Resource Assistants and Field Rangers collaborate to chronicle “More Ways to Connect to Nature” for National Public Lands Day

OREGON & WASHINGTON—Resource Assistants and Field Rangers from the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region collaborated to create a video to celebrate National Public Lands Day and to highlight this year’s theme “More Ways to Connect to Nature.”

From left to right: Resource Assistants Lily Carey, Alexa Pengelly, and Jessica Ibarra joined together to plan and film a fun and informative video for National Public Lands Day about visitors to the Pacific Northwest National Forests. (USDA Forest Service photo by Lily Carey).

Resource Assistants and Field Rangers from various units within the Pacific Northwest met in person, and virtually, to develop an action plan to interview members of the public about how they connect to public lands. Lily Carey, who spearheaded the innovative regional Virtual Ranger video series in 2020, provided gear and recording tips to the group.

The three-minute video captures heartfelt testimony from nearly thirty interviewees from all background and interests including children, families, solo adventurers, and even a newlywed couple who had just been married at Trillium Lake on Mt. Hood National Forest.

“Everyone was excited to be outside and happy to share their feelings about connecting with nature. I connected with over 160 people the day I performed interviews and every single person had something positive to say about our public lands,” explained Lily Carey. “When engaging people with the topic of National Public Lands Day, many visitors did not know what it was, so I shared the national website with them so that they could learn more.”

Resource Assistant Jessica Ibarra interviews two members of the public near Trillium Lake on Mt. Hood. (USDA Forest Service photo by Alexa Pengelly).

Chris Bentley, Digital Media Specialist for the Pacific Northwest Region, compiled the interview clips into the final video in time to share for National Public Lands Day this past Saturday: "Our National Public Lands Day video turned out so much better because of the diversity of backgrounds, location, and
interests. It's amazing how much synergy can build when a team of dedicated individual join together around an important cause like celebrating our public lands."

Through the spirit of collaboration and teamwork, this shared effort allowed Region 6 interns and staff opportunities to learn from each other and to connect to diverse visitors and their multifold ways of connecting to nature more deeply.

The video is available on the U.S Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Vimeo website.

Strategic Goal: Excel as a High-Performing Agency