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Department of
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Forest
Service

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SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST HONORS VOLUNTEERS

Harrisburg, IL, October 7, 2008 – Forest Supervisor, Allen Nicholas, is announcing that five individuals have been awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award (Award), a prestigious national honor offered in recognition of volunteer service.

The highest award, the Gold Award, was presented to Bob Wagner of Metropolis, Illinois. Mr. Wagner, the president of the Shawnee Backcountry Horseman, received his Award for volunteering 570 hours. His volunteer service is a combination of hours worked with the USDA - Forest Service, the Leave No Trace program, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and other agencies.

Pamela Brandon, Diana Emmons and Joel Heidemann each received a Silver Award. Ms. Brandon, from Murphysboro, Illinois, is a community member who has been very involved in the developed recreation program as a volunteer. She received a Silver Award for 417 hours of volunteer service. Diana Emmons, a Southern Illinois University intern, worked with the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District this fall and received her Award for 315 hours of volunteer service. Joel Heidemann, an area teacher, commits much of his free time to volunteer programs and received a Silver Award for 262 hours of volunteer work.

The Bronze Award was presented to Brett Billings, a Southern Illinois University student, for his 191 volunteer hours working with the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District in the spring of 2008.



The Forest has a growing volunteer program, with more than 300 volunteers performing community service in 2008. Trail maintenance and construction, trash removal, adopt-a-trail/trailhead, conservation programs, the wilderness inventory analysis program and media productions are some of the activities of Forest volunteers.

The Shawnee National Forest reaches out to local volunteers such as the Sierra Club and equestrian groups; to regional volunteers such as Fieldcrest Middle School, Galesburg Baptist Church and the University of Illinois; and to national volunteers such as AmeriCorps. These volunteers work together for the benefit of the community.

“In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush created the USA Freedom Corps, and called on every American to make a lifelong commitment to volunteer service. The President’s Volunteer Service Award recognizes individuals and families who have answered that call,” said Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas. “America’s volunteers work to make our communities stronger and safer. As a certifying organization for the Award program, the Shawnee National Forest is proud to be aligned with this prestigious volunteer award, and we are especially proud of our volunteers who have made volunteer service a central part of their lives.”

Established in 2003, the Award is presented on an annual basis to individuals, groups and families who have met or exceeded requirements for volunteer service and have demonstrated exemplary citizenship through volunteering. As one of the thousands of certifying organizations participating in the Award program, the Shawnee National Forest confers the Award to recognize the achievements of outstanding volunteers.

The President’s Volunteer Service Award, issued by the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation, is for volunteer service that every American, any age or walk of life, can work to achieve. The Council is comprised of leaders in government, media, entertainment, business, education, nonprofit and volunteer service organization and community volunteering. To be eligible to receive the Award, individuals, families and groups submit a record of their

annual volunteer service hours to participating certifying organizations, such as the Shawnee National Forest, to verify the service and to present the Award.

“These recipients of the President’s Volunteer Service Award are role models for all Americans,” said Kelly Pearson, Forest volunteer coordinator. “Each volunteer hour contributed makes a difference in improving the quality of life for others, and I encourage everyone to contribute to our community by volunteering. Volunteers bring us closer together as families, as communities and as a nation, through their commitment.”

For information about volunteering for the Shawnee National Forest call Kelly Pearson or Jennifer Sublett at (618) 687-1731.

For more information about how to qualify for the President’s Volunteer Service Award and to find out how to identify additional volunteer opportunities in this area, visit www.PresidentialServiceAwards.gov or call 1-866-545-5307.



Left to Right: Kelly Pearson, Bob Wagner and Jennifer Sublett