



# **NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA**

**USDA FOREST SERVICE, 160A ZILICOA STREET, ASHEVILLE, NC 28801**

## **NEWS • RELEASE**

### **FOREST SERVICE CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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The USDA Forest Service celebrated 30 years of serving the older workers' community by honoring their accomplishments at a conference in Baltimore, MD on April 29-May 3. The conference highlighted the achievements by Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) enrollees nationwide, while also recognizing Forest Service employees responsible for program management.

During the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration last week in Baltimore, the two people responsible for managing the Seniors' Program for the National Forests in NC, and the Southern Research Station, Rebecca Allen and J.C. Smith, received national recognition as "Outstanding Senior Community Service Employment Program Coordinators". These two individuals also won recognition for writing the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative History for the Agency, and for serving on the Program's National Advisory Committee.

As if that weren't enough, Andy Wike, a senior on the Tusquitee Ranger District in Murphy, NC, was honored as one of the three oldest Forest Service seniors in the nation. Andy is a mere 92 years of age, and is still extremely active. In addition to his work and training on the Ranger District, he manages to care for a farm that consists of 40 head of cattle, chops his own wood, and raises his own vegetable garden. Andy's energy level rivals someone half his age.

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National Forest in NC Supervisor, John Ramey said “I couldn’t be prouder of the accomplishments of Rebecca, J.C. and Andy, and appreciate the efforts of everyone who has contributed to the success of the Senior Community Service Employment Program over the past 30 years.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is designed to provide part-time employment opportunities for low-income persons who are 55 years or older. The program is based on the principles of personal responsibility, lifelong learning, and service to the community. Enrollees receive training, learn new skills, and develop job search skills while enrolled in the program. The goal is to assist enrollees in securing permanent employment in the public and private sector.

Program enrollees receive on-the-job training for about 20 hours per week. Positions available include those involved with recreation programs, visitor centers, land management, facility and vehicle maintenance, teacher’s aides, computer aides, interpretative services, accountant technicians, receptionists and office clerks.

There are currently over 5,000 Forest Service-Senior Community Service Employment Program enrollees throughout the United States; 279 of which are located here in North Carolina with the National Forests in NC, and the Southern Research Station. Throughout the Agency’s 30-years of operation, the enrollees have contributed a total of \$797.7 million of community service. The Forest Service operates its program through an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Labor.

Note to reporters: Photos of award recipients are available upon request.

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