

News Release
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USDA FOREST SERVICE HOSTS LARGEST ONE-DAY VOLUNTEER EFFORT FOR NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26, 2009 - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service will join the public and roll up their sleeves for the largest hands-on nationwide volunteer effort to improve America's public lands. The 16th annual National Public Lands Day, sponsored by the National Environmental Education Foundation with the support of 8 federal agencies, focuses on educating the public about the importance of natural resources and the need for shared stewardship on these lands.

"Our nation's forests are incredible assets that have major economic, environmental, and social significance for all Americans," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Forests are sources of clean abundant water, fish and wildlife habitat, carbon storage, and a wide array of recreational activities for all to enjoy. But they are in need of restoration and conservation. It is essential that we reconnect Americans across the nation with the natural resources and the landscapes that sustain us. By working together we will restore forests, making them more resilient to climate change while protecting critical water resources and improving overall forest health."

Healthy water resources are vital to public lands and are a focus of this year's National Public Lands Day events. Volunteers will be able to participate in activities such as restoring fish and wildlife habitat, testing water quality in streams and rivers, cleaning up rivers, lakes and wetlands, and planting vegetation near bodies of water.

The Forest Service has approximately 96 project sites for volunteer initiatives across the country. Highlights of these projects include:

George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, Virginia

The event at Camp Roosevelt Recreation Area, the nation's first Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp, will be a day of service with partners, enhancing and restoring the recreation area. Special emphasis will be placed on collaboration efforts for the benefit of America's forests.

The Angeles National Forest, Lower Big Tujunga Canyon, California

The Angeles National Forest has planned a day-long event that provides opportunities for service to America's public lands and celebrates connecting children with nature. The day begins at the Los Angeles Zoo, launching the Forest Service partnership with renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman and his Get to Know program. The event then moves to the Tujunga Canyon for stream restoration activities.

The Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest and Pawnee National Grassland, Colorado

This comprehensive event focuses on volunteer activities that will restore watersheds and lessen the effects of climate change within a high-use urban forest. A reforestation project will occur at Lake Granby where volunteers will plant trees in areas devastated by pine beetle infestations. Other volunteers will work to improve wildlife habitats along a new motorized trail.

Deschutes National Forest, Oregon

This event, located on the Whychus Creek, will include land and water restoration projects such as plantings, cleaning of trails and streams, and improvement to recreation areas.

Uinta National Forest, Diamond Fork Youth Forest, Utah

The Diamond Fork Youth Forest is designed to provide opportunities for youth to serve public lands and connect them to nature. The event includes the installation of trail signs and the rehabilitation and maintenance of trails.

Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, Washington

Volunteers will work on the Marble Mountain Sno Pak to improve trails, repair recreation facilities, and do litter removal.

Chugach National Forest, Alaska

At this location, the accomplishments of the first year of the Children's Forest will be celebrated. Special focus will be on climate change and the roles that every person can make. The event helps to prepare future community and land management leaders.

In 2008, 120,000 volunteers built trails and bridges, removed trash and planted over 1.6 million trees throughout the country. This year's event promises to be even more successful. In recognition of the day, fees will be waived at hundreds of recreation sites on public lands nationwide. The Forest Service will also host recreational activities and stewardship projects at over 60 sites across the country.

The Mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the need of present and future generations. The Forest Service manages approximately 193 million acres of public lands across 155 national forests and 22 grasslands. For more information about National Public Lands Day or the Forest Service, visit: www.publiclandsday.org or www.fs.fed.us