

I would like to nominate Dan Miles for the National Wilderness Award for Traditional Skills and Minimum Tools. Dan has been a temporary summer seasonal employee since 1990 working for the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District wilderness program for all but one of the preceding summers.

Dan has consistently shown leadership in traditional skills development and minimum tool training for other seasonal wilderness rangers and our volunteer groups. Without Dan's leadership we would be at a significant disadvantage in utilizing traditional skills in our wilderness trails program.

Dan has recently coordinated several complex trail restoration projects in the Goat Rocks Wilderness and William O. Douglass Wilderness. These projects have included puncheon repair and replacement, stair replacement and turnpike repair. Dan has worked with a variety of volunteer groups including Earth Corps, a youth development program, and in the course of these projects has shared traditional trail building and woodworking skills that include scribing logs for secure placement and hand splitting cedar planking.



One of the primary reasons I am nominating Dan is his use of native materials in almost all of his wilderness trail projects, and in particular the passing of traditional skills to our volunteers, including the Earth Corps youth program. The young adults who worked on these projects were taught how to safely saw and move large logs, how to split planking for trail structures and how to utilize scribing to securely construct these structures. The sense of satisfaction gained by doing all of the necessary work by hand was significant and contributed to Earth Corps considering this to be a very successful partnership.

The project could have been completed utilizing dimensionally sawn lumber that had been packed in on stock.

This past year Dan coordinated and lead the Earth Corps team through a turnpike replacement that was only able to be accomplished through the utilization of pack stock hauling rock from a nearby source. The pack stock was provided by volunteers from our local Backcountry Horseman group. The stock utilized packboards constructed for the district's own stock program in the 1950's, and buckets filled by hand. With these minimum tools the volunteers were able to move enough material for 200' of turnpike reconstruction and to fill another 600' of deeply rutted trail.

For a project like this to occur in the near by Mt. Rainer National Park the Park Service routinely flies material into the project site. Flying non-native material into our project site was discussed for several seasons, but was rejected as the minimum tool necessary for the project. Due to Dan's diligence in finding suitable fill material within a reasonable stock hauling distance to the project site we were able to complete this project

without motorized transport. This project required over 700 hours of labor and four pack stock to complete.

Of significant note are the volunteer partnerships that are supported by Dan's exceptional leadership with traditional skills and use of minimum tools. These include partnerships with Earth Corps, Wilderness Volunteers, American Hiking Society, Backcountry Horsemen, Student Conservation Association and the Washington Trails Association.