
Cedar Bark House effort wins volunteer award



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USDA/Forest ServiceThe Cedar Bark House, Powers Ranger District.

Restoring and maintaining the Cedar Bark House on the Powers Ranger District in Coos County has won Jim Ford of Grants Pass a 2008 Volunteer Award from the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Region.

The one-of-a-kind Cedar Bark House was originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1936. It will eventually become available in the Forest Service's overnight public rental program.

Rogue River-Siskiyou [<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/>] National Forest Supervisor Scott Conroy presented Ford with the Pacific Northwest Individual Volunteer Award plaque, from the regional forest headquarters in Portland.

President Franklin Roosevelt established the CCC in 1933 as a government work program that put thousands of young men to work in national forests, national parks and other public lands during the Great Depression.

These men performed a variety of jobs such as firefighting, planting trees, building roads and trails and other types of natural resource conservation work.

The Cedar Bark House was constructed using standard building plans developed by the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service. Encouraged to adapt the plans to blend with local environments, local officials designed the Cedar House to include strips of bark from rare Port Orford cedar trees as siding.



USDA/Forest ServiceJim Ford of Grants Pass.

All construction material was milled on-site from local Port Orford cedar. A beautiful stone fireplace was constructed using locally collected petrified wood. It is said that the building cost nothing to build except for the cost of nails.

The Cedar Bark House was built to serve as the headquarters for the Port Orford Cedar Experimental Forest. The building provided housing for research personnel, and the office portion housed public displays on this rare and valuable tree species.

Today, the Port Orford Cedar Research Natural Area still draws scientists wanting to understand more about phytophthora lateralis, a highly infectious non-native pathogen which causes Port-Orford-cedar root disease.

Jim Ford and the Ford family have been working in partnership with the Forest Service over the past six years on the Cedar Bark House. Jim Ford, recipient of the award, has not only volunteered his personal time but has coordinated the volunteer efforts of well over 1,000 hours of labor from friends and family for this truly special project.

Thousands of dollars worth of materials and professional services have been donated to renovate the Cedar Bark House. Work throughout the years has involved kitchen restoration, masonry work, floor replacement, bathroom restoration, carpentry finish work, plumbing, ceiling installation, custom entrance gate, construction and installation.

Local residents refer to the Cedar Bark House as the Ferris Ford House. Ferris Ford, Jim Ford's father, left his mark with his work in the woods as a Forest Service employee serving as a superintendent of the CCC camps in Oregon and Washington.

He was also a Forest Service engineer on the Siskiyou and Wenatchee National Forests. Ferris Ford later died in the mid 1950s as a result of injuries attempting to save another person in a landslide along the South Fork of the Coquille River, a short distance from the Cedar Bark House.

When the Forest Service expanded the former "experimental forest" headquarters in the 1960s, it was re-named the Ferris Ford Work Center. Those buildings were subsequently moved or disposed of and the original Cedar Bark House is the only structure remaining on site.

Once the Cedar Bark House is fully restored, the Forest Service plans to make it available to the general public for overnight stays in the recreational rental program through the www.fs.fed.us/r6/recreation/rentals/ [<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/recreation/rentals/>].

Ford and his family and friends are supportive of the recreational rental program plans for the Cedar Bark House and have said that the more people that have the opportunity to enjoy the Cedar Bark House the better.

"Mr. Ford serves as an inspiration to many people for his leadership, and personal commitment to the restoration and maintenance of the Cedar Bark House on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest," said forest supervisor Scott Conroy. "He has been the spearhead behind the work to restore the Cedar Bark House, 15 miles south of Powers, Oregon, and his efforts have truly been tremendous."

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