

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region



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Smokey Bear Memorabilia Donation Highlights 62nd Birthday Celebration

PUEBLO, Colo., August 15, 2006--A recent memorabilia donation to the Pike and San Isabel National Forests, Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (PSICC) made Smokey Bear's 62nd birthday celebration even more noteworthy.

Twilla Smith, whose late husband Dr. Ed Smith treated Smokey Bear's burn injuries in 1950, recently donated their Smokey Bear memorabilia to the PSICC Supervisor's Office in Pueblo, Colorado, where it is on display at the front desk.

On August 14 PSICC Forest Supervisor Bob Leaverton dedicated the display in honor of Dr. Smith and presented an appreciation award, an inscribed clock, to Mrs. Smith. The festivities also included door prizes, photo opportunities with Smokey, and a cake commemorating the August 9 birthday.

In May 1950, firefighters found a burned bear cub clinging to a tree on the Capitan Gap Fire in the Lincoln National Forest, New Mexico. Veterinarian Ed Smith, then of Santa Fe, treated the bear, which recovered and became the living symbol of Smokey Bear in residence at the Washington, D.C. Zoo for 25 years.

The Smiths retired to Pueblo, Colorado, where they developed close ties to the Forest Service and carried the fire prevention message to area school children, service clubs, and fire prevention groups. In 1998 the Forest Service recognized their work with a Bronze Smokey Bear Award. Two years later another celebration honored them on the 50th anniversary of Dr. Smith treating the bear cub. Dr. Smith died in 2003.

The PSICC is pleased to accept Twilla's donation and pay tribute to Dr. Ed Smith's place in Smokey Bear and Forest Service history.

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