



NEWS RELEASE

Lolo National Forest

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Skip Rosquist Honored for Mentorship

Missoula, MT. – Arne “Skip” Rosquist, who retired last week from the Forest Service, noticed something important very early in his career while serving as a junior officer in the Air Force and he made some mental notes about it. It was what he saw in the dynamics of teams and supervisors.

“During my first professional job as a Second Lieutenant I was part of a project that had two groups ...after a while I realized we were getting a lot more work done than the other group,” Rosquist said. “It was because our supervisor, Captain Obenland, gave away credit. He would say, ‘we met this deadline because of so and so.’ His evil twin did just the opposite. He kept the credit and gave away the blame.”

Rosquist remembered that. There was a lesson in that early experience that would guide his 33 year career with the Forest Service, 31 of those years on the 2.1 million acre Lolo National Forest as the forest hydrologist. He has been responsible for the forest’s entire watershed program, to include such issues as water quality, precipitation patterns, runoff and water rights.

After his five year active duty commitment to the Air Force, Rosquist accepted a job with the Forest Service in Denver, Colorado. There he was fortunate to have another exceptional supervisor and mentor. The lesson about good leaders and supervisors – people who encouraged and supported their employees -- was the same for Rosquist: “It’s good for the agency and it’s good for the people. And I realized if I had the opportunity to mentor I was going to take advantage of that.” He went about doing just that, and he never broke stride.

Rosquist was recognized last month as the Forest Service’s 2008 National Wildlife, Water, Fisheries and Rare Plants Mentor of the Year. He was selected from nominees from across the Forest Service, an agency with approximately 30,000 employees. His award nomination, written in large part by the people he has led, guided and supported over the years, states: “His dedication to the Forest Service mission and sound resource management through the years has been direct, exemplary, and unyielding. Yet, perhaps his greatest achievement is in what he has indirectly accomplished during his tenure, as he has mentored an uncommon number of young professionals who have continued to lead very successful careers in the fields of water resources...In fact, Skip would attest that helping others to establish a career path in water resources has been a goal throughout his career. Rather than focus on just one career, his own, Skip has made extraordinary efforts to help other people, and in turn, has influenced a much greater array of water resource improvements and a more heightened focus on sound water management – more than any single person could. He has always achieved remarkably high quality work, not by demand or micro management, but through a unique ability to foresee and gently guide performance and path expectations, followed by unprecedented support and commitment to employee success.”

Rosquist’s employees also noted his contributions to water resource management in his 31 years on the Lolo National Forest. Those include the planning and implementation of over two million dollars in watershed restoration work through Stewardship contracting; over 2.5 million dollars in Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation work, and the automation of the Forest Service’s Northern Region sediment model with Geographic

Information System (GIS) to better model sediment production during timber harvest and road work.

The list of his accomplishments while on the Lolo National Forest is lengthy. Still, Rosquist himself would not point to any of those if asked what he has done that is most lasting and meaningful to him.

“Here at the end I’m getting cards, email...and flowers showed up this morning,” Rosquist said.

With the flowers came a card with a note that was as humble as the person it was sent to: “Thank you for always being there for us. You are the best!! From, Nobody.”

There was a lesson there as well.

“You may not be able to clean up all of the watersheds, but you can really make a lasting impact that goes beyond that. It’s been the most satisfying aspect of my career, working with these guys,” Rosquist said.

Rosquist said he plans to “spend more time doing grandpa activities” now that he is retired. He is married and has three children, and plans to stay in Missoula, which he calls home.

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