

**File Code:** 2320**Date:** February 5, 2016**Route To:****Subject:** 2015 National Forest Service Wilderness Awards Recipients**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs

I am pleased to announce the recipients of the 2015 National Wilderness Awards. These awards honor individuals and groups for excellence in wilderness education, traditional skills leadership, decision making, and overall wilderness stewardship. The awards will be sent to the respective regional offices for presentation at an appropriate opportunity.

### **Aldo Leopold Award for Overall Wilderness Stewardship Program**

#### **Superior National Forest Wilderness Program, Region 9, Superior National Forest**

The Superior National Forest has consistently driven its program forward striving for outstanding wilderness stewardship, including being the first National Forest in the nation to conduct wilderness character mapping, creating a valuable planning resource. In addition, the Superior National Forest developed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Travel Distribution System and Simulation Model to better understand how people travel in the wilderness. This system, combined with encounter data gathered by Wilderness Rangers, will significantly enhance the wilderness experience while preserving its character. The Superior National Forest also actively seeks ways to provide public education, including the development of an education program for high school students going on winter camping trips, programs aimed at first, fourth, and sixth graders, and efforts such as a YouTube video on the value of youth experience in wilderness. In addition, the Superior National Forest demonstrates its commitment by routinely considering the effects on wilderness character of any action taken on the Superior National Forest, whether it be related to fuel reduction, mineral exploration, or any other decision.

### **Bob Marshall Award Individual Champion of Wilderness Stewardship**

#### **Steve Boucher, Wilderness & Wild and Scenic River Information Manager, Washington Office**

For the past 10 years, Steve has demonstrated outstanding dedication and active involvement in wilderness stewardship by leading and participating in all of the agency's key wilderness initiatives. He has been an integral member of The Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG), nurturing and leading the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge, begun under Chief Bosworth, to define and stimulate improvements in wilderness stewardship on a national scale. This effort culminated in October 2014 with the announcement that 99 percent of the agency's wilderness areas were being managed to at least the minimum stewardship level. Steve has been instrumental in cultivating a community of wilderness champions. His guidance and leadership



working with WAG, the national Wilderness Information Management Steering Team, and Regional Wilderness Program Managers, have helped to develop and launch a new wilderness performance measure – Wilderness Stewardship Performance, which evaluates actions taken to preserve wilderness character. It will soon be accompanied by another project influenced by Steve, a national framework to monitor wilderness character outcomes.

### **Bob Marshall Award for Group Champion of Wilderness Stewardship**

#### **Wilderness 50<sup>th</sup> Southwestern Region Steering Committee, Region 3**

This interdisciplinary committee was convened to help support the Southwest Region's hosting of the National Wilderness Conference and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Albuquerque, but far surpassed that goal by raising awareness of the wilderness community and the range of ways to support and interact with wilderness, and by partnering with groups such as New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, Wilderness Society, Great Old Broads, as well as the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Land Management, non-profit organizations, and local schools and civic organizations. The committee's support and oversight helped produce a wide array of events including hiking field trips and work days (including integrating with tribal youth on trails), a Get Wild festival with skill demonstrations, development of a Wilderness 50<sup>th</sup> time capsule, an interagency group lecture series on Wilderness, wilderness art shows and contests, and even the creation of playing cards for 52 Forest Service Wildernesses. In an even more promising development, youth were hired through Pathways, Student Conservation Association, and Service First Agreements during these efforts, helping to ensure a much longer and broader influence of the committee's efforts to foster an appreciation for wilderness and its stewardship.

### **Wilderness Partnership Champion Award**

**Jon Erickson**, Wilderness Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Pacific Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest

Jon's work with many non-profit groups fostered, developed, and maintained a broad network of partnerships within and outside the Agency during 2014. For example, the partnership with Desolation Wilderness Volunteers resulted in approximately 3,000 hours of volunteer service in conservation education, trail maintenance, outreach, and campsite restoration. Other similar partnership efforts included groups such as Wilderness Volunteers, the Student Conservation Association, and the Pacific Crest Trail Association. Work with the Great Basin Institute involved four groups of six high school students spending a week in wilderness areas performing trail maintenance and learning wilderness stewardship principles. Jon's efforts also included wilderness trailhead sign creation with Region 5's graphic artist and landscape architect, resulting in 15 panels of new signs, and working with Region 5's Public Affairs office to schedule and screen the film "Green Fire" at public libraries and Recreation Equipment Inc. locations in the Bay area and Sacramento. Jon is truly a wilderness champion and skilled partnership coordinator.

**Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Research Award**

**Dr. Steve Martin**, Humboldt State University

Dr. Martin has collaborated with the Leopold Institute, as well as Forest Service and National Park Service units in the Sierra Nevada, to support management and planning decisions by employing science in a diversity of areas including: bear-proof containers and visitor safety, the use of technology in wilderness by visitors, quota decisions based on visitor travel simulation and visitor attitudes about intervention to adapt to climate change, and ecological restoration to fix problems caused by past human behavior. He remains focused on management solutions applied to wilderness stewardship issues relevant across the National Wilderness Preservation System.

**Excellence in Wilderness Research Applications Award**

**Chris Armatas & Carly Campbell**, University of Montana

Through Chris and Carly's efforts, 50 social science data sets dating back to the 1960s are now literally at the fingertips of managers, scientists, and students to analyze and apply to future management decisions and applications. This trove of social science research represents about 75 percent of all wilderness social science projects conducted worldwide. Data and methods that used to take months to search for are now instantly accessible. Chris and Carly's work even resulted in a first for Forest Service research, a wilderness research publication in a science journal (*Environmental Management*) that included full reference to the supportive archived data, coding manuals, methodology descriptions, and reports. With huge amounts of data yet unanalyzed, the efforts of these two students will influence wilderness studies for a long time to come.

**Traditional Skills and Minimum Tool Leadership Award**

**Lisa McClure**, Wilderness Ranger, Divide Ranger District, Rio Grande National Forest

Lisa's tireless work on the Saw Policy Technical Advisory Group, while championing the regional crosscut saw program, ensures these traditional skills will survive, but more importantly, they will be used by competent employees who remain committed to safety at work. By keeping this important skill alive and active, alongside other traditional work such as horse and mule-packing, Lisa's educational efforts keep the character and values of wilderness at the forefront of consideration for future generations.

**Wilderness Education Leadership Award**

**R5 2014 Tournament of Roses Planning Team**, Pacific Southwest Region

The culmination of nearly two years of planning, the R5 Tournament of Roses Planning Team successfully fielded a parade float during national broadcast of the January 2015 parade with three themes centered on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, the role Pack Stock play in

wilderness and fire management, and wildland firefighters. Besides the massive effort that went into the float itself which showcased three mule strings, a crew of wildland firefighters, and a wagon with the Forest Service Volunteer of the Year, Smokey Bear, the R5 Regional Forester, and the Chief of the Forest Service, the group also put together fully staffed pre-parade information and education booths at the Rose Bowl, the Los Angeles Equestrian Center Bowl, and the float viewing area. As a result of these efforts, information themes about wilderness and fire were broadcast to millions of television viewers as well as the estimated 80,000 people on hand at the event itself. With the large number of materials and information delivered multiple ways over many days, it was an event of national distinction for wilderness-related outreach and education efforts.

### **Line Officer Wilderness Leadership Award**

**Dave Neely**, District Ranger, Eagle/Holy Cross Ranger District, White River National Forest

Dave manages all or part of three Wilderness areas: Holy Cross, Maroon Bells-Snowmass, and Flat Tops. Managing each one is made difficult by high visitor usage and fragile alpine tundra amid peaks that climb fourteen thousand feet high. Without fail, he stays committed to preserving wilderness in both policy and action, whether hosting a forest-wide Carhart-instructed Wilderness Awareness training course, implementing Wilderness Character Monitoring, showing the vision to deny range fencing improvements when alternatives that would preserve the character of the wilderness could be undertaken, or even detailing to the Washington Office to serve as the lead staffer in the Legislative Affairs Office for wilderness and wild & scenic river legislation. His consistent decisions reflect a real commitment to preserving wilderness for present and future generations.

Please join me in congratulating all of this year's award recipients.

*/s/ Brian Ferebee, for*

LESLIE A. C. WELDON  
Deputy Chief, National Forest System