

October 15

## Stanislaus National Forest celebrates Centennial

October 8 - Sonora, CA - "Celebrate Your National Forests: The First 100 Years," was the name of the huge Centennial Celebration planned by the Stanislaus National Forest in Sonora, CA.. Art exhibits, a film festival, food, children's activities, live music and displays about national forests were featured.

Stanislaus National Forest employees had built stages and set up chairs at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in preparation. Dozens of exhibitors arrived in Sonora for the free event, which lasted from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"Wow! We were blown away," said the **Fiddlin' Foresters**. "During 2005 we have been all over the country performing at dozens of Forest Service Centennial Celebrations. This is the biggest and most exciting we've seen. We had a blast."

"It's really about educating, learning, having fun, and celebrating our public national forests," said Summit District Ranger **Karen Caldwell**. Caldwell said that over 5,000 people attended the event, which aimed to attract not only those in the foothills, but Central Valley and Bay Area residents as well.

Tomorrow's celebration began with a Me-Wuk blessing ceremony and opening statements by Forest Supervisor **Tom Quinn**, followed by the music of the Fiddlin' Foresters. Other musical acts that took the main stage included The Great Mother Lode Brass & Reed Band, Mark Dyken and the Black Irish Band.

In addition **Gary Hines**, who formerly worked on the Stanislaus National Forest, portrayed famed forester Gifford Pinchot and **Lee Stetson** depicted environmentalist John Muir. Yosemite National Park Ranger **Shelton Johnson** told the story of the Buffalo Soldiers, African-American troops who patrolled the Sierra Nevada wilderness in the late 19th century. The play, "On Fire!," portrayed the joys and sorrows of America's wildland firefighters with live theater.

There was also a backcountry pack stock scramble, a lumberjack jubilee, an operating antique 10-ton steam donkey, primitive tool displays, live forest animals, logging equipment and a photography exhibit showcasing 100 years of Stanislaus National Forest history. Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl, Ready Squirrel and Francis Fish were also on hand.

The event ended with a musical jam between the Fiddlin' Foresters and the Black Irish Band. The [Black Irish Band](#) plays a large compliment of traditional maritime and railroad music, as well as ethnic tunes in their repertoire. Band leader **Patrick Michael Karnahan**, a former Forest Service employee, has written songs about the life of firefighters and foresters, and a song about John Muir.

"We had a chance to meet and play with Black Irish Band members **Patrick Michael Karnahan** and **Jim Nelson** at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival this summer," said Lynn Young. "It was great to see them again and jam on stage at this great Centennial Celebration."



Photo by Jay Harlie Power

The Fiddlin' Foresters perform at the Stanislaus National Forest Centennial Celebration in Sonora, CA.



Huge crowds gathered at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds on a beautiful day to celebrate the value of the Stanislaus National Forest and its history



Black Irish Band members Patrick Michael Karnahan and Jim Nelson perform a song about firefighters



So many airports. So many miles. It's all a blur!