NEWS

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2016 LEGENDS AWARD WINNERS RECOGNIZED BY ARC

Washington, D.C. (June 7, 2016) – The American Recreation Coalition presented its 2016 Legends Awards to eight federal managers in recognition of outstanding efforts to improve outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities for the American people. The Awards were presented on June 2, 2016 during Great Outdoors Month® - ARC’s celebration of the value and importance of outdoor recreation. Initiated by ARC in 1991, the Legends Award program invites key federal agencies to nominate an individual whose extraordinary efforts have enhanced outdoor recreation programs and resources.

The 2016 Legends Award recipients represent the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Federal Highway Administration, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Together, these agencies host more than a billion visitors annually. 2016’s Legends Awards winners are: Jim Bedwell, U.S. Forest Service; Jim Goodbar and Gary Pritchard-Peterson, Bureau of Land Management; Laurie Gonzales, Fish & Wildlife Service; Kerri Cahill, National Park Service; Susan Law, Federal Highway Administration, Bill Martin, Bureau of Reclamation and Tamara Schroeder, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Jim Bedwell is the Director of Recreation, Lands and Minerals for the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service. Joining the Forest Service in 1979, he served in landscape architecture and recreation management positions in the western U.S. and Puerto Rico prior to being selected as Chief Landscape Architect in 1996. In that role, Jim was a key advocate for outdoor recreation accessibility, scenic byways, scenery management, and the timely delivery of tools and resources to the agency’s more than 300 landscape architects. He was a leader in the development of the Forest Service’s “Built Environment Image Guide,” the first national design guide for the agency since the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. In 2006, Jim was named the National Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources, where he used his leadership and collaborative skills to develop a “Framework for Sustainable Recreation,” and set ambitious goals for the National Forest System to achieve in building up the capacity of recreation

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Jim Goodbar is the Senior Cave/Karst Specialist at the Bureau of Land Management’s Carlsbad Field Office in southeastern New Mexico, where he has worked for nearly 35 years. He is also the Washington Office lead for Cave/Karst. Jim is known nationally and internationally for his caving skills, knowledge and intense passion for the resource. He is an explorer, instructor, author of national cave policy, has served on numerous boards, and has appeared in all forms of media promoting knowledge about caves and cave stewardship and the importance of giving them proper respect as a natural resource. He has located, mapped, surveyed and inventoried hundreds of caves and karst features. He was a pioneer in the enactment of the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act of 1988 and was instrumental in establishing the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in Carlsbad. He works with cavers and caving grottos locally and across the country. This interaction creates cohesiveness among cavers and the BLM while ensuring responsible caving and protection of the resource. Jim has taken cave outreach and education to a whole new level. In the early 70’s, he had a vision of creating a portable cave that could be taken “on the road” to teach the public, especially youth, about the fragile environment of this unique resource. This exhibit worked well for several years but the logistics of hauling and setting up were a challenge. As technology evolved, Jim began exploring more portable options for a cave exhibit. Inspired by huge inflatable bounce houses and other inflatable party rentals for children, he researched the possibilities for a portable cave made with similar technology. After years of research and collaboration with various companies, BLM’s portable cave exhibit came to life in early 2000. It has three passageways complete with formations, bats, interpretive flip-up signs and air flow. Thanks to Jim’s vision, more than 100,000 children and adults have experienced the cave exhibit. He also has a long-term partnership with the National Outdoor Leadership School and many institutions of higher learning. Jim is known among his colleagues and friends as the “Cave Guy.” If you want to know anything about caves, caving (it is not referred to as spelunking because real cavers rescue spelunkers) or anything related to caves, the Cave Guy is the one to contact. He truly is a living legend in the world of caves.

Gary Pritchard-Peterson is the Manager of the King Range National Conservation Area (NCA) in Arcata, California. Serving in this position for the past 24 years, Gary has provided
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outstanding leadership to expand recreational opportunities while protecting and restoring natural resource values at the Nation's first designated NCA. Gary has demonstrated exceptional skill in building partnerships and coalitions to enhance recreational facilities and experiences for a variety of visitors, including hikers, hunters, surfers, students, anglers, mountain bikers, artists and campers. He has established new campgrounds and trails, including a world-class network of mountain bike trails through rugged terrain with stunning vistas that skillfully melds a backcountry riding experience with sustainable construction techniques. He has effectively managed the growing visitor use on the iconic Lost Coast Trail, setting the stage to implement a new permit system that will better manage the number and timing of visits. He nurtured the development of an exemplary outdoor education and interpretation program with local schools and communities, to ensure that youth have an opportunity to learn about and enjoy the majestic King Range, as well as an internship program that exposes local youth to conservation careers and helps break prevalent cycles of substance abuse. He collaborated with community groups to implement watershed restoration projects for the recovery of salmon and their habitat. He led the development of a Resource Management Plan, Wilderness Management Plan and, more recently, a Business Plan that will set the course for the future stewardship of the King Range NCA. Gary is a hands-on leader who is as comfortable driving a dump truck and fighting wildfires as he is talking in front of a large group about the wonders of the King Range. His consistent, dedicated presence in the community, which had a long history of not being friendly toward the federal government’s presence, has resulted in a positive view of the BLM that has been instrumental in the agency’s success in achieving its conservation and recreation mission in the NCA. As he prepares for his retirement in June, Gary can proudly reflect on a legacy of stewardship projects and relationships that will benefit generations to come.

Laurie Gonzales is the Wildlife Biologist for the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. As a Wildlife Biologist, Laurie’s duties include the control of invasive species, surveys of birds, amphibians, reptiles and bats, and putting together maps for habitat conservation. She is also involved in all aspects of visitor services, including helping partners carry out research on the Refuge and nearby Trinity River. She works closely with student interns and volunteers, guiding and empowering them through effective refuge management programs and then assisting them in finding meaningful employment. Laurie’s resourcefulness and drive power her labor-of-love efforts to build programs that help the community and youth grow through nature. In 2010, she recognized that the Refuge and the neighboring city of Liberty had overlapping boundaries, offering an opportunity to partner on an outdoor recreational network that would connect the public with nature. She established an ambitious program entitled “From Crosswalks to Boardwalks” with the goal of creating 29 miles of hiking trails, 4½ miles of paddling trails, and five miles of bicycle routes on 3,000 acres of the refuge and within the city. Two-track roads and rights-of-way on the Refuge were connected with levees, parks and roads in the city through newly constructed primitive trails leading to scenic areas and secluded wetlands. The bicycle route connected people to trailheads, grocery stores, city infrastructure and local schools. She also found the resources to build a boardwalk and observation deck that traverses 500 feet of wetlands and Palmer Bayou, creating a space for interpretive events and a shaded resting/photography area for hikers. Laurie’s next project is adding environmental education opportunities in partnership with local school districts, the Texas Forest Service and Project Learning Tree in which core curriculum will be taught to children.

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within the confines of the forest. This program will be the first official environmental education program that the refuge has offered in 22 years. She is also creating a tree-planting program this winter in which areas that have been treated for invasive species will be replanted with native bare-root seedlings by children from local schools. Working to spread the message that “Refuges are for people as well as wildlife, water and habitat conservation,” Laurie has indeed found a way to get visitors from crosswalks to boardwalks.

Kerri Cahill is the Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner with the National Park Service’s Denver Service Center, where she has been an innovator and leader for outdoor recreation management. A true collaborator and visionary, Kerri has chaired and led the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council since it was chartered in 2011 to develop consistent interagency guidance for visitor use management, including visitor capacity, and to enhance best practices, interagency consistency, cost effectiveness, and the defensibility of decisions related to visitor use management. Its membership includes the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Kerri’s patience, facilitation and problem-solving capabilities have generated significant guidance and effective strategies for sustainably managing recreation use on parks and public lands across the nation. Her diligence, leadership and professionalism have inspired innovation and enhanced understanding by the agencies of the value, benefits and relevance of outdoor recreation both in land management and in maintaining high-quality experiences and opportunities for the public. Her coworkers, team and council members cite and recognize her passion and thoughtful approach in everything she does. She is widely recognized as an expert in the field of park, recreation and visitor use management both nationally and internationally. Kerri leads the NPS Visitor Use Management Team and supports agency public engagement and planning efforts across the country. She is highly respected by her staff and all who work with her. She is sought after as a supervisor and a mentor. Her team and the council members deeply appreciate her leadership style, kind spirit, and her consistent guidance to improve the field of visitor use management, and to share this good work with other practitioners across the nation and around the world. Kerri received much support and outstanding recommendations from colleagues and many others. She greatly deserves recognition as a leader in the field of outdoor recreation.

Susan Law is the Planning Team Leader in Western Federal Lands for the Federal Highway Administration. She is actively involved in a wide variety of planning activities and consistently demonstrates leadership, seeks creative solutions, and develops partnerships in everything she does. She has been involved in “Nationally Significant” projects to improve transportation access in Glacier National Park, Grand Canyon National Park and Mt. Hood National Forest. She has also fostered access opportunities in small rural communities, which while on a smaller scale, are just as significant to those communities and the users of those Federal Lands. As a National Park Service Transportation Planner, she was instrumental in the planning and development of the alternative transportation efforts to support Glacier National Park’s Going to the Sun Road rehabilitation project. The resulting shuttle system – which won a Beacon Award in 2008 – exceeded predicted ridership during the first year of operation thanks to the effective partnerships that were created under Susan’s leadership. She was a key member of the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan, a multi-jurisdictional effort in Oregon focused on strategies to increase travel options and improve safety. She was instrumental in developing (more)
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an implementation plan that would make an impact quickly. She has also encouraged the consideration of multi-modal projects in the Federal Lands Access Program created by MAP-21. Her efforts have provided six transit systems in Oregon, Washington, and Montana with the ability to offer additional service to access Federal Lands. Susan has been a champion for bike sharing and promoting bicycle access to Federal Lands, publishing “Bicycling Options for Federal Lands: Bike Sharing, Rentals and Employee Fleets.” She is currently working on a partnership effort between Oregon Department of Transportation and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to provide transit to one of the most visited locations in Oregon, Multnomah Falls. Susan’s positive influence extends beyond Western Federal Lands and FHWA. Her proactive, thoughtful, thorough, and transparent interaction with multiple Federal, State, and local partners on the wide range of activities that she touches has created an extremely high level of cooperation and trust with many partners. Susan has been a tremendous leader in improving recreation access to Federal Lands.

Bill Martin is the Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Resource Management Office of the Bureau of Reclamation’s Lower Colorado Region (LCR). He has been with Reclamation for 38 years in three different regions. He has actively worked to expand and enhance recreation opportunities in the LCR and connect the nation’s youth to the great outdoors. Bill has helped to design and build a number of local recreation facilities, including, in recent years: the Laughlin Colorado River Heritage Park and Trails; Wetlands Park; River Mountains Loop Trail; Historic Railroad Trail; Logandale Off-Road Vehicle Trail; and accessible public fishing facilities at Lake Havasu. At the same time, he has continued to provide outdoor education improvements at existing regional facilities, including facilities that he had helped to design and build earlier. All of these facilities, which are heavily used by the recreating public and provide many new opportunities for student and other youth engagement, were made possible by Bill’s skill in building formal and informal partnerships. A great example of his use of partnerships is related to the recent designation of the National Blue Water Trail below Hoover Dam. Bill worked in partnership with the National Park Service and the Outside Las Vegas Foundation to develop the Lower Colorado River Water Trail Alliance, a partnership consisting of Federal, State, and local entities as well as nonprofit organizations and for-profit river outfitters, to support the designation, improvement of access, and information on the Blue Water Trail. During the summer of 2015, the Alliance sponsored four different YMCA summer youth programs at Lake Mohave for a day. The Alliance hopes to make the event an annual occurrence. In another example, Bill recently helped an outfitter open a horseback riding and wagon ride operation in Laughlin, Nevada by working with the outfitter and the Town Manager’s Office to identify and permit an appropriate route across Reclamation-managed lands. This new form of tourism is expected to provide economic benefits to Laughlin and the Tristate area. For the past seven years, Bill has also been the project coordinator for youth conservation work in the Lower Colorado Region, identifying, funding, and working directly with conservation corps crews. Bill, who received the Legends Award for the Bureau of Reclamation in 2006, is the first person to win the Legends Award twice. Some Legends just keep getting better.

Tamara Schroeder serves as Park Manager for the Willamette Valley Project in the Portland District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She has worked tirelessly and productively to build a cohesive recreation program across the Willamette Valley, a system of 13 multi-purpose dams and reservoirs and 63 parks spread over a wide geographic area in western Oregon.
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During her 25-year career with the Corps, she has made improving visitor experiences, community involvement and partnerships her primary goals. She consistently works to achieve facility improvements, collaborative partnering, public safety and awareness, and resource stewardship. She also shares her knowledge by serving as a national Visitor Assistance instructor for the Corps. Tami’s leadership has been transformational to the Willamette Valley Project. Despite facing increasing fiscal constraints and challenging management dilemmas, she has found ways to provide significant improvements benefitting the public through partnerships and innovative management tools. A particularly significant partnership with Linn County Parks resulted in a Federal Land Access Program grant worth more than $6 million that will be used to improve roadways, add parking areas, and enhance other visitor facilities. Other enhancements that have been undertaken include installing a campground amphitheater, replacing failing restrooms, providing full-service volunteer camp sites, and improving accessibility for visitors. Tami engages in community partnerships to improve recreation opportunities and address recreation trends, tourism and marketing, volunteer recruitment, regional law enforcement and stewardship issues. For example, she initiated and serves on the Willamette Valley Inter-Agency Recreation Providers Team, which meets annually to improve communication and relationships with other recreation providers and law enforcement agencies. This excellent forum, a team-building model for networking, brainstorming solutions and sharing lessons learned, has been emulated by other Corps projects. Tamara Schroeder has proven herself to be a well-respected, strong and influential advocate of recreation within the Natural Resources Management program for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Pictures of the Legends award recipients are available at http://www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org/#!gallery/component_9350.

American Recreation Coalition – is a nonprofit, Washington-based association providing a unified voice for recreation interests on issues such as public land management. ARC’s membership is more than 100 organizations, including national and regional associations and corporations that represent a major share of the $650 billion a year recreation/leisure industry and enthusiast groups representing millions of recreationists. Since 1979, ARC has forged public-private partnerships to enhance and protect outdoor recreation opportunities and resources. ARC conducts research, organizes national meetings and disseminates information, including through its website www.funoutdoors.com. ARC plays a leading role in key coalitions, including the Coalition for Recreational Trails, and leads efforts to celebrate June as Great Outdoors Month including National Get Outdoors Day, a national effort to invite children to enjoy healthy, active outdoor lives.