

# SUCCESS STORIES

REPORTING EXAMPLES OF OUR PROGRESS IN CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE



## Singin' In the Rain

By [Gwyn Ingram](#) on Mar 3, 2010



Hansen in the black.



The hydrologist at home in a gully.

*A South Carolina hydrologist receives a national honor.*

Often a lifetime of service and achievement, however notable, seems quietly to come and go with only a few pats on the back along the way. Now and again, though, an individual is honored with the recognition he or she genuinely deserves.

Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests Hydrologist Bill Hansen has dedicated 35 years to forest hydrology and watershed management. In 2009 he received the USDA Forest Service's National Wagon Wheel Gap Award for excellence in hydrology for his outstanding level of achievement in the protection, improvement and restoration of surface and groundwater resources in national forest watersheds.

The award, named for the location of the first watershed experiment performed in the U.S. from 1910-1926 at the Wagon Wheel Gap Experimental Forest in Colorado, honors a Hydrologist of the Year from a field of USFS hydrologists and technicians nominated by national forests and grasslands across the United States. Hansen became familiar with the Wagon Wheel Gap Experiment, as it was sometimes called, while conducting experimental watershed research at the University of Missouri.

As the national forest hydrologist in South Carolina, Hansen has authored some 40 technical papers and publications over the course of his career. His workshop on gully control was presented twice at the International Erosion Control Association annual conference. He provided peer review to the NRCS National Engineering Handbook Part 654 on Stream Restoration Design, contributing portions on gully control.

An innovative leader in the Southern Region (Region 8) of the US Forest Service, Hansen identified and documented specific and emerging issues during the devastation of Hurricane Hugo that helped serve other forests facing similar disasters, such as hurricanes Andrew and Katrina. His contributions concerning the extent of small headwater streams have provided internal tools for both field and planning level identification and delineation.

Because of his contributions addressing the effects of wildfires during Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER), the Southern Region included Hansen in the training cadre for its 2009 BAER Team Leader and Member Workshop.

His efforts at the regional and national scales have included membership on the National BMP Road and Trail Team, and contributions to the National Water Strategy and to "Water, Climate Change and the Forest Service."

Additionally, Hansen's comments relative to national watershed condition assessment led to the selection of the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests as the Region 8 pilot to test the Performance Accomplishment Rating Tool for Watershed Condition (PART).

In his nomination, Hansen was noted for his strong ties and accomplishments in South Carolina with soil scientist and co-worker, Dennis Law. Referred to by peers as "Mud and Flood," they managed one of the largest soil and water improvement programs in the nation for over 25 years. Their work helped transform a severely eroded and locally gullied landscape, once referred to as "the lands that no one wanted," into a healthier and productive forest.

His contributions to the region in sharing ideas and transferring technology continue to exceed expectations. Receiving the award from Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief and Anne, Zimmerman, Director of Wildlife, Plants and Fish, Hansen thanked the many others at the district, forest, region and national levels who played an integral role in his success.

"Above all I'm grateful to my wife and family, who have endured living with someone passionate about his work," said Hansen. "My early outdoor interests and service to others I credit to my dad and Boy Scout activities in Omaha, Nebraska. Without those, I might never have realized my dream career with the US Forest Service."

His exceptional understanding of hydrologic, forest and ecosystem processes makes Bill Hansen an invaluable part of the forest and a key contributor to the agency effort. He has maintained a determination not only to leave a legacy, but especially, to give something back to the relatively young science.