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To: Regional Foresters

I am pleased to announce the 2011 recipients of the national awards for Fisheries, Hydrology, and Soil Science. Please join us in recognizing the outstanding efforts and achievements of each of the award recipients. Our reviewers were faced with the challenging task of selecting from an abundance of outstanding nominations.

Aquatic Recreational Accomplishment

The Manistee River Rainbow Bend – Bear Creek Universal Access Partnership is recognized for its collaborative efforts to provide barrier-free world class fishing opportunities on the popular Wild and Scenic Manistee River, on the Manistee Ranger District of the Huron-Manistee National Forests. Key project coordinators with the Ranger District included Manistee County Community Foundation; Manistee Alliance of Economic Success; Easter Seals; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Fishery Trust. The result is universal access for people with disabilities at two sites along a 25 mile stretch of river. The Partnership is operated through Manistee County's Alliance for Economic Success "Explore the Shores" program, a community based initiative to make Manistee County, Michigan a premier destination for universal access for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy, use, and learn from the county's water resources.

Collaborative/Integrated Aquatic Stewardship

Mike Lambert, Umatilla Basin Manager for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) is recognized for his catalyst role in the success of the Meacham Creek Floodplain and In-Stream Enhancement Project on a 1.1 mile reach split between the Umatilla National Forest and the CTUIR. The restoration effort involved a key section which is culturally significant for ESA listed Middle Columbia River steelhead and bull trout and was impacted by Union Pacific Railroad. The project returned the river to its historic channel, restored habitat complexity, improved water quality and riparian function. It has a dual mission of helping sustain the First Foods mission of the Tribes, which is a basis of their natural resource management. The Tribes contributed nearly \$2.5 million in funding to this project, and involved Tribal youth in surveying, fish relocation, and native plantings. Numerous internal and external partners contributed to the overall success of this project and over 140 people were involved in a five day fish rescue and relocation.



Collaborative/Integrated Aquatic Stewardship

The Tongass National Forest's Craig Ranger District and The Nature Conservancy are recognized for the Harris River Restoration Program on The Prince of Wales Island to recover aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems altered by an extensive management legacy. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) identified the Harris River for its biodiversity and salmon production potential and prioritized the river for restoration under a Conservation Action Plan for Prince of Wales in 2007. TNC also helped raise extensive funding to implement a range of restoration efforts. An integrated, watershed approach was critical to restoring river processes, salmon spawning, and rearing habitat on 20 miles of mainstem river and tributary habitat, and improving wildlife habitat on 500 acres of upland and riparian habitat. The collaborative effort provided over \$2.3 million in local contracts for restoration work and benefits commercial, recreational and subsistence fishing in the region.

Field Soil Scientist of the Year

Jim Archuleta, Forest Soil Scientist on the Umatilla National Forest is recognized for his outstanding contribution toward field soil science and his creative approach to solving problems. He successfully developed an innovative subsoiling tool with equipment operators and Northern Research Station scientists, and is working with companies to develop fast pyrolysis technology for slash pile burning. He is also experimenting with biochar's ability to sequester carbon and heavy metals with federal and university partners. He was instrumental in establishing a Long-term Soil Productivity research site for volcanic ash soils. Jim's efforts are always integrated with research and field scientists and a host of NGOs and local groups.

Friend of the Fish/Watershed

Sandra Wilson Musser, Pacific Northwest Regional Office Geotechnical Engineer is recognized for playing a critical role in providing direction and program coordination in 170 culvert replacement projects in priority locations, restoring over 400 miles of aquatic organism passage in Region 6. She is applauded for her consistent and active leadership and her ability to integrate various Forest Service programs, and for facilitating the adoption and implementation of the Stream Simulation Design approach among engineering staffs across the region. She continues to collaborate with a host of federal and state agencies and NGOs in Oregon and Washington to refine and monitor the effectiveness of the Region 6 aquatic organism passage program.

Line Officer

John Erickson, Emmett District Ranger on the Boise National Forest, is recognized for his efforts to champion the Bull Creek Trail Restoration Project, which focused on reducing sediment delivery to a bull trout stream on the Boise National Forest. Despite pressure from external parties and OHV user groups, John closed a long-used, illegal OHV trail for safety and water quality concerns. The restoration of this popular trail will be completed this year incorporating expertise from fisheries, watershed, and engineering staff that will include 38 new arch culvert stream crossings, the relocation of 10 chronic sediment delivery sites, and upgrading 12 existing bridges.

Partnership

The Americorps Watershed Stewards Program was created in 1994 by a partnership of California Conservation Corps, California Department of Fish and Game, Humboldt State University, US Forest Service, other members of the fisheries, watershed, and science community in northwest California, and with the support of Proposition 70 (the Wildlife, Coastal, and Park Land Conservation Act of 1988). Under the program the Six Rivers National Forest, the Klamath National Forest, and the Pacific Southwest Research Station have placed over 140 members, and recruited many former participants as resource professionals. In 2011, 52 members served 10 month/1700 hour tours under the mentorship of 50 resource professionals at 27 placement sites between San Francisco and the Oregon border. The project is recognized for significant contributions to watershed education, on-the-ground restoration, water quality and fish monitoring, and road and stream habitat inventories. The program achieves an impressive 300 miles of stream monitoring on the Six Rivers National Forest annually. Their substantial efforts with local schools, community outreach, and volunteer recruitment is ensuring the next generation of watershed stewards to benefit healthy watersheds for northern California.

Partnership

Winston County Smith Lake Advocacy Group is recognized for their partnership with the National Forests in Alabama to sponsor lake shore clean up events as part of Alabama Power Company's "Renew Our Rivers" campaign. Over the past six years, the partnership has engaged to the local community and convened hundreds of volunteers to remove approximately 180 tons of litter (appliances, Styrofoam, tires, boating and fishing accessories). Over 166 tributary river miles on Smith Lake have also been targeted. Winston County Smith Lake Advocacy Group is accredited for raising environmental awareness and engaging a broad coalition of community businesses and groups and the entire staff of the Bankhead National Forest in this effort.

Professional Excellence - Fish Management

Rodger Nelson from the Payette National Forest is recognized for his long productive fisheries career with the Forest Service, starting at the Boise Forestry Sciences Lab in 1978, followed by his move to the Payette NF in 1994. His accomplishments involve innovative database and GIS fisheries applications, along with substantial work in riparian and range management, fish habitat inventory, ESA consultations, and fire management. Through his innovations in software applications, his high standards for data quality, analysis, and reporting he also served as a role model for young fisheries biologists. He was critical in analyzing management impacts and sediment trends in the South Fork Salmon River and on bull trout management on the Payette NF. He has authored and co-authored numerous technical reports and contributed many presentations to external partners.

Public Awareness

The STEWARDS Program of the South Santiam Watershed and Sweet Home Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest are recognized for the contribution of over 13,000 hours of fisheries and watershed education on the Sweet Home Ranger District on the Willamette National Forest. The STEWARDS Program – Students Engaged in Watershed And Resource Discovery Sessions – has engaged thousands of children and adults in outdoor activities such as camping, riparian restoration projects, outdoor school, and a number of classroom related programs, some including entire families to reach adults about the outdoors. Through the STEWARDS Program, Oregon’s very first youth watershed council was established under the South Santiam Watershed Council, which works aggressively to fund this opportunity for local young adults to engage in restoration across the watershed. Many diverse partners have supported the program, from school districts to 4-H clubs to the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz. Pre and post testing indicate significant increases in local students’ understanding of fish and watershed issues from the STEWARDS Program.

Professional Excellence Research Achievement

Kelly Burnett of the Pacific Northwest Research Station, is a leading fisheries scientist in the Pacific Northwest on a range of issues from climate change to forest planning and landscape analysis. She is recognized for the development of a river mapping concept called “intrinsic potential” applied to coho, chinook salmon and steelhead trout production. Intrinsic Potential has in turn been applied across western states by many agencies and partners for conservation and recovery of anadromous fish listed or considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. During the development of the IP concept, Kelly engaged a variety of internal FS disciplines and collaborated with many other external groups and agencies. She is commended for her dedication to science and work with groups and individuals that has resulted in better landscape management for fish conservation efforts across the Pacific Coast states.

Special Category “River Champion”

Robert Hunter, WaterWatch of Oregon is recognized for his “unwavering commitment and tenacity” in leading a successful campaign to remove four dams in the famous Rogue River basin, including the Savage Rapids and Grants Pass Irrigation District dams. Over the past 25 years, his dedication to the Rogue River and his thousands of hours of volunteer time to champion the positive benefits of dam removal and build relationships among stakeholders and cultivate multiple funding sources have produced tangible results. His efforts have greatly benefitted salmon, steelhead, Pacific lamprey, and coastal cutthroat trout on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and the robust recreational and commercial economies that depend on the health of this fishery.

Special Category for “Aquatic Technology Training”

The USFS Aquatic Organism Passage Cadre: Dan Cenderelli, STREAM Systems Technology Center; Bob Gubernick, Engineering Geologist for Region 9; Mark Weinhold, Hydrologist White River National Forest Region 2; and Kim Johanson (retired), Engineer Willamette/Siuslaw National Forest Region 6. The ‘Cadre’ as they are known, has served the Forest Service by developing and presenting the “USFS Stream Simulation Design” training nationally. Because of their extensive knowledge and effective training techniques, the Forest Service is recognized as a national leader in this ecological approach to ensuring that road-crossings provide movement for fish and other aquatic organisms while protecting water quality and road infrastructure. Their continuing commitment to excellence and external collaboration has made them highly sought-after experts both in and outside the Forest Service. Since 2003 they have presented 19 nationally sponsored workshops in 19 different locations usually filled to a capacity of 50 participants. Their commitment to bringing the concept of Stream Simulation design to engineers, biologists, hydrologists, other agencies, and contractors represents an extraordinary accomplishment on a national scale.

“Wagon Wheel Gap” Hydrology

Louis Wasniewski, hydrologist on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest is recognized for his excellence in and advocacy for watershed management and hydrology. He has provided leadership in the design and implementation of many successful stream and wetland restoration projects on multiple Forests in Regions 4 and 6. His project work has improved stream flows for hundreds of miles. His collaboration has benefitted private lands and resulted in successful partnering with several counties in Idaho, NRCS, Trout Unlimited, and the National Park Service. His ‘can-do’ attitude and resourcefulness have enabled him to complete many millions of dollars worth of projects that without his perseverance would not be completed today. He has grown from a enthusiastic project manager to an influential program leader, educator, and trainer. His professionalism and ability to guide a project from concept to implementation has earned Louis the respect of all those he works with.

Please join us in honoring our recipients at the annual awards ceremony on the evening of March 28, 2012, at the National Archives in Washington DC.

/s/ Leslie A. C. Weldon
LESLIE A. C. WELDON
Deputy Chief, National Forest System