



NEWS RELEASE

Lolo National Forest

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Sue Alley Receives Vernon Valach Award

Missoula, MT. – The Vernon Valach Award, begun in 1985 to recognize an outstanding forestry technician on the Lolo National Forest, was presented to Ninemile Ranger District employee Sue Alley this month for her exceptional work in 2007. The award is named in honor of Lolo National Forest technician Vernon Valach, who was killed in an automobile accident in 1983 while off-duty. The award has been presented each year to a Lolo NF technician who demonstrates the technical contribution, leadership, peer respect, and public service that Valach exemplified while employed with the Lolo NF. Recipients of the award receive a cash award from a trust fund established by the Valach family and have their names engraved on the Vernon Valach plaque, which hangs in the Forest Supervisor's Office at Fort Missoula.

Alley was recognized for the following work she did in 2007:

- Supervising crews and administering reforestation and fuels reduction contracts
- Laying out reforestation and thinning units and monitoring implementation activities
- Monitoring forest regeneration and conducting stand examinations
- Flying air patrol Forest wide during the fire season
- Maintaining the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database

According to her supervisors, Alley has gained the respect and trust of her fellow employees by leading by example, demonstrating a tireless work ethic, and utilizing technical forestry skills.

“Sue’s technical contribution goes well beyond silviculture,” said Sheryl Meekin, Alley’s supervisor on the Ninemile Ranger District. “She has been an invaluable resource to the fire and fuels program. She did the most phenomenal job in such a dire fire crunch this past summer. She would come in here early in the mornings and get her (silviculture) crew lined out and do her normal work, and then come nine o’clock she would go down to the airport and fly air patrol duties...and she did that throughout most of the summer, six days a week. She located a lot of the fires on the Forest over the summer.”

Meekin noted that Alley’s contributions resulted in several years of target accomplishment in timber stand improvement, reforestation, fuels management, database management, wildfire suppression, and fire prevention.

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