



File Code: 2320; 6140**Date:** DEC 19 2019**Route To:****Subject:** 2019 Forest Service National Wilderness Awards Recipients**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs, and WO Staff Directors

I am pleased to announce recipients of the 2019 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

Jeff Outhier, Forestry Technician from the San Carlos Ranger District of the Pike/San Isabel National Forests and the Cimarron/Comanche National Grasslands, Colorado

Jeff's 19-year commitment to managing wilderness areas has been spent forging strong relationships with the surrounding community, developing expertise on the landscape, and promoting wilderness values. Recognizing that ecosystems know no boundaries, he coordinates annual meetings with managers from adjacent lands to ensure consistent management throughout the landscape. Jeff's recent work includes training volunteers in traditional wilderness skills, speaking about wilderness stewardship at various events, and organizing a unique exhibit and event commemorating Arthur Carhart's influence in Southern Colorado. He also works to ensure the future quality of wilderness by engaging in fire planning efforts, presenting on the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide and providing critical expertise to employees in his unit.

Bob Marshall Individual Award

Steve Sunday, Wilderness and Trails Manager from the Leadville Ranger District of the Pike San Isabel National Forest, Colorado

Steve has dedicated 19 years to wilderness stewardship! His commitment to mentoring other rangers, volunteers, youth, and students allow him to share backcountry skills, traditional tool use, safety skills, photography, and Leave No Trace principles with his community. He reaches outside the Agency by maintaining relationships with four wilderness groups and certifying program leaders in crosscut saw skills. Steve also works to improve wilderness stewardship within the Agency by creating wilderness planning documents and participating in search and rescues. He clearly demonstrates what it means to go the extra mile through his time spent teaching photography classes and running an after-school program for middle school students on wilderness stewardship outside his work as a Wilderness and Trails Manager.



Bob Marshall Group Award

The Cascade Crest Wilderness Strategies Team, located in Oregon, consists of team leads Beth Peer from the Deschutes National Forest and Matt Peterson from the Willamette National Forest; Wilderness Specialists Jason Fisher from the Deschutes National Forest and Tyson Cross from the Willamette National Forest; line officer Amy Tinderholt from the Deschutes National Forest; and Jean Nelson Dean from Public Affairs.

This team exemplifies the spirit of the award not only in the way their project protects wilderness character but also in the way they navigated the challenging process of engaging stakeholders and harnessing public support. By developing an adaptive day use permit system for Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington, and Three Sisters Wilderness, they protect the character of these places for future generations. Team members worked hard to coordinate information analysis across forests and advance wilderness values while also considering the greater role of these areas in the multiple use mission of the Forest Service. The team made special efforts to incorporate stakeholder voices into the decision, pour over data from various specialists, and thoroughly inform the public on the project.

Wilderness Partnership Champion Award

Barbara Lydon, Wilderness Specialist for the Nellie Juan – College Fiord Wilderness Study Area on the Glacier Ranger District of the Chugach National Forest, Alaska

For 10 years, Barbara has built and managed the Voices of the Wilderness Artist Residency Program in the Alaska Region. Her unique vision to pair artists with wilderness managers to do stewardship projects serves to inspire and connect people to wilderness through art. Even after relocating to the Chugach National Forest, Barbara continues to manage the Voices of the Wilderness program by connecting with all 50 states, other agencies, and international partners. During this year's government shutdown Barbara's partners stepped in to keep the program afloat, a testament to the strength of the connections she has made. The interpretation and educational materials, promotional videos, and stunning photographs she provides to partner agencies will benefit wilderness stewardship efforts for years to come.

Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Research

Dr. R. Travis Belote of The Wilderness Society and his team of scientists: Matthew S. Dietz, Peter S. McKinley, G. Hugh Irwin, Timothy J. Fullman, Jason C. Leppi, Gregory H. Aplet and Anne A. Carlson of The Wilderness Society, Clinton N. Jenkins of Pesquisas Ecológicas, Carlos Carroll of Klamath Center for Conservation Research, and Dean L. Urban of Duke University.

Dr. Belote and his team investigated how best to maintain biodiversity and ecological processes in the face of habitat fragmentation and climate change while considering what a resilient system of protected areas in the United States would look like. The team developed maps that visualized ecological integrity, connectivity, representation of ecosystems, and biodiversity priority. Their analysis revealed that wilderness areas are of high conservation value but their quality depends on the protection level of surrounding lands. These maps provide an important visual resource to land managers for evaluating the relationship between the National Wilderness Preservation System and other public and private lands.

In a second article, Dr. Belote and his team also combined spatial assessment of conservation values with a climate vulnerability analysis to outline conservation strategies under climate change. By superimposing a map representing the rate and magnitude of climate change on the map of conservation values, they identified general conservation strategies that include intervention and restoration efforts. This research provides a tool for considering the outcomes and risks of taking action in different ways.

Traditional Skills and Minimum Tools Award

Ottawa National Forest Wilderness staff and Shoshone National Forest staff and pack string. Team members include Melissa Simpson, Chris Kovala, Marlanea French-Pombier, Jim Sobrack, Pamela Nankervis, William Hansche, Sara Wall, Amanda Johnson, Barbara Van Alstine, Thomas Strietzel, Randi Ellsworth and Victoria Hahka from the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan. Additional team members include Jason Brengle, Jason Pindell, Crosby Davidson, and Spencer Otto of the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming and the honorable equines, Boomer, Quincey, Lefty and Dusty. An honorable mention goes to Emily Clegg and The Nature Conservancy staff.

This team addressed erosion and threats to a sensitive species in McCormick Wilderness on the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan by installing a step and run boardwalk to reduce the use of visitor created trails. There was no viable reroute option due to flooding and surrounding habitat at the site. Wilderness managers assembled a team to transport materials and construct over 400 feet of boardwalk with hand saws, drills, and other hand tools. To accomplish this task so the boardwalk would be ready for use the following season, they enlisted a team of 10 mules, four horses, and four packers all the way from the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming to move supplies through rain and snow. Their enthusiasm and perseverance in using traditional tools is a great example of protecting wilderness character.

Connie G. Myers Wilderness Education Leadership Award

The late Connie Saylor Johnson of the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest, Idaho

Connie's time educating people about wilderness included 13 years with the Forest Service as a wilderness ranger and upon retirement, an additional 11 years as a full-time volunteer. Her ability to connect with young people, creatively find resources to accomplish projects, and reach outside the typical wilderness visitor audience shined through in all her work.

One of Connie's unique accomplishments was developing the IDAWA (Idaho-Iowa) Youth and Educator Project. As a former educator in Iowa, Connie initiated a conservation education program based on wilderness service targeting Iowa educators; a state with no wilderness. Teachers embraced the wilderness ethic and committed to creating conservation education modules for their classrooms. The IDAWA program expanded to include an annual backpacking trip and service project for youth in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Over three hundred Iowa high school students and adults have been exposed to an untrammeled landscape as a result of the program. She continued her efforts to engage unique audiences and expose them to new places by volunteering her time to coordinate Idaho students' travel to Mexican wildernesses to emphasize global awareness of the wilderness resource.

Her involvement with the Lochsa Historical Ranger Station Visitor Center in Idaho also produced several exciting programs and events. The Living History Days School Program hosts a day of hands-on activities that engage elementary students by exploring history and adventure near their communities. Working horses and mules, smoke jumpers, blacksmiths and lively historians make the program exciting and interactive.

Connie's daughter Nicole Saylor describes her best:

"Connie, who died in October 2018, worked hard to protect wild places. But more important, she cultivated generations of wilderness advocates. Many young people she led on wilderness service projects later chose conservation careers and said Mom had inspired them. Teachers who spent time in her summer wilderness workshops developed curricula that exposed hundreds of students to the power of wilderness and the importance of saving it."

Family and friends gathered in July on the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests to celebrate Connie. The award was presented to her family by Forest Supervisor Cheryl Probert.


Line Officer Wilderness Leadership Award

Tracy Beck, Forest Supervisor of the Willamette National Forest and **John Allen**, Forest Supervisor of the Deschutes National Forest (Retired).

Tracy and John's teamwork in sharing management of five wilderness areas along the Cascade Crest in Central Oregon is grounded in their willingness to tackle visitor use challenges. Both Tracy and John provide strong support to the Cascade Crest Wilderness Strategy Team, resulting in improved Wilderness Stewardship Performance scores and exciting partnerships. For example, collaboration with the Department of Defense has allowed soldiers to be brought on board as wilderness rangers.

Perhaps their leadership is best displayed through their signing a limited-entry permit system that provides opportunity for both spontaneous and carefully planned trips while preserving the quality of the lands they love. Their work provides a model for land managers across the country.

Congratulations to all of these outstanding Wilderness Award recipients!


For **CHRISTOPHER B. FRENCH**
Deputy Chief, National Forest System