



Forest Service

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News Release

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US FOREST SERVICE HONORS EMPLOYEES AND PARTNERS

(Oct. 30, 2015) Roanoke, VA - The U.S. Forest Service honored employees and partners yesterday for exemplary work, dedication and commitment in the Southern Region at the 2015 Regional Forester's Honor Awards. This year's theme for the awards was, "Stories of Excellence"

"I am proud to recognize the outstanding work our employees have accomplished this year," said Regional Forester Tony Tooke. "Of course, we couldn't do it without working side-by-side with partners, volunteers and others who support the work we do. I am excited to honor some of them today as well."

Tooke and Deputy Regional Foresters Mary Morris and Ken Arney gave out awards in 12 categories to more than 100 individuals from the region, which includes 13 southern states and Puerto Rico.

- 1. Making a Difference Award:** This award recognizes employees, partners or volunteers who have demonstrated excellence in sustained commitment to public service, conservation or outreach to make a positive difference in communities and in the lives of people from all walks of life. Recipients include:
 - Arthur Henderson and Gloria Nielsen, Talladega Ranger District, National Forests in Alabama; Dennis Krusac, Regional Office Biological and Physical Resources Staff; Kimberly Murray, Munford Schools Science Resource Teacher, Alabama; Fannie Newman, Davy Crockett Ranger District, National Forests and Grasslands in Texas; Bob Owens, Nantahala Ranger District, National Forests in North Carolina; and Johnny Ponder, Talladega County Board of Education Member, Alabama.
- 2. Building a Foundation for Sustainable Recreation:** The Southern Region's vision for Sustainable Recreation charts a course for providing high quality recreation opportunities over the long term. By working together with district and forest level personnel, the Region identified the most important areas for focus, defined a set of desired outcomes, and designed innovative new tools to help managers make better informed decisions. Recipients of this award include:
 - Deb Caffin, Ann Christensen, Jimmy Gaudry, Pat Gilbert, Alison Koopman, Michelle Mitchell, Lynn Prince, Terry Terry and Melissa Twaroski, Regional Recreation, Wilderness, Heritage, and Volunteers Staff; Betty Jewett, Forest Supervisor, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests; Stephanie Johnson, Regional Director, Public Affairs and Support Services; Rick Lint, Forest Supervisor, Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest; James Melonas, Deputy Forest Supervisor, National Forests in North Carolina; Mary Morris, Deputy Regional Forester; Sherry Reaves, Regional Director, Budget and Financial Management; Tina Tilley, Area Supervisor, Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area; Mark Van Every, Forest Supervisor, National Forests and Grasslands in Texas; and, Randy Warbington, Regional Director Engineering (retired).

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Forest Service



Page 2 - Forest Service Honors Employees, Partners

3. **Creating a Safety Learning Culture:** This award recognizes groups and individuals who have developed practices and procedures with measurable outcomes that change the agency's safety culture and make the shift to learning.
 - National Forests in Mississippi Leadership Team (Group Award)
 - Jim Gumm, National Forests in North Carolina and William Jones, Asheville Field Office (Individual Awards)
4. **Diversity and Inclusiveness:** This award recognizes an individual and organization that have demonstrated highly effective and measurable contributions toward making the Forest Service an employer of choice. Performance and expectations are high while creating a fair, diverse, inclusive, and effective workplace.
 - Osceola National Forest, National Forests in Florida (Group Award)
 - Anthony T. Rivers, Kisatchie National Forest (Individual Award)
5. **Law Enforcement and Investigations:** This award is a way for the Regional Forester and Special Agent in Charge to recognize those individuals who have taken that extra step to effectively align the LEI organization with Regional programs and priorities and/or have committed an act of bravery and selflessness.
 - Ouachita Law Enforcement and Investigations, Ouachita National Forest (Group Award)
 - David B. Hartley, National Forests in Alabama (Individual Award)
6. **Leading in the Business Environment:** This award recognizes individuals and groups that demonstrate exemplary accomplishments in ensuring an efficient and effective business environment.
 - Bridge Inspection Team Leaders, National Forests across the Region (Group Award)
 - Christopher Ford, Regional Office Acquisition Management Staff (Individual Award)
7. **Natural Resources Leadership:** This award goes to the group and individuals who are leaders in caring for the land. They demonstrated major achievements in the stewardship of our diverse ecosystems including the soil, air, water, vegetation, and wildlife resources.
 - Forest and District Timber Leaders, Ouachita National Forest (Group Award)
 - Jeff Gainey, National Forests in Florida (Individual Award)
8. **Partners/Community Engagement:** This award recognizes Forest Service employees and groups that have demonstrated innovative and creative approaches to building partnerships, strengthening relationships, and successful implementation of Forest Service projects or programs.
 - George Washington National Forest Stakeholder Collaborative, George Washington and Jefferson National Forests (Group Award)
 - Michelle Mitchell, Regional Office Recreation, Wilderness, Heritage, and Volunteers Staff (Individual Award)
9. **Promoting Recreation:** This award recognizes an individual and group who has sustained safely or enhanced recreation opportunities in a manner that is financially sustainable and environmentally sound.
 - Supervisor's Office Recreation Team, Ouachita National Forest (Group Award)
 - Kirby Carlton, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests (Individual Award)

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Page 3 - Forest Service Honors Employees, Partners

10. Ranger District of the Year: This award exemplifies management excellence in the Southern Region. Great work is being done on each Ranger District; however this award pays tribute to the one District whose overall achievement is clearly extraordinary.

- Enoree Ranger District, Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests (Group Award)

11. Restored and Resilient Landscapes: This award recognizes Forest Service individuals or work units that have made major achievements in restoration and in attaining land management objectives. These honorees have made substantial contributions in “Caring for the Land” through the use of stewardship contracting and other innovative means.

- Red River and Red Bird River Watershed Groups, Daniel Boone National Forest (Group Award)
- Ed Moody, National Forests in Mississippi (Individual Award)

12. Volunteer Program: This award recognizes volunteers who partner with the Forest Service to help preserve and protect the Forests and ensure visitors have a pleasant experience

- Wild South, Bankhead Ranger District, National Forests in Alabama; Conecuh Forest Chapter of Quail Forever, Conecuh Ranger District, National Forests in Alabama; Bob and Judy Peak, Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area (Group Award)
- Ray Stanfield, Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area (Individual Award)

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