

District Ranger Dave Martin To Retire



NORTH FORK - After 13 years as District Ranger on the Bass Lake District of the Sierra National Forest, Dave Martin has decided it's time to move on to the next chapter.

"After long and thoughtful conversations with my wife and personal deliberation over the last many months, I have made the decision to retire at the end of this year," Martin says.

"This was not an easy decision to make. Besides my family, my 41 years with the Forest Service has been the most important part of my life. More than that, for the past 13+ years, I have been honored to have the job I always wanted."

Martin considers himself very lucky to have had the chance to work with so many wonderful and professional people on the District and the Forest.

"Add to that, having the time and opportunity to work with so many wonderful folks in the local communities has been incredible icing on the cake. I have been the luckiest person in the Forest Service."

Martin has clearly worked his way up through the ranks, starting his career in 1973 on the Inyo National Forest at what was definitely an entry level job - a seasonal gig cleaning toilets.

"I was foremen of a small crew. By small, I mean me and one other guy," says Martin.

He returned to the Inyo the next season as part of a recreation maintenance crew, then moved on to the position of campground manager in the June Lake Loop area.

Working during the summer on the Inyo, Martin was also working through the winter on a degree in Forestry at the University of Washington, and in line with that education he moved over to timber management.

He then went to work on the Stanislaus National Forest as a Contract Administrator on the Calaveras District in 1979, and in 1981 took on the job as District Timber Management Officer on the Summit District.

In 2001, he moved up to the position of District Ranger on the Bass Lake Ranger District of the Sierra National Forest, a job he truly loves. So why would he want to retire?

"My father was a college professor, first at USC and later at the University of Texas," says Martin. "He loved his job, and although he made great efforts to keep family in his priorities, his work was his passion, so much so that he kept at it until his age and health forced him to retire."

Martin says his father's entire identity was caught up in his work, and that he discovered too late that he had missed out on doing the things that were important to him.

"Watching and reflecting on my father's experience, I needed to truly look at the life/balance sheet. The balance sheet has been tipped toward work for many years now. I want to tip it in the other direction."

Martin has two grandkids that are growing up fast, and he wants to have the time to do those things that grandfathers do.

"Soccer, camping, fishing, just hanging out - I don't think this needs more explanation," he says.

Another important item on his balance sheet is "more personal time for me and my wonderful spouse Diane. This year is our 40th anniversary. We both want more personal time while we have our health."

As for his own personal time, Martin has a list that he says is getting longer, and he doesn't want to wait until it's too late.

"More fishing is at the top," says the 63-year-old Martin. "I still have the energy to do a lot, but it needs to be directed more toward what is most important, and that is my family."

As to what is happening on the District right now, Martin says preparing folks for a change in leadership is always a huge challenge, noting the French Fire recovery and budget

considerations. In a letter to his staff, the outgoing ranger commended them for the outstanding job they do.

"All of you have been the reason this District has always been successful, no matter what the challenges. It is because of all of you that I have been so blessed for the past 13+ years. I know I can retire knowing this District is in the best, most capable hands possible. Your many successes and continuing professionalism have been, and will continue to be the foundation for a very bright future."

Martin says he won't be dropping off the end of the earth after his last day on the job, set for Jan 2, 2015.

"I plan to continue being involved in aspects of the Sierra National Forest that I have a passion for. This is a wonderful and exciting community, destined for great things and I plan to use some of my time to be part of that. Making this decision has been harder than I ever imagined. I love the Forest Service and the people who make it work."

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