



Forest Service
Kaibab National Forest
800 S. 6th St.
Williams, AZ 86046
(928) 635-8200
www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab

News Release

Media Contact: Jacqueline Banks
jacqueline.banks@usda.gov
(928) 635-8314

Kaibab National Forest employee honored for innovative tribal partnerships

WILLIAMS, Ariz., Nov. 21, 2019 — A Kaibab National Forest employee was recently recognized for his excellent communication with local tribes and development of innovative tribal partnerships related to all aspects of forest management.

Mike Lyndon, who currently serves as the forest's tribal relations program manager, was the recipient of the Regional Forester's Partnership and Engagement Award for the Southwestern Region of the Forest Service. The award recognizes "effectively bridging the efforts of the Forest Service through collaboration with partners" and overcoming barriers "through valuable partnership agreements and innovative leadership," according to the nomination guidelines.

"I feel like I accepted the award on behalf of all of the Kaibab employees who work to develop and maintain our many partnerships with tribes," said Lyndon. "Strong relationships with tribes lead to better forest management and more opportunities for our agency to serve our neighboring communities. I feel really lucky to work with so many people who are dedicated to partnering with tribes to take care of our forests."

The list of Lyndon's accomplishments as part of his nomination was extensive, but several highlights emerged. One such highlight was Lyndon's work in 2018 to bring the Kaibab and Tonto National Forests' tribal relations programs together to partner with Northern Arizona University's Landscape Conservation Initiative. Lyndon and the project partners worked to develop a grant through the Forest Service CitiSci Competitive Funding Program.

The grant provides for a multi-year partnership to work with tribes on the identification and management of traditionally important plant resources by utilizing citizen scientists to collect data on high-value plant species. Tribes had advocated for such a project for years and specifically requested that the Forest Service improve monitoring and management of traditional use plants.





Another key accomplishment was inviting Hopi tribal leaders to join Kaibab National Forest managers in long-term monitoring of prescribed burn areas. This monitoring indicated that reintroduction of fire to the ecosystem is benefitting populations of traditionally important plants and increasing their availability for traditional use. According to his nomination, "These programs are vital, bolstering the Forest Service's awareness and responsiveness to tribes' traditional uses of the national forests."

Lyndon utilized partnerships to build programs that connect tribal youth with public lands as well as creating avenues for them to pursue employment with the Forest Service. He developed the Hopi Waters for Life Program in order to conduct collaborative spring restoration projects on the forest. Not only does this work help protect important waters, but it also highlights the ecological importance of natural springs as well as their cultural significance to tribes.

"I've been working alongside Mike since 2010. Since then, I've gotten to know him on a working level and a personal level," said Joel Nicholas, archaeologist for the Hopi tribe. "Mike really engages himself to come out and meet with community members and youth one-on-one. He'll drop everything he's doing to help tribes with any issues or potential projects. He's a really helpful resource on the Kaibab and generally a great guy."

Lyndon also facilitated partnerships with the Hopi Tribe's Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act office and Southern Utah University's Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative to provide Native American youth with opportunities to learn about careers in natural resources.

In 2018, the Kaibab and Tonto National Forests negotiated and implemented a new Master Participating Agreement with four tribes, setting in place a wide range of projects to support work as part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative. This agreement has since been replicated within other Forest Service regions as a template for collaborative restoration treatments with tribes.

"Mike has built a remarkable tribal relations program that embodies Forest Service values of innovation, public service and collaboration," said Heather Provencio, forest supervisor of the Kaibab National Forest. "Thanks to his passion for work with tribes, exceptional interpersonal skills, and talent for developing partnerships, the Kaibab's program is now viewed as a national standard."

The prestigious award was presented to Lyndon by Southwestern Regional Forester Cal Joyner at a ceremony in Albuquerque this past summer. Lyndon recently accepted a position at Grand Canyon National Park as a tribal relations specialist and will be starting next month.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.





Partnership & Engagement Award

2018 Regional Forester's Awards

Mike Lyndon

