

# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest Region



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## Three California Winners of Chief's Awards Recognizing Volunteerism on National Forests

VALLEJO, Calif., Aug. 3, 2009 – Three of this year's prestigious national awards for volunteerism in the Forest Service went to Pacific Southwest Region awardees. Recipients are Tim Wood of Coldwell Banker-The Tim Wood Group and The Lighthouse Project in the Corporate/ Private Business volunteer category for continued sponsorship of music and youth programs on the San Bernardino National Forest; Jeff Gumpertz in the Youth Volunteer category, for his work with Children's Forest on the San Bernardino National Forest; and Debra Clark, who is honored in the Forest Service Employee category for working diligently with volunteers on the Cleveland National Forest. Chris Pratt, also of the San Bernardino National Forest, received Honorable Mention for his work as a volunteer training other volunteers.

"Winning the Chief's awards is a significant honor that highlights the important work accomplished by volunteers around the region," said Randy Moore, Regional Forester.

Since working for the Forest Service, employee honoree Debra Clark has helped grow the volunteer workforce on the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest from approximately 70 volunteers to over 450 volunteers.

"Debra's effort in furthering the long-standing history of recruiting and training volunteers has resulted in significantly reducing the backlogged maintenance for two developed sites on the district," said Keith Fletcher, District Ranger. "We're pleased she's receiving this much deserved recognition."

On the San Bernardino National Forest, there are over 1,500 volunteers, ranging in age from 11 on up. Youth honoree, Jeff Gumpertz, 13, has volunteered for over a year with the Children's Forest, a youth volunteer program managed by the San Bernardino National Forest Association, a non-profit partner to the forest.

"As a volunteer, Jeff's learning at a young age how to be a good steward of the forest by helping to operate the visitor information center, lead nature hikes and tours, fix hiking and biking trails, and plant trees in the burned areas of the forest," said Allison Bates, Program Director of the Children's Forest.

Recently, Jeff had the winning design for the volunteer t-shirt contest with a compelling shirt encouraging people to “give back.” This summer, volunteers are seen working on the trails in Jeff’s designed t-shirt, serving as a constant reminder to be an active part of the community.

Knowing well how to give back, Corporate/Private Business volunteer honoree, Tim Wood of Coldwell Banker - The Tim Wood Group and The Lighthouse Project has been a multi-year funder and supporter of the Music in the Mountains Amphitheater program at the Big Bear Discovery Center on the San Bernardino National Forest.

“The financial support has helped cover talent expenses for this venue where we can then outreach and highlight our volunteer opportunities to thousands of visitors that not only enjoy the music, but then also enlist for volunteer service on the forest, such as tree planting or youth programs,” said Sarah Miggins, Executive Director of the San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA).

To further this effort, the SBNFA and The Lighthouse Project have formed a mountain community collaborative with a joint mission to improve the quality of life for all community members and visitors through outdoor music, education, recreation and volunteer opportunities that leverage the unique assets of the mountain communities of the San Bernardino National Forest.

“The San Bernardino National Forest is fortunate to have the vast contributions we get through volunteer service,” said Jeanne Wade Evans, Forest Supervisor. “The forest benefits and the volunteers benefit in knowing the great work they’ve done in sharing in the care for this great land for future generations to come.”

Awardees received national recognition from the Chief of the Forest Service and were awarded plaques for their outstanding volunteer contributions in furthering the mission of the agency.

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