes
- Fuels and Fire Weather - Predictive Services - Srader - Friday - 30 minutes
- Camp 16 Burnover - John Tripp - Vidales - Thursday - 60 minutes
- Hawkins Live (Budgets/Decade in Review) - John Hawkins - Michael - Thursday - 30 minutes
- Electrical Safety on Wildland Fires - Troy Whitman - Whitman - Backup program
- The use of RAWs on Wildland Fires - Doug Forrest - Srader - Thursday - 30 minutes
- Social Media and the Fire Service - Daniel Berlant - Lannon - Friday - 30 minutes

First Vice President Whitman will work out the final scheduling and get further draft schedules out. All contact people should check with their speakers and report back to him as to any problems with the tentative schedule. Speaker sheets should be

filled out and returned to Whitman so that proper spelling of names and titles are available for the program and certificates as well as any AV needs they may need.

Exhibits & Demonstrations: Second Vice President Michael reported that he had spoken to Vendor Representative Shabro and they were going to get together next week to get the letters out.

Registration and Membership: Treasurer Leininger reported that Editor Rippens was having problems getting PayPal set up to work on the registration site. First Vice President Whitman reported that for the photos he sells through his web site he simply pays a fee to his web site provider and that they handle all of the details.

Entertainment & Raffle: Director Ernst stated that he would be sending out a donation letter to the Directors so that they could solicit donations. He also asked if anyone had been able to find a band that would be able to provide live music for Thursday night. President Childers reported that he had found a band of members from his department that would be willing to play. Director Snow reported that there is a group, "the Ramblin' Rangers", that might be available to play however, they have a limited repertoire. Director Ernst will correspond with the bands and Directors by phone and e-mail and have the band firmed up by the next meeting. He reminded the Directors to be thinking about their \$75 raffle prize.

Publicity: President Childers asked if everyone had seen the e-mail from Chairman Neumann and if they agreed that we weren't getting the bang for our buck with the paid advertising. It was decided that the advertising in the departments newsletters and word of mouth and e-mail by the Director's in their departments was the better deal. First Vice President Whitman suggested we use the money that we have budgeted for advertising and spend it on t-shirts to give out at registration so that when the members wore them around the stations it could serve as a walking advertisement. Motion

by Treasurer Leininger, second by Chairman Lannon that the publicity money be used to purchase 240 t-shirts with the Association logo and web site address to be given away at registration. Second Vice President Michael will contact the t-shirt vendor that is normally at the conference as well as other suppliers to obtain the best price.

Historian: Historian Whitman stated that there was no report.

Safety: Chairman Lannon reported that Director Forsyth had contacted CHP for the conference. He reported that he had the paramedics lined up for the conference and that he would be contacting the few bike patrol people he still had to help with the parking. Chairman Lannon asked if the bear horns were around and asked if it was necessary if Director Forsyth was authorized to purchase new ones. It was stated by President Childers that safety items were always preapproved.

Golf: Director Snow reported that the golf tournament is good to go for this year. He stated that he would be getting together with Historian Whitman and have the flyer out soon.

Newsletters: Secretary Martin reminded everyone that Editor Rippens needs any articles and/or photos that anyone can find or create. Articles related to upcoming presentations at the conference are especially good. It was suggested that Chairman Lannon produce an article about the recent flooding. The flyer for the conference should be out shortly after this meeting with the draft agenda.

Old Business: Second Vice President Michael passed around a handout with samples of the various ideas for the back of the challenge coin. There was a discussion of the various ideas and a motion was made by Director Snow and seconded by Director Megli that we use the entire preamble. The motion passed. A motion was made by First Vice President Whitman and seconded by Director Snow that we authorize the purchase of 400 coins with one for each person registered for the

conference, one for each speaker at the conference and 3 for each Director, for distribution to Department Heads as the Director sees fit. Coins not given away would be available for purchase by the Directors or general membership for \$5.00 each. The motion passed.

Director Snow presented the Director's wear that he had made including shirts, jackets and a golf shirt. He will send out an e-mail for any final orders now that we have seen the final product.

Life Membership Recommendations: Director Megli nominated Kevin Nestor, Deputy Chief, Ventura County Fire Department, second by First Vice President Whitman. Chief Nestor is a member in good standing and has made a presentation at the conference in the past. The motion was approved.

New Business: A discussion was held as to the advisability of having the December Directors meeting at a location other than Bakersfield with the thought of alternating between Kern and Los Angeles counties. A decision was deferred until the May meetings when the schedule for the next year's meeting is set. A discussion was held as to the need to give out a survey card to the membership at registration to determine from them a number of items including how they had heard about the conference and what topics they would like to see in the future. Director Ernst will develop a draft survey and bring it to the April meeting for final approval.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens will be held on April 8, 2011 in San Luis Obispo, CA.

President Childers closed the meeting 1200 hours.

Respectfully Submitted, Gordon P. Martin,
Association Secretary



Daryl L. Osby Appointed New Los Angeles County Fire Chief



On February 8, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appointed Chief Deputy Daryl L. Osby as the Department's next Fire Chief, succeeding P. Michael Freeman. Osby began his firefighting career with the Department in 1984, and has ascended through the ranks to his most recent assignment as Chief Deputy of Business Operations, where he has applied both his expertise on the fireground and his education in Organizational Leadership and Economics towards management of the Department's Administrative, Prevention Services and Special Services Bureaus.

Commenting on the appointment, Supervisor Don Knabe said: "Congratulations to Chief Osby on his appointment as the County's Fire Chief. We have worked together closely for years and I know that he will do an excellent job in his new role. Chief Osby has expertise in all aspects of fire administration and emergency response, and his knowledge and professionalism will well serve the over 10 million residents of the County. He is a proven leader who I am confident will build on Los Angeles County's reputation as the best fire department in the nation."



Los Angeles County Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman Retires



Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department retired after 22 years as Chief. Pictured above is Assistant Chief of Forestry Frank Vidales presenting an Honorary Life Membership certificate to Chief Freeman from the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens as John Todd, Chief of Forestry for the Department looks on.

Chief Freeman was born in Santa Monica but his family moved to Texas when he was a small child. He joined the Dallas Fire Department and served as Operations Chief before accepting the position of Los Angeles County Fire Chief in 1989. He has led the Department through trying times and made the Los Angeles County Fire Department one of the nations finest fire departments. Enjoy your retirement Chief!



The 1932 Matilija Fire

The 1932 Matilija Fire for 71 years was the largest fire in California history at 219,254 acres until the October 25, 2003 Cedar Fire in San Diego County set a new record at 273,246 acres. That record was again shattered by the 2009 Station Fire in Los Angeles County with 336,020 acres.

In 1932 the Ventura County Fire Department was 4 years old and had seven fire stations located in Santa Paula, Ojai, Piru, Ventura Ave., Moorpark, Port Hueneme, and Thousand Oaks and had 36 volunteer firefighters with only eight employees.

On September 7, 1932, the Santa Barbara National Forest (changed name to Los Padres in 1936) was headed for its easiest fire season on record. Then, at 10:00 a.m., La Cumbre Lookout reported a smoke rising out of the upper end of the North Fork of the Matilija Canyon 21 miles away and ten miles from Ojai Valley. A low cloud layer prevented closer Lookouts from seeing the smoke.

Ojai's new District Ranger Baxter along with Deputy County Fire Warden William Bowie started to the fire. Ranger Baxter ordered sixty-six men and a fire camp. It took the two men two hours to get to the fire, traveling thirteen miles by auto and five miles on horseback. When they

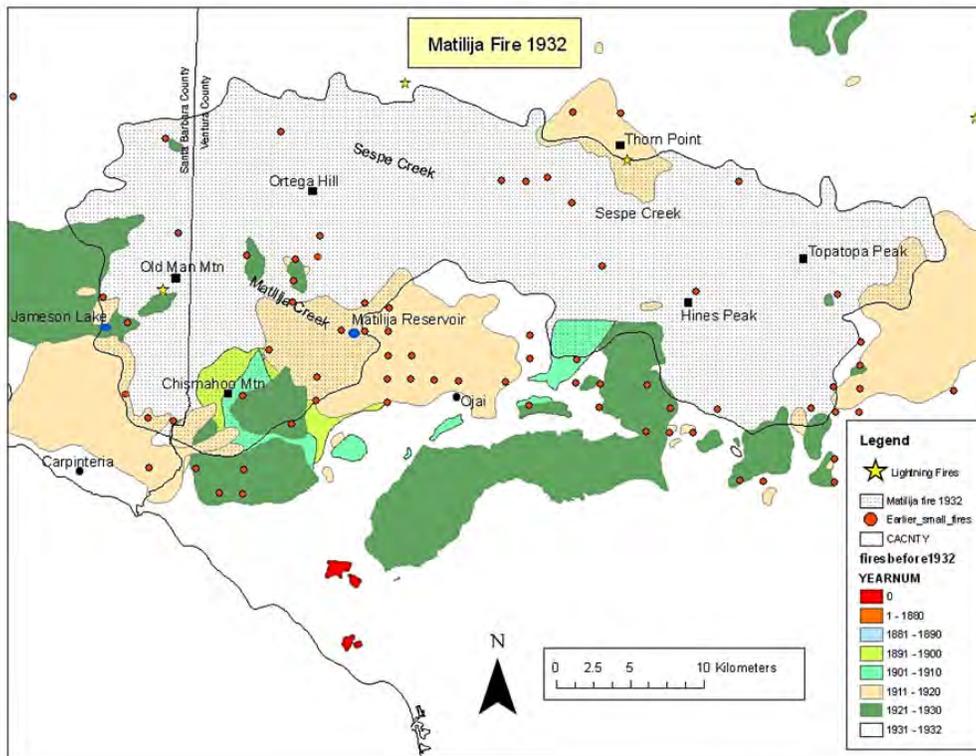
arrived, the fire had already covered three hundred acres. Footprints and other evidence indicated that the fire started from a hunter's campfire.

At 4:00 p.m., fire control efforts were proceeding normally for the expected large fire. The temperature was ninety-eight degrees and the relative humidity was very low at eleven percent. A wind was blowing from the northwest at about eight miles per hour.

Suddenly, at about 5:30 p.m., the fire literally exploded. Forest Supervisor Nash-Bolden and his crew of fifty men were trapped with the fire on three sides of them. The men were near panic

when Nash-Bolden ordered them to backfire the canyon wall. The backfire rushed up the slope bringing behind it a draft of life-saving fresh air. Nash-Bolden and crew quickly escaped down canyon.

The Explosive outbreak of fire was the result of a wind change to a strong Santa Ana wind, which reached fifty miles per hour, low humidity and a configuration of terrain which allowed gases to accumulate under the wind. When these gases were ignited they exploded covering hundreds of acres with waves of flame, throwing firebrands even further, and setting off a firestorm that burned 20,000 acres in the succeeding twelve hours.



A crew of sixty-five men in the Last Chance region were working under the direction of Ventura County Fire Warden (Fire Chief) Walter Emerick. Twenty men of his crew left camp early in the morning to fight the fire in the Hines Peak country. Late in the day the wind fanned the fire into a raging inferno that swept down from the north side of the mountain. Dropping their tools, they ran for their lives through the smoke and flames to an open rocky point on which they huddled and helplessly watched the fire run down the canyon toward the Last Chance camp where forty-five more men were working. The crew backfired a line previously cleared around the camp, which saved them. Hair-breadth escapes were an almost daily occurrence on the Matilija Fire

During the first ten days of the fire there were repeated blowups. The greatest came on September 10, in what must have been the most stupendous firestorm on record in California. As firefighters watched in awe and disbelief, the fire swept twelve miles, on a front nearly five miles wide, from Sespe Gorge to Matau Flats in one hour. It roared up the canyons and ridges of Sespe River to the Pine Mountain Ridge and on towards Devils Heart Peak. Perhaps 35,000 or more acres of brush and timber exploded in just sixty minutes. Control efforts had to be adjusted constantly because of the erratic nature of the fire.

The fire completely enveloped Lyons Hot Springs but with the use of a County Engine they were able to save all structures and trees. A County Engine was used also at Thatcher School and Wheeler Canyon. The Fire District's new dozer was used to a great extent in making fire breaks and clearing roads.

Suppression was hampered because no part of the fire was accessible by road. Seventeen fire camps were set up, twelve of which had to be supplied by pack stock. This fire was the first large fire in California where most of the firefighters were members of trained crews.

For ten days the fire ran wild, and the

burned area grew to over 200,000 acres. Strong winds continued to blow, and humidity remained low until September 18 when a high fog rolled in from the Pacific Ocean. The winds shifted from northerly Santa Ana to southerly sea breezes and humidity rose to over thirty percent. Within thirty-six hours of this weather change, the fire was cold-trailed and controlled on September 20, 1932 at 219,254 acres. The fire did not leave the forest. Only 2.1% of private lands inside the forest burned. Over five hundred miles of fire line had been cut. From Squaw Flats in the east to Jameson Lake in Santa Barbara County to the west, land had been blackened; an area about thirty-two miles long and from Pine Mountain to the north to Santa Paula Peak to the south, averaging about eleven miles deep made up the burn.



Matilija Canyon

This story was provided by Ventura County Fire Department Assistant Chief Rod Megli and is included in the Departments Training Manual. Credit is given to retired Assistant Chief Dick Wilson for writing the story. Dick is president of the VCFD Historical Foundation.



Did you or are you thinking of changing your E-mail address? Please remember to contact the SCAFFW at SCAFFW@aol.com and let us know so we can send you your newsletters and other important information



Celebrating 100 Years of Professional Forestry in Los Angeles County - 1911-2011

Many people do not realize that several current day Fire Departments in Southern California started out as Forestry Departments. Such is the case of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department whose early Forester, Spence D. Turner was one of the founding fathers of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens. When one thinks about it, that is probably where the name of the organization came from.

Patterned after the State Board of Forestry, the Los Angeles County Board of Forestry was established by the County Board of Supervisors on May 8, 1911. That action was to be a key factor in the eventual organization of the Los Angeles County Department of Forester and Fire Warden.



Winston "Shorty" Evens screening a young pine against rodent depredation - Henninger Flats 1941

On January 30, 1912, Stuart J. Flintham was appointed county forester at a salary of \$150 per month. Flintham would hold this job until his death in 1925. During his tenure, county foresters planted thousands of trees along the roads and highways in Los Angeles County, served as fish and game wardens, and fought wildland fires whenever needed. As their leader, Flintham conceived and developed the Forester & Fire Warden organization, and later, the system of Fire Districts for the unincorporated townships in the county.

With the passing of Flintham, the County turned to Spence D. Turner to take over the department and continue to build on the work started by his predecessor.

On December 4, 1928, the County purchased 120 acres of property in the mountains above Pasadena known as Henninger Flats. This land had been homesteaded by William K. Henninger in the late 1800s before becoming property of the Mount Wilson Toll Road Company. For several years (1903-1907) the U.S. Forest Service had maintained a nursery at the site growing and planting thousands of pine trees.



Nursery office and living quarters at Henninger Flats. C.1960

The county moved its nursery operation from Altadena and began its operation at Henninger Flats, an endeavor that still exists today. The facility, with new museum, office and living quarters (1993) still caters to hikers, visitors and campers at Henninger Flats.

The emphasis of the Forestry Division of the Fire Department has given way from the growing and planting trees to reviewing Environmental Impact Reports, overseeing the Counties Oak Tree Ordinance, providing the fire weather forecast for the Department, and operating the departments brush clearance program. The counties Foresters continue to be an important part of a dynamic department.

This article was written by retired LAC Forestry Chief Paul H. Rippens with excerpts from "*Ride The Devil Wind*" by Retired LAC Captain David Boucher

