Maureen Brooks...

**Personal Work Goals Matter**

NEWTOWN SQUARE, Pa.--Maureen Brooks is the community fire planner with the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry’s Fire and Aviation Staff in Newtown Square, PA. State partners depend on Maureen for technical assistance with fire planning and wildfire risk assessment, wildland-urban interface issues, Firewise programming, fire prevention activities, and grant implementation and monitoring. She helps partners work out how to do get these tasks done. For example, in preparing Community Wildfire Protection Plans, or CWPP, she identifies the right people to develop a plan and the kinds of activities that can be in it. She draws on her knowledge of what has worked for others.

Maureen managed the multiple phases of the Northeast Wildfire Risk Assessment Project, which involved many partners. The results of this assessment are used in the allocation formula that determines core fire funding, and have been used by some states to develop their Forest Action Plans.

Other roles Maureen plays are staff specialist for the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, which includes interpreting how this legislation affects or is implemented by partners, and staff liaison for the Middle Atlantic Forest Fire Protection Compact.

Variety is one aspect that Maureen likes about her work. Another is the vantage point it provides of the continuum from the local to national level. She is able to use that information to help partners anticipate program changes and improvements.

Maureen earned her Associate of Arts in Forest Technology from Allegany College of Maryland. She started her Forest Service career as a seasonal on the Monongahela National Forest in 1980. Her first full-time Forest Service job was as a forestry technician on the Gauley Ranger District in Richwood, WV.

Her husband Steve worked in water quality for a local mining company. After a few years, however, his job was lost due to mine closings. His search for a new job led to Maryland, so they used their last $300 to pick up and move. They were part of a mass exodus from the area and were not even sure they would be able to find an available trailer to move their belongings.

In Maryland, Maureen found a position in State-wide fire prevention and outreach for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service. While working for the state she studied part-time for 7 years to get her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Towson University. During her 20 years with the Maryland Forest Service, she worked as a forest ranger, education and fire prevention specialist, and fire training and prevention officer.

In May 2005, Maureen returned to the U.S. Forest Service, for the position she now holds. Maureen says her current work atmosphere makes her want to do a good job. Others on the staff are capable and nice to work with, making her want to contribute. Maureen enjoys meeting and working with colleagues and partners. She likes that her personal work goals matter in the agency and that there is interest in helping her do her job better.
Maureen admits that her most satisfying accomplishment is having raised son Chris to the age of 20 and daughter Eva to the age of 18. “Neighbors say they are ‘nice kids.’ It’s gratifying to see them offer to help others, be polite and kind.”

If she was not working, Maureen says she would be tending to chores on their 10-acre property—cleaning the chicken coop, and taking care of the horse, pony, and flower and vegetable gardens. As in her work, Maureen is also forward-thinking about her garden. “I have a vision of how it is supposed to be.” For now she says about her gardening, “I am practicing for retirement, when my garden will finally look like it should.”

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