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To: Regional Foresters

September 3, 2014, will mark 50 years since the signing of the Wilderness Act. The Forest Service has a rich legacy as world leaders in wilderness stewardship. With your continued help, our ongoing stewardship work will help preserve this wilderness legacy for future generations. As the 50th anniversary date approaches, now is the time to honor and build upon our successes.

There are several efforts underway to commemorate this historic anniversary. These efforts include working with a National Planning Team and the establishment of an Agency team to explore how we can tell the Agency's wilderness story and specifically how we can assist employees in the field with their endeavors (refer to January 18, 2013, Chief Tidwell letter).

To help meet this need, I am pleased to announce that we are committing approximately \$365,000 of National Forest System fiscal year (FY) 13 carryover funds to the field to develop and implement activities and projects that celebrate not only the past 50 years of the Wilderness Preservation System but the next 50 years. Each Region will be allocated \$43,000; except Region 10 who will receive \$21,457.

Official budget execution documents will distribute these funds as soon as possible, but I strongly encourage regions to move forward now to effectively use this opportunity. Regions will determine how to best to use and distribute these funds. The funds, however, must be allocated in FY13 for specific activities, projects, and events that engage wilderness partners, Tribes and/or local communities. In addition, each region will be required to submit an accomplishment report in a standardized format (see enclosure) to the Washington Office by December 31, 2013. The information submitted will be assembled and used to help tell the Forest Service wilderness legacy story.

Please note that several resources are currently available to help forests and districts with their efforts. For instance, Wilderness50 recently launched a website that provides a wealth of information and resources: www.wilderness50th.org. In addition, the Agency team is also pulling together several materials that will be made available through your respective directors and program managers.

Please contact Leanne Marten, Director, Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers, at 202-205-0925 or Ralph Swain at 303-275-5058 if you have any questions.

/s/ Leslie A. C. Weldon
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Deputy Chief, National Forest System

