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News Release



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Local volunteers receive regional recognition

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz., June 6, 2018, For Immediate Release – A local biking organization and volunteer recently received high praise and recognition from the Southwestern Regional Forester, who oversees management of the national forests in Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Texas.

As part of the Forest Service’s annual National Volunteer and Service Awards program, Southwestern Regional Forester Cal Joyner recognized nominees **Jim McGeorge** and also the **Flagstaff Biking Organization** for their contributions in fiscal 2017.

“This group of impressive citizens have willingly dedicated much of their time and talents to improving their public lands,” said Joyner. “[Jim McGeorge and the Flagstaff Biking Organization] have made a significant impact in the Southwestern Region, and we would like to thank you for your commitment to public lands.”

The awards program is divided into four categories, including *Enduring Service*, *Restoration*, *Leadership*, and *Citizen Stewardship and Partnerships*. McGeorge received regional recognition under the *Enduring Service* category for his many years of service to the Coconino National Forest. “Jim is our most dedicated volunteer—always reliable and willing to lend a hand,” said Paul Dawson, recreation forestry technician for the Flagstaff Ranger District. “He has dedicated over 15 years of service to this forest.”

The Flagstaff Biking Organization received regional recognition under the *Citizen Stewardship and Partnerships* category for its partnership with the national forest and efforts which raised interest about the outdoors and Forest Service mission. “Since its inception in 2002, the Flagstaff Biking Organization has been a valued partner of the Coconino National Forest,” said Brian Poturalski, recreation staff officer for the Flagstaff Ranger District. “They connect people to the outdoors and strengthen community interest through their trail advocacy and educational efforts. They have raised thousands of dollars to construct and maintain sustainable trails in the Flagstaff area and promote an active trail volunteer program to implement the Forest Service mission.”

In addition to these local special recognitions, recognition was also given to the Arizona Trail Association under the *Enduring Service* category for contributing more than 21,000 hours of volunteer work in fiscal 2017, which is equivalent to 11 full-time employees. The Arizona Trail Association enables the Forest Service, and other agencies who manage the Congressionally-designated 800-mile Arizona National Scenic Trail, to provide quality, sustainable recreation trail opportunities to the public and to improve, maintain, and preserve the trail for future generations.

On a national scale in fiscal 2017, the Forest Service engaged 115,000 volunteers and service participants across the nation. Together, they contributed 4.6 million hours, valued at \$111 million and equivalent to 2,560 full-time employees—nearly 10 percent of the Forest Service permanent workforce. The Southwestern Region recorded its highest engagement since 2009 with 10,907 volunteers and service participants contributing 631,348 hours of service valued at more than \$15 million, about 14 percent of the national total.

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