

## 2014 Regional Forester Honor Awards



Golden Colorado  
 April 2, 2014

Dan Jirón, Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service announced the recipients of the 2013 Regional Forester Honor Awards. The Honor Awards recognize partner organizations and employees who significantly contribute to the U.S. Forest Service mission “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”

“National Forests and Grasslands in Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas are benefiting from the unparalleled work of these individuals and groups,” said Jirón. “The awards recognize the work we accomplish with our partners within the Forest Service’s regional priorities of *Ecosystem Restoration, Public Service, Safety and Inclusion.*”

## Inclusion

**Blanco Ranger District** - The Regional Forester’s 2013 Cultural Transformation Award recognizes the inclusive efforts of the White River National Forest’s Blanco Ranger District to partner with the Denver Indian Center and bring urban Native American youth to the National Forest to learn about natural resource careers. As part of the program, Native American students meet Forest Service biologists, and range, recreation and wildland fire staff. The students learn on-the-job skills in these natural resource areas through trail maintenance and other projects.



Cultural Transformation/Inclusion - Blanco Ranger District

(Left to right) Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Ken Coffin, Blanco District Ranger; Chuck Mills, Denver Indian Center; Jay Grimm, Denver Indian Center; Lynn Lockwood, Blanco Ranger District; Kasey Cox, Blanco Ranger District; Eileen Masquaat, Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor, White River National Forest; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



## Safety

**Josh Graham** - The Regional Forester’s 2013 Safety Award was presented to Josh Graham, assistant fire management officer for the White River National Forest. Graham was recognized for his efforts to research programs, develop training and secure equipment for extricating firefighters and others injured in the backcountry. Graham’s recognition that injury response time was related to equipment and training stemmed from a firefighter injury incident in Northern California. The Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit now has equipment and a medical training program in place to serve backcountry wildland firefighters.



Safety - Josh Graham

Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Chris Farinetti, Fire Management Officer; Josh Graham, Assistant Fire Management Officer; Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor, White River National Forest; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester





**Public Service - Native American Graves Repatriation Act MOU**

(Left to right) Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Tom Ford, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland recreation; Sue Struthers, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland archaeologist; Lois Witte, Office of General Counsel; Susan Johnson, Tribal Relations Program Manager; Rick Cooksey, Director of State and Private Forestry and Tribal Relations; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



**Public Service- Flood Impacts Assessment Team, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland**

(Left to right) Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Kevin Zimlinghaus, Deputy Incident Commander; Dick Edwards, Incident Commander; Glenn Casamassa, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland Forest Supervisor; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



# Public Service

**Native American Graves Repatriation Act MOU** - A Forest Service led collaborative group of tribal, state and federal agency members developing a process to respectfully implement the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 was recognized with a Regional Forester’s 2013 Public Service Award. An agreement signed last December by the Southern Ute Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, State of Colorado Lt. Governor’s Office, Colorado Natural Resources, Colorado Historic Preservation, BLM Colorado State Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Prairie-Mountain Region, National Park Service Intermountain Region and the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region facilitates the reburial of Native American ancestors across Colorado.

**Flood Impacts Assessment Team, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland** - The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland’s Flood Impacts Assessment Team was recognized with a Regional Forester’s 2013 Public Service Award for its work safely and successfully assessing damage from last September’s flood event. The team surveyed more than 600,000 acres including 600 miles of roads, 17 bridges, and 168 buildings. The Team’s report expedited the much needed repair of roads, bridges and facilities, and landslide stabilization and river and stream improvements.



**District of the Year - Pawnee National Grassland**

(Left to right) Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Glenn Casamassa, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland Forest Supervisor; Tristram Post, Actg. District Ranger; Lori Bell, District Ranger; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



# 2013 District of the Year

**Pawnee National Grassland** - The Pawnee National Grassland was recognized as the 2013 District of the Year for their employee efforts to partner with organizations to improve Forest Service relationships with Tribes, recreation facilities, oil and gas permit processing and prairie dog management. For example, the Pawnee National Grassland staff leveraged National Rifle Association and Colorado Parks and Wildlife grants to develop the new Baker Draw Designated Shooting Area. The shooting area’s thirty target shooting lanes provide a safe place for recreational shooting.

“From recreational shooting to oil and gas management to internationally known birding, the Pawnee National Grassland is a landscape full of opportunities. Those employees who care for the Grassland do so as if it is their own backyard and for that I am proud,” said Glenn Casamassa, Forest Supervisor for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland.

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**USDA FOREST SERVICE ● ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION**

- COLORADO: Arapaho Roosevelt NF & Pawnee NG ● Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, & Gunnison NFs
- Pike-San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron-Comanche NGs ● Rio Grande NF ● San Juan NF ● White River NF
- NEBRASKA: Nebraska & Samuel R. McKelvie NFs ● SOUTH DAKOTA: Black Hills NF
- WYOMING: Bighorn NF ● Medicine Bow-Routt NFs & Thunder Basin NG ● Shoshone NF

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Restoration – Kay Zillich

(Left to right) Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester, Kay Zillich, BLM and Forest Service abandoned mine coordinator; Kara Chadwick, Forest Supervisor, San Juan National Forest; Mary DeAgüero, Director of Engineering; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



Restoration – Gretchen Fitzgerald

(Left to right) Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Gretchen Fitzgerald, San Juan National Forest forester; Kara Chadwick, Forest Supervisor, San Juan National Forest; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



## Restoration & Resiliency

**Kay Zillich** --Kay Zillich, a shared Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service abandoned mine coordinator, along with several key partners were recognized for their efforts in restoring two fens affected by historic mining activities. A fen is a type of wetland that typically contain a rich diversity of plants. In southwest Colorado, the Chattanooga fen hosts a rare species of sphagnum moss, while the Ophir Pass fen was eroding metal-laden soils into an Animas River tributary. Durango Mountain Resort provided the initial funding for the project while the Mountain Studies Institute monitors the project.

**Gretchen Fitzgerald** - Gretchen Fitzgerald, a forester for the San Juan National Forest, was recognized with a Regional Forester's 2013 Restoration and Resiliency Award. Fitzgerald is responsible for leading climate change and carbon management activities for the National Forest and the BLM Tres Rios District. Her work leveraging \$1.2 million in National Forest Foundation grants for planting trees on 1,300 acres of forest affected by wildland fires is assisting in understanding climate change effects. Fitzgerald partnered with University of Colorado, Fort Lewis College and Mountain Studies Institute to study the pace and magnitude of climate change at the local level.

## 2013 Partner of the Year

**Trust for Public Land** - The Trust for Public Land (TPL) was recognized as the 2013 Regional Partner of the Year for their efforts to acquire a trail right-of-way to Wilson Peak – a popular 14,000 foot elevation peak in the San Juan Mountains. The TPL helped secure unrestricted public access to the summit via the Rock of Ages Trail. Through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the TPL was a key partner in acquiring Ophir Valley, a high-elevation valley south of Telluride.

"The Colorado office of The Trust for Public Land is thrilled to be recognized as the Rocky Mountain Region's 2013 Partner of the Year. With the help of dedicated folks at the Forest Service, we are proud to be improving public access to some of this Region's most wild and spectacular back-country," said Tim Wohlgenant, Colorado Director of The Trust for Public Land.



Partner of the Year- The Trust for Public Land (TPL)

(Left to right) Brian Ferebee, Deputy Regional Forester; Maribeth Gustafson, Deputy Regional Forester; Jim Bedwell, Director of Recreation, Lands and Minerals; Russ Bacon, TPL; Corey Wong, Pagosa District Ranger; Mike Herran, TPL; Hillary Merritt, TPL; Scott Armentrout, Forest Supervisor Grande Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests; Justin Spring, TPL; Dan Jirón, Regional Forester



### USDA FOREST SERVICE ● ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

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