



**File Code:** 2320

**Date:** February 7, 2014

**Route To:**

**Subject:** Projects Selected for FY 2014 Strategic Investment Funding to Support the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge

**To:** Regional Foresters

This fiscal year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the conclusion of the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. When we started the challenge in 2004 only 10.8 percent of our wilderness areas met minimum standards. Today, thanks to your sustained interest and dedication, 84.5 percent of our wilderness areas meet minimum standards. Our goal is to have at least 90 percent meet standards at the end of fiscal year (FY) 2014. To do this, we need a concerted effort and your continued support. We are well within reach of our goal and won't it be wonderful to announce our success as we celebrate 50 years of wilderness and look forward to wilderness stewardship for the next 50 years!

I know each region has individually committed to meeting this goal and to fulfilling their responsibility. To help these efforts, we are providing \$2,514,150 in national strategic investment funding this fiscal year, using a mix of NFRW, NFVW/NFRR, NFIM, and WFPR funds. As in previous years, \$200,000 of this funding will be used as part of the National Forest Foundation's successful Wilderness Stewardship Challenge grant, with the remaining funds directed to implement priority projects in the regions and forests.

Project submissions for these funds remained high in both number and quality. A total of 120 proposals, for approximately \$3,300,000, were received. With the funds available, we are able to approve a total of 65 forest grants and 10 regional strike team proposals (see enclosures).

Funding for the approved projects will be distributed from the Washington Office to the regions through budget execution documents as soon as the initial regional allocations have been distributed. Regions may decide to proceed with funding the proposals before that time, with this letter as documentation of the Washington Office's commitment to fund the proposals detailed on the attachment.

All FY 2014 projects must be completed by September 30, 2014. This year, the due date for reporting is October 1, 2014. This timeframe is required to allow the Agency time to tally the final reporting results for announcement at the Wilderness Act's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, scheduled to begin on October 15, 2014.



Questions about the funding or reporting process should be directed to Steve Boutcher, at (802) 656-1718 or [sboutcher@fs.fed.us](mailto:sboutcher@fs.fed.us).

*/s/ Tony Tooke (for)*

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Enclosure

