

Forest Matters Stewardship Newsletter Spring 2019

U.S. Forest Service, Eastern Region State and Private Forestry

Thank you, Karen!

Karen Sykes, Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator out of the Morgantown, WV, Field Office, retired from the USDA Forest Service in early January. Karen is a native of southwestern Pennsylvania. She attended The Pennsylvania State University and earned a B.S. degree in Forest Management in 1975. Over her 43-year career, she has worked in all three Forest Service branches – Research, National Forest System, and State and Private Forestry.

Her first forestry-related position was as a forestry aid for two summers on the Isabella Ranger District on the Superior National Forest. She worked as a field forester in Forest Inventory and Analysis for 8 years, then began serving as a forester in 1983 on the Marlinton Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. Her experience included timber sale development and layout, silviculture, recreation, fire, minerals, range, and watershed planning.



Karen Sykes on a working trip in the Adirondacks. (Forest Service photo by Al Steele)

In the spring of 1988, she became the principal watershed planner for the Morgantown Field Office of Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry in Morgantown, WV, a position she held for 15 years. She became the Group Leader for Forest Management in 2003 and had oversight of the Forest Stewardship, Forest Legacy, Urban Forestry, and Watershed Programs. She also temporarily served in detail positions, including as “River Navigator” for the Cuyahoga American Heritage River and as District Ranger on the Wayne National Forest. She’s a member of the Society of American Foresters, Pennsylvania Forestry Association, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Karen recently reflected on her tenure with the Forest Service:

“I’m grateful for having a 43-year career in the Forest Service. Had it not been for the variety of positions that I held, I would not have fought fires in the Cascades, seen Sequoia National Park and Muir Woods, hiked the Continental Divide and the Appalachian Trail, spent a night in the Boundary Waters babysitting a fire while watching the aurora borealis, gone up in the arch at St. Louis, held a baby bear, and had various adventures that are too many to list. I’ve met people who are very dedicated to their jobs and want to do the best they can for the public and natural resources. I’ve had wonderful experiences throughout the years and will have fond memories of the friendships I’ve made.”

We wish you all the best, Karen! We also warmly welcome Amy Hill, who is serving in a detail as the Morgantown Field Office Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator. You can reach Amy by calling 304-285-1565 or sending an email to amy.hill@usda.gov.