

YOUR NATIONAL FORESTS

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AMERICA'S
**MOST AVID
CAMPERS**

FOREST **ROADS**
PEDAL ROOM FOR
CYCLISTS

THE SUPERIOR'S
ANCIENT ROUTES



EDUCATION • AWARENESS • APPRECIATION • CONSERVATION



Greetings from the Francis-Marion National Forest

Fred and Suzi explore America's National Forests

By Carolyn McGlinchey

Fred and Suzi Dow are not your typical, sitting-in-a-rocking-chair retirees. Some might even describe them as twenty-first century techno gypsies on a mission.

For five to seven months each year, Fred and Suzi Dow hop in their RV, loaded with computers, research logs and their trusty dogs. They head out on the road and they drive... Boy, do they drive! Destination: America's National Forests.

Back in 1994, while planning a camping trip to a National Forest, Fred and Suzi encountered a lack of extensive information about their destination. Wanting to do something to publicize and get the good word out about National Forests, they've been filling the campground information gap ever since through a Web site and guidebooks.

Since 1994, the Dows have traversed the country, racking up over 200,000 miles while visiting more than 146 of the 155 National Forests in the United States. Their primary objective has been to visit

and gather information about the more than 4,300 National Forest campgrounds. So far they have personally visited and documented 2,229 of them.

"We love National Forests for their history and heritage, their beauty and solitude. National Forests are family-friendly and dogs are able to go, too," says Suzi Dow, 60.

During a road trip, the Dows will select, visit and observe anywhere from fifty to more than one hundred campgrounds in a six-month stretch. They collect resource information on each campground. Then they compile and post their discoveries online.



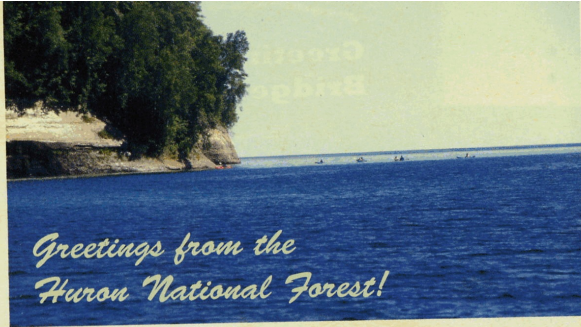
Fred and Suzi Dow & Friends

The Dow's actual camper.

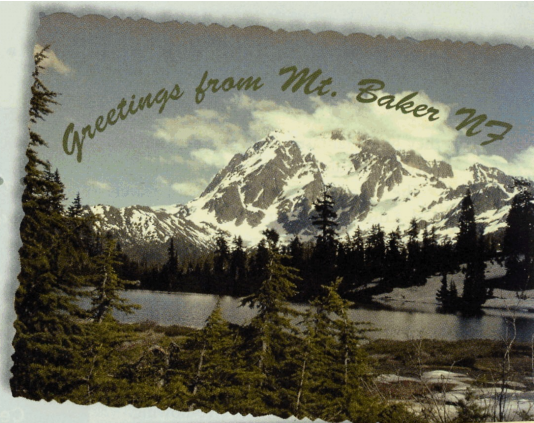
The Dows By the Numbers

- Visited 146 National Forests
- Surveyed 2,229 campgrounds
- Traveled over 200,000 miles





*Greetings from the
Huron National Forest!*



Greetings from Mt. Baker NF

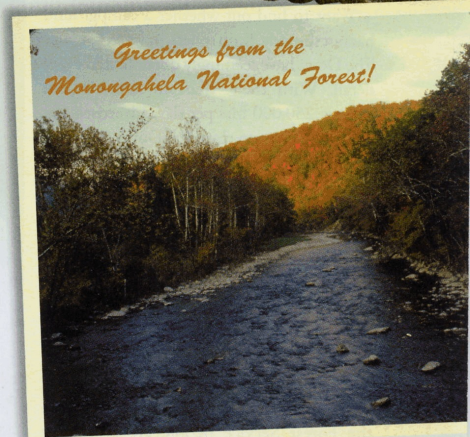
“There’s so much to National Forests. There’s a forest for any activity you can think of. There are special forests to visit if you want to go blueberry picking. Others for huckleberry picking,” explains Suzi from her home in Bisbee, Arizona. “Each forest has its own temperament.”

Geographic diversity is evident, but so are similarities between seemingly disparate regions of the country. “In California there are volcanic areas, open meadows and deserts. But go to Montana. There’s a valley that looks like West Virginia. California can look like New England. Washington and Oregon are green. You see greens you won’t

even find in a crayon box.”

After six months on the road and living in their RV, the Dows can get tired of the confinement of their living quarters. “Also, we sometimes get disappointed that we can’t stay and enjoy what we’ve discovered,” says Suzi. There is plenty to motivate them, however. “We receive roughly 100 emails each week. That keeps us going.”

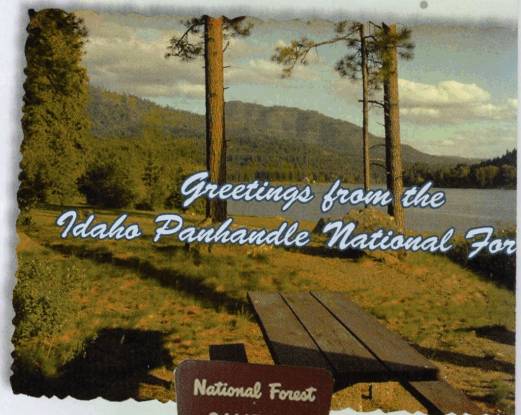
Suzi describes such an email, “There was a father of five in Texas who couldn’t afford to vacation on the Gulf. He packed his five kids in a trailer and they traveled to Sam Houston National Forest. He said



*Greetings from the
Monongahela National Forest!*



*Not actually
the Dow's camper.*



*Greetings from the
Idaho Panhandle National For*



they had a fantastic time and he wouldn't have known about it if it weren't for us."

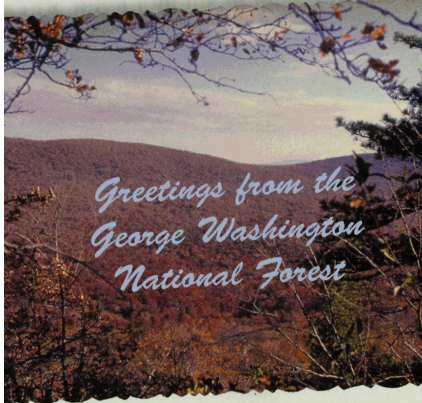
The Dows document their travels and discoveries at the Web site, www.forestcamping.com, which is their own creation. At 73, Fred's Web design skills are well suited to the job, as too are Suzi's skills with the written word. She is a former communications and public speaking instructor at George Mason. "It's a great marriage," she says, "Fred is detail-oriented. I tend to be more free-flowing."

Want to find out whether a campground has hot showers, flush toilets, or water spigots? The Dows have seemingly documented every detail. With their Web site receiving an average 250,000 hits per day, advertisers are becoming eager to reach the Dow's audience. What started in 1994 as a labor of love is beginning to bear financial fruit.

The Web site, published guide books, and speaking engagements provide some income for the Dows, but money has never been a motivating force behind their work. To understand their enthusiasm and passion, one need look no further than the forests.

Have they learned any lessons from their travels? "There are no challenges, just adventures," says Suzi, then she adds, "and the Forest Service people are absolutely amazing! They get little recognition for all the work they do."

During the summer of 2008, the Dows are investigating and documenting campgrounds in Alaska's National Forests. And what will 2009 bring? "We want to go back and revisit all the National Forests we love," says Suzi, already contemplating new adventures.



Fred & Suzi's Picks for Favorite Campgrounds

Sawbill Campground

Superior National Forest
Lat: 47.861 Lon: -90.888
Minnesota

Cedar Lake Campground

Ouchita National Forest
Lat: 34.781 Lon: -94.693
Oklahoma

Kirk Creek Campground

Los Padres National Forest
Lat: 35.988 Lon: -121.494
California

Klahowya Campground

Olympic National Forest
Lat: 48.065 Lon: -124.115
Washington

Reef Townsite Campground

Coronado National Forest
Lat: 31.431 Lon: -110.289
Arizona

Elizabeth Furnace Campground

George Washington NF
Lat: 38.928 Lon: -78.327
Virginia

Dolly Copp Campground

White Mountain National Forest
Lat: 44.332 Lon: -71.218
New Hampshire

Cagle Campground

Sam Houston National Forest
Lat: 30.530 Lon: -95.536
Texas

Baker's Hole Campground

Gallatin National Forest
Lat: 44.703 Lon: -111.101
Montana

