

EDITOR'S NOTE

by James G. Lewis

Six degrees of separation. The “Kevin Bacon Game.” Networking. It’s how the articles in this issue came to us. And it reminds us yet again how grateful we are for the expertise and vigilance of our leaders, readers, and staff.

A conversation between FHS President Steve Anderson and U.S. Forest Service researcher Ken Cordell prompted an invitation to Ken to write up his findings on Americans’ interest in outdoor recreation. **The Latest on Trends in Nature-Based Outdoor Recreation** is as timely as it is critical to the future of that subject, and it has real-world implications. Publication of this article will be accompanied by a press release from the Forest Service’s Southern Research Station, where Ken works, to underscore the urgency of the matter.

The next two articles come to us courtesy of Mark Cioc, editor of *Environmental History*, and with the recommendation of FHS board member Char Miller. Char is also the associate editor for *Environmental History*, which is jointly published by FHS with the American Society for Environmental History. Both thought that **The Historic Ponderosa Ecosystem: Disappearing Icon of the American West**, by Stephen F. Arno, Carl E. Fiedler, and Matthew K. Arno, and Roger Williams’s **French Connections: Cultivating American Trees in Revolutionary France** would be ideal for *Forest History Today*. Roger had submitted his article in part because he knew Mark; Mark sent me the article on ponderosa pines because we had previously talked about publishing articles that draw on forest history to provide context for examining current issues.

The excerpt from Mike McCloskey’s memoir appears following conversations he had with Steve and me over the past two years since *In the Thick of It* was published. **Taking Over as Environmentalism Takes Off** offers a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse of one of America’s most powerful environmental groups at a critical time in the history of environmental politics and the environmental movement—the first presidential administration of Richard Nixon. The excerpt offers Mike’s unique perspective as the executive director of the Sierra Club during the organization’s rise to prominence.

Our photo essay on the Granville Manufacturing Company, better known as **The Bowl Mill**, came about through discussions with FHS photo archivist Eben Lehman. When Eben gave me an overview of the latest acquisition for our digital photo archives—the extensive collection of photos from Region 9 of the U.S. Forest Service—I was eager to share some of those 13,000 images with our readers to highlight the wood products industry. Eben suggested the Bowl Mill photos, so I volunteered him to draft the companion text. While researching the mill online, he found the announcement about its closing. What would have been a congratulatory piece instead became, sadly, more like an obituary. A few phone calls were

made to get some context for the closing and confirm the newspaper report. The mill’s owners said they were going out of business in part because of the cost of proving chain of custody for “green” certification. The closing brings up the issue of certification as a marketing tool—a topic we don’t explore in this piece—that is affecting many in the wood products industry. I hope that it does prompt someone to consider writing on that topic for us.

The Features section concludes with a thoughtful piece from Carlton Owen, president and CEO of the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc. When Carlton addressed the Society of American Foresters’ Appalachian Chapter in January 2008, he shared highlights from his career in forestry and wildlife biology to illustrate how others could leave a legacy other than money or property. Steve heard **Success or Significance: Leaving a Legacy** and suggested that *FHT* print it.

Tom Straka, author of the Biographical Portrait of **Edmund Schulman**, talked with Steve about contributing a few pieces on forest history in the Nevada-California area at a Society of American Foresters meeting last year, in anticipation of the national convention later this year in Reno. Tom and I discussed those contributions, in this case using the Biographical Portrait to focus on a pioneer of dendrochronology.

Our History on the Road column is perhaps the best example of connections. Last year, Jeffrey Stine, a board member and author of our new Issues Series book, *American’s Forested Wetlands*, passed along an article from the *New York Times*, “Scenic Roads That Deserve a Detour.” In a sentence or two it described eight interesting “slow” roads worthy of a tourist’s attention. Jeffrey circled **Cleveland’s Hessler Court**, that city’s last remaining wood-paved road, and asked, Might it be a topic for the column? His note arrived the same day Steve Anderson was flying to Cleveland. I caught him at the airport and requested photographs, which he happily obtained. After my wife, Dianne Timblin, and I visited friends in Cleveland and saw Hessler Court this past January, she volunteered to write the article. She got some last-minute on-the-ground research assistance from Chris M. Worrell, a history instructor in Cleveland who had recently corresponded with me about another topic for *FHT*, to help sort out conflicting information about the street’s construction. Amazingly, Dianne is still talking to me.

The Hessler Court saga is another reminder that forest history is all around us, even in urban settings and metropolitan newspapers, and that you should keep your eyes open for article ideas. Thanks to Jeffrey, Steve, Chris, and Dianne for their efforts on this article, and to all our authors for theirs. Please keep those ideas and articles coming. □