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News Release

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Helping hands aid in restoration of historic cabin

Fredonia, Ariz., Nov. 18, 2016 — For Immediate Release. A mile-and-a-half southwest as the crow flies from the Jacob Lake Inn sits an old wooden Forest Service cabin. The structure is significant to the agency as it once served as a ranger station on the Kaibab Plateau providing rangers with remote workspace to manage programs for timber, livestock, tourism, wildlife, and fire protection.

Approximately a year after its construction in 1910, six such ranger stations existed on the North Kaibab, providing rangers with strategic locations from which to manage their forestry programs. These locations included Ryan, DeMotte Park, Dry Park, Big Springs, Bright Angel and Jacob Lake.

Today, the Jacob Lake Ranger Station is the only one left standing.

Facing east of the meadow surrounding Jacob Lake it stands isolated among the tall ponderosa pine trees. Little has changed for this historic landmark over the years. In fact, some visitors may feel as though they've stepped back in time to the early 1900s as they walk up the front porch steps and across its threshold, but that wasn't the case just two years ago.

That was 2014.

District archaeologists had determined the historic cabin was in need of several repairs if it were to be preserved for future generations to enjoy. Over the years, Mother Nature had taken her toll on the relic; rotting porch posts and shingles, joists, flooring, and masonry were in need of much attention and restoration.

In 2015, the North Kaibab Ranger District received funding to conduct the restoration work from a Forest Service grant awarded in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional funds were later received in 2016 as part of a Southwestern Region program designed to educate and empower the next generation of public lands stewards through conservation education and youth engagement.

The entire restoration project took two summers to complete.

During the summer of 2015, district staff partnered with the local Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), an Arizona Conservation Corps summer program that provides 17-to-18 year old members with opportunities to engage in hands-on community service and resource conservation land management projects. During that summer, district staff replaced rotted footings and flooring on the porch, and the YCC crew cleared drainages and pathways under the direct supervision of district facilities and heritage resources staff in preparation for additional restoration work the following summer.

"The Jacob Lake cabin provides a rare glimpse into the history of the Kaibab National Forest and the early years of our national forest system. It links our past to the present," said North Kaibab Ranger District Archaeologist Connie Reid. "The combined efforts of all those who participated on this project, volunteers and staff, will help preserve this

window in time, so that generations to come can enjoy the rich legacy of our public lands. It's a perfect project to mark the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act."

The following summer of 2016, the remaining restoration work was completed with help from the Girl Scouts of Utah Troop 805 and an 8-person ACE crew (American Conservation Experience), a volunteer conservation program that provides land management work opportunities to students 18-to-25 years old who may be interested in pursuing land management as a career path or course of study.

The Girls Scout volunteers prepared the site, raking and clearing it of all debris from the previous winter. The ACE crew then continued and completed the restoration work under the direction of the district facilities and heritage resources staff.

"This particular project was definitely unique in my experience," said Kelly Sheetz, assistant ACE crew leader on the project. "It's been great having the opportunity to switch gears from our typical work of applying brute force and repetitive motion on a project such as clearing and brushing trails to a more technical and detail-oriented project like this."

The work that Sheetz and crew accomplished included expanding drainage ditches, installing drainage pipes to help curtail further erosion and deterioration of the cabin, repainting the complete exterior and portions of the interior, repairing masonry around the chimney and repairing the stone wall under the front porch.

"Working under the day-by-day direction of the district archaeologist gave the crew a clear picture of what the cabin would have looked like during the time period it was originally built and how it would have been constructed," said ACE crew leader and supervisor Brandon Lester. "Then having to replicate to the standard directed to us by the archaeologists was challenging, but being part of this preservation project was both an honor and a unique experience for each of us."

October 2016 marks the launch of the Forest Service Southwestern Region Preservation 50 celebration in commemoration of President Lyndon Johnson signing the National Historic Preservation Act into law on October 15, 1966. This historical landmark legislation led to the authorization of the National Register of Historic Places and the corresponding State Historic Preservation Offices.

The National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to identify and evaluate historic properties and then determine if a site is to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Once listed, additional federal protections are granted to further protect the site. The Jacob Lake Ranger Station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 13, 1987.

As part of this Forest Service celebration, the Southwestern Region will spotlight a different archaeology project each month throughout the next year. These future spotlights may be found on the Southwestern Region webpage at www.fs.usda.gov/main/r3/home or the USDA Forest Service YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/usdaForestService.

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Jacob Lake Ranger Station on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest. Photo by Dyan Bone. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.



ACE crew pictured with North Kaibab Ranger District Archaeologist Connie Reid during the Jacob Lake Ranger Station cabin restoration project, June 2016. Photo by David Hercher. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.



Porch demolition on Jacob Lake Ranger Station cabin restoration project, July 2015.
Photo by David Hercher. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.

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ACE crew scrapes loose paint prior to repainting, June 2016. Photo by David Hercher. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.



ACE crew cleans out and expands drainage ditches during the Jacob Lake Ranger Station cabin restoration project, June 2016. Photo by Connie Reid. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.