

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service



Sharing the Commitment: Partnerships for Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants on our National Forests



Chief's Message

Ten years ago, some far-sighted sports enthusiasts joined in partnerships with the Forest Service to improve habitat for wildlife and fish on some of our national forests. That initial effort took root and blossomed. Today, programs such as **Get Wild!**, **Rise to the Future**, **Every Species Counts**, and **NatureWatch** constitute a dynamic alliance. Conservation groups, industry, individuals, corporations, educational institutions, and other government agencies join with us to improve and restore habitat for wildlife and fish, and recover and conserve rare species of plants and animals.

All across the Nation, people are awakening to the fact that we can and should raise our voices and lend our backs to the conservation and restoration of our rich wildlife and fish legacy. This publication briefly summarizes how over 3,400 partners—from Audubon clubs to Zuni Indians—worked side by side with Forest Service people at all levels on over 2,100 projects in 1996. By teaming up, we improve habitats, host exciting informational and educational programs, and provide unparalleled recreation opportunities for forest visitors.

Since 1986, the Challenge Cost-Share program has raised over \$150 million in partner dollars to match \$112 million in Forest Service expenditures to help restore wildlife and fish habitat. These partnerships not only make fiscal sense, they make ecological sense. We all want healthy watersheds, open space, productive soils, and a rich diversity of plants, fish, and wildlife. If we are to maintain and restore the health of the land, we must work together. The partnerships reported here share a common theme. They demonstrate that people of good will—be they anglers, ranchers, hunters, miners, or recreation users—can come together to reconnect their social and cultural values to the land that sustains them. Partnerships are a critical tool in our effort to maintain the ecosystems essential for supporting healthy populations of squirrels and elk, turkeys and neotropical migratory birds, cutthroat trout and endangered suckers, Douglas-fir and prairie fringed orchids.

I call this commitment to working with people to restore the health of the land "collaborative stewardship." Call it what you will—it's simply common sense. As conservationist Aldo Leopold once wrote, "the only progress that really counts is that on the landscape of the back forty." Everywhere we turn, we can see such on-the-ground successes benefiting our Nation's irreplaceable fish, wildlife, and rare plants.



Mike Dombeck
Chief, USDA Forest Service

Diverse Resources Provide...

Our 156 national forests and 20 national grasslands produce more than trees and grass, lumber and cattle. They harbor a treasure trunk of sparkling habitat gems—from subarctic tundra to tropical rainforests. These natural communities shelter more than 3,000 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, insects, amphibians, and 10,000 species of plants. A sample of the resources includes:

- ▶ More than 2 million acres of lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; about 200,000 miles of streams; and 16,500 miles of coastline.
- ▶ Half the remaining spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead trout in the lower 48 States.
- ▶ Eighty percent of the Nation's habitat for elk, wild sheep, and mountain goats; over 37 million acres of turkey and quail habitat.
- ▶ Over 191 million acres of wildlands providing unparalleled opportunities for hiking, wildlife watching, nature study, and photography.
- ▶ Habitat for over 250 species of neotropical migratory birds.

Elk in Montana

PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL



The National Forest System also provides essential habitat for such endangered species as the grizzly bear, mountain golden heather, northern spotted owl, and Snake River chinook salmon. We have designated more than 2,500 "sensitive species." These plants and animals warrant special stewardship to prevent them from joining the Federal list of threatened and endangered species. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

FS PHOTO



Western Pond Turtle Surveys on West Fork Chiquito Creek, Minarets Ranger District, Sierra National Forest, California

PHOTO BY SANDY FROST



Fish Printing, Cordova Ranger District, Chugach National Forest, Alaska

...Unparalleled Uses

Wildlife and fish resources on the national forests and grasslands benefit local communities economically:

- ▶ Over 36 million activity days of recreational fishing, with nearly \$2 billion spent in local communities. About 150-200 million pounds of commercially harvested fish, valued at \$212 million.
- ▶ Over 16 million activity days of hunting, with nearly \$630 million spent in local communities.
- ▶ Over 33 million activity days of wildlife watching, including photography and nature study, with nearly \$1.8 billion spent in local communities.

These activities generated nearly 140,000 jobs related to natural resource recreation and tourism goods and services, which produced an estimated \$3.6 billion in net public benefits. Countless indirect economic benefits stem from healthy forests and watersheds. Clean and plentiful waters translate to savings in treating domestic water supplies and a reliable water supply. Healthy forests assure habitat for nearly 30 percent of all federally listed species, productive soils, protected wetland and riparian habitats, and abundant fish and wildlife for hunting, fishing, and viewing.

PHOTO BY KATHY BURNETT



Tuolumne Fawn Lily, Stanislaus National Forest, California

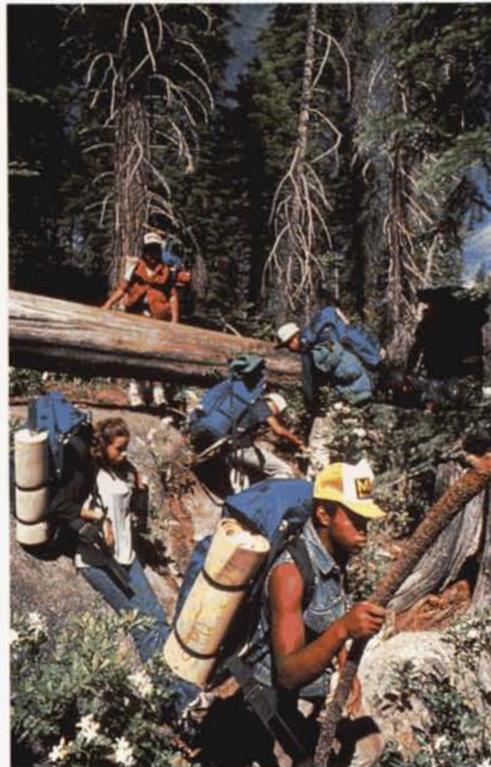


PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL

Nature Hikes

Success through Teamwork

The Challenge Cost-Share (CCS) Program offers State agencies and private organizations the chance to share both the costs, management, and benefits of fish, wildlife, and rare plant resources. Forest Service CCS funds appropriated by Congress must be matched by contributions of money, labor, equipment, and technical skill from conservation groups, private enterprises, educational institutions, individuals, or other public agencies.

In 1996, our partners helped us leverage \$15.9 million of appropriated funds into \$44 million of activities to benefit wildlife, fish, and rare plants. People, too, ultimately benefit from assuring a healthy environment.

As the environmental awareness of our stakeholders becomes increasingly sophisticated, so do the projects undertaken and the skill levels our partners bring to them. Terms such as ecosystem management, stewardship, and sustainable populations are now routine in our partners' vocabularies. Fish, wildlife, and plants are viewed as interrelated members of complex communities. Projects that strengthen these communities have the best long-term payoffs.

An amazing synergy is taking place as new partners join in. Along with the hunting, fishing, and nature-oriented groups, our partners now include grazing associations, off-highway vehicle users, miners, and utility companies. Constructive teamwork toward shared goals benefits wildlife, fish, and rare plants far more than confrontation over different types of activities. Interagency cooperation at all levels of government stretches tax dollars too. Our partners include 44 State fish and wildlife agencies, 43 State Natural Heritage Inventory Programs, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and over 16 Native American Tribal Governments, and thousands of private and corporate businesses.

Robert Frost Trail, Green Mountain National Forest, Vermont

PHOTO BY RICK WYMAN



PHOTO BY ROB LOWE



Banding Leach's Storm-Petrel Chicks

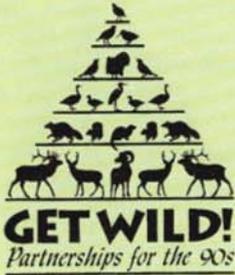


PHOTO BY GAIL TUNBERG

Preparing for Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Reintroduction in Upper Cebolla Creek, Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico

A Framework for Cooperation

Forest Service partnerships are essential to the health and productivity of fish, wildlife, and rare plants on national forests and grasslands. Four program areas help to focus efforts to take best advantage of partner expertise.



Get Wild! A national venture to manage habitat for all forms of wildlife.



Every Species Counts. A national effort to recover threatened and endangered species, and conserve sensitive species.



Rise to the Future! A national program that emphasizes improving fisheries and aquatic habitat, and recreational, commercial, and subsistence fishing opportunities.



NatureWatch. A national program uniting Eyes on Wildlife, FishWatch, and Celebrating Wildflowers: offering nature viewing opportunities; encouraging safe and sound viewing ethics; and contributing to local communities.

PHOTO BY GAY IPPOLITO



Jakes Event, National Forests in Texas



PHOTO BY SUE JENNINGS

Petersburg High School Students Learn To Use a Fish Key, Stikine Area, Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, Alaska

Get Wild!

1996 HIGHLIGHTS

▶ Aerial photos suggest that about half the quaking aspen stands in the Beartooth District of Montana's Custer National Forest have become decadent and are being lost to conifer encroachment. But dense seedling/sapling stages are important to ruffed grouse for courtship, nesting, and brood rearing. The Ruffed Grouse Society; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; and the Yellowstone Chapter of the National Audubon Society joined with the forest in an ongoing project to regenerate these aspen communities through harvesting and prescribed fire in patterns that will encourage dense sprouting from aspen root systems. Treated areas are being monitored to track changes in how grouse use the habitat.

▶ Prescribed fire has become the tool of choice for improving foraging areas for elk and bighorn sheep in the Rocky Mountain Region. Fires, sometimes set by helitorch in hard-to-reach terrain, rejuvenate decadent shrub stands, and improve uphill slopes to spread out foraging use by big game. The Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming and the White River National Forest in Colorado carried out prescribed burns in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Foundation for Wild Sheep, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Monitoring shows vigorous postburn growth of desirable forage plants.

▶ Although improving waterfowl nesting and brood-rearing habitat were the primary objectives of a wetland project on the Colville National Forest, Washington, many secondary objectives were also accomplished. Volunteers from Ducks Unlimited, the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council, and the Kalispell Tribe, with equip-

From songbirds to majestic elk, the national forests and grasslands harbor the greatest diversity of wildlife under any single ownership nationwide. Launched in 1988, the *Get Wild!* program complements efforts to manage and enhance these precious wildlife resources. Within the framework of this program, the Forest Service cooperates with State and Federal agencies, as well as wildlife interest groups, to inventory and improve habitats, survey and monitor wildlife populations, provide educational and interpretive programs for forest users, and protect special habitats, such as snags and riparian areas.

Get Wild! is made up of 10 public interest programs:

- ▶ *Partners in Flight* for neotropical migratory bird conservation,
- ▶ *Taking Wing* for waterfowl,
- ▶ *Making Tracks* for wild turkeys,
- ▶ *Answer the Call* for quail,
- ▶ *Full Curl* for wild sheep,
- ▶ *A Million Bucks* for deer,
- ▶ *Dancers in the Forest* for grouse and woodcock,
- ▶ *Animal Inn* for wildlife dependent upon dead wood,
- ▶ *Ecosystem Management/Restoration and Special Habitats* for unique species groups and communities, and
- ▶ *Elk Country* for elk.

It is within these public interest programs that the Forest Service and its partners team up to restore, maintain, or improve habitat for wildlife.

PHOTO BY NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION



Turkey
Hunting



Bighorn Sheep

PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL



FOREST SERVICE PHOTO

Warblers Are One of the
Many Birds that Benefit
from the Neotropical
Migratory Bird Partnership
Program

1996 HIGHLIGHTS

ment support from the U.S. Air Force, modified existing small ponds for waterfowl and other wetland species. They also planted trees and shrubs, created snags for use by primary cavity-nesting birds, placed small nest boxes for secondary cavity-nesters, fenced riparian areas, thinned encroaching conifers, and closed an old road—truly a multidisciplinary project. The project is part of a continuing effort to improve small wetland and riparian areas on the Colville.

▶ The Devil Fire in 1994 seriously impacted important turkey and quail habitat on the San Bernardino National Forest, California. Bulldozer lines built to fight the fire, and subsequent illegal vehicular traffic on a closed road created added impacts. The National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Unlimited, and Kimbark Elementary School students joined with forest personnel to minimize damage and speed recovery of the area. They collected native plant seeds, germinated and raised plants in containers at the Big Bear Native Plant Nursery, and planted critical areas. Some 300 native grass and shrub plants now are healing bulldozer scars and creating cover for turkeys and quail. Another 500 were planted and fenced to re-close the roadbed.

▶ Ornithologists from Cornell University surveyed Finger Lakes National Forest, Vermont, pasture lands and newly acquired agricultural lands for presence of Henslow's and grasshopper sparrows, northern harriers, bobolinks, and other grassland species. Forest Service representatives then met with the ornithologists and the Hector Grazing Association to jointly design pasture maintenance and cattle use patterns to address concerns about nesting birds. About 1,800 acres were surveyed and received management "tailoring" that considered songbird reproduction and grazing efficiency.



PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL

Aspen Forest,
Inyo National Forest,
California

GET WILD!

1996 EXPENDITURES

Total Budget: \$28.25 Million

Total Challenge Cost-Share Program

Forest Service contributions: \$4.68 million

Partner contributions: \$8.04 million

1996 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Challenge Cost-Share Program

201,149 acres of habitat improved

5,895 structures completed

2,891,181 acres of habitat inventoried

Other funds (non-partnerships)

445,109 acres restored or enhanced

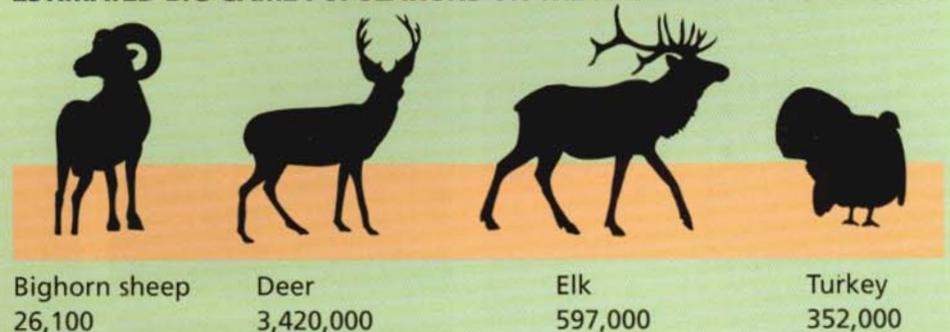
9,807 structures completed

6,211,531 acres inventoried

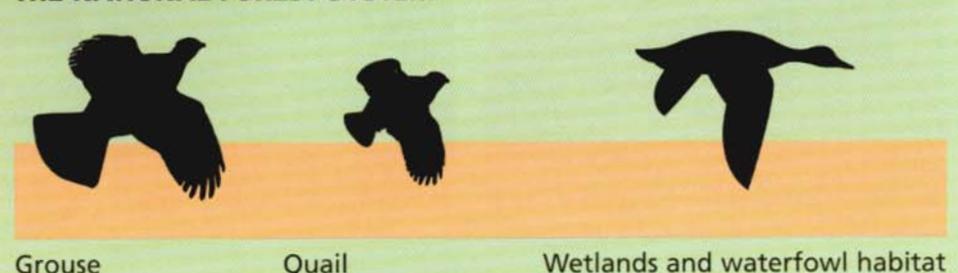


Number of Challenge Cost-Share projects completed: 947

ESTIMATED BIG GAME POPULATIONS ON THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM



ESTIMATED OCCUPIED HABITAT ON THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM



Every Species Counts

1996 HIGHLIGHTS

▶ Zimmerman Lake in Colorado's Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest is well on its way to becoming a reliable, easily accessible source of broodstock for the threatened greenback cutthroat trout. Most of a non-native arctic grayling population were transplanted to a larger, downstream reservoir by personnel of the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Remaining grayling and other non-natives in the reservoir were eliminated before 1,500 hatchery-reared greenback trout were released in the lake. The greenbacks, feeding on abundant freshwater shrimp, are growing quickly. If initial success holds up, anglers may soon be allowed to keep some greenbacks caught from the lake. In the meantime, however, the primary purpose will be achieved: biologists will harvest eggs and milt from the genetically pure population to create or augment other greenback populations in streams along Colorado's Front Range.

▶ The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the University of Arizona are cooperating with the Tonto National Forest to study the reproductive success, seasonal movements, and habitats of the desert tortoise. Biologists attach radio transmitters to female tortoises to track their movements throughout the year. While tortoises don't move very fast, they do disappear underground, which makes telemetry difficult. Other aspects of the research include a mark-and-release study on one-hectare plots to determine suitability for tracking long-term population trends, and other needed information.

▶ Not often do we go out of our way to protect a thistle, but when it is a threatened species, our attitude changes. Such is the case with the Sacramento Mountain Thistle,

The *Every Species Counts* program and partners manage threatened and endangered species, as well as agency-designated sensitive species. More than 283 threatened or endangered species—approximately one-third of all federally listed species—dwell on national forests and grasslands. More than 2,500 sensitive species, those requiring special management to prevent their loss from national forests and grasslands, are also found on these lands.

Every Species Counts is a partnership program that brings together the expertise, resources, and commitment of the Forest Service and other Federal and State agencies, and private organizations, such as the Garden Club of America and The Nature Conservancy, to recover and conserve rare species. Through *Every Species Counts*, the Forest Service continues to branch out to manage, protect, and conserve plant communities and terrestrial and aquatic species.

The national forests and grasslands are the last refuge for many of the Nation's native plants, wildlife, and fish. The Forest Service, in cooperation with other agencies, academic institutions, and concerned citizens, has become a leader in conserving the Nation's biological diversity. Conservation actions for well-publicized species—including the northern spotted owl, Mt. Graham red squirrel, red-cockaded woodpecker, gray wolf, grizzly bear, and Mexican spotted owl—are breaking new ground in the application of science to resource management.

In the future, the *Every Species Counts* program will focus recovery and restoration efforts in 13 major ecological areas, from the Great Basin to the tropical rainforests of Puerto Rico. Management efforts will address the restoration of ecosystems, the development and implementation of species recovery plans, habitat and species inventories, and monitoring efforts. The support of our partners becomes more critical as we embark on an ecosystem approach to managing habitats of imperiled species.

PHOTO BY AUDREY NES KUYKENDALL



PHOTO BY DAVID S. PITKIN



Albino Slug

PHOTO BY JOEL PAGEL



Rocky Mountain Columbine,
Camino Real Ranger District,
Carson National Forest,
New Mexico

Peregrine
Eyas

1996 HIGHLIGHTS

Cirsium vinaceum, a unique riparian species found only in the Sacramento Mountains on the Lincoln National Forest in southern New Mexico. As part of a 10-year study in the recovery plan for the species, a New Mexico State University biologist will monitor up to 100 sites where the species occurs for the presence of noxious plants and livestock grazing. A smaller number of sites will be more intensively monitored to evaluate environmental factors and disturbances. The plant appears to have an affinity for calcium deposits.

► The future is more secure for some 26 species of rare plants on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada as a result of extensive surveying and monitoring by a group of dedicated botanists, the Smithsonian Institution, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Forest Service personnel surveyed thousands of acres and the partners monitored five populations, and built an enclosure around one critical site. Significantly, they found new populations of nine species. Changes in habitat condition and trend were identified to provide a better understanding of many species, and also identify new threats.

► The threatened Mead's milkweed and endangered running buffalo clover have a better chance for survival on the Mark Twain National Forest as the result of partnership efforts with the Missouri Department of Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, the Missouri Botanical Garden, and Northeastern University. Pre-scribed fire was used to improve habitat and enhance seed production for the milkweed, while planting was the preferred technique for expanding stands of the clover.

EVERY SPECIES COUNTS

1996 EXPENDITURES

Total Budget: \$24.75 million
 Total Challenge Cost-Share Program
 Forest Service contributions: \$4.41 million
 Partner contributions: \$9.45 million

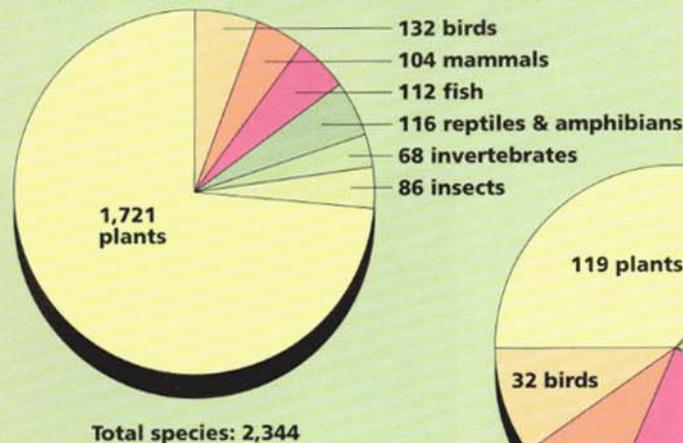
1996 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Challenge Cost-Share Program
 11,871 terrestrial acres restored or enhanced
 38 lake acres restored or enhanced
 155 stream miles restored or enhanced
 318 structures completed
 3,268,886 terrestrial acres inventoried
 69,940 lake acres inventoried
 857 stream miles inventoried
 Other funds (non-partnerships)
 66,090 terrestrial acres restored or enhanced
 171 lake acres restored or enhanced
 138 stream miles restored or enhanced
 405 structures completed
 3,796,840 terrestrial acres inventoried
 9,898 lake acres inventoried
 2,022 stream miles inventoried

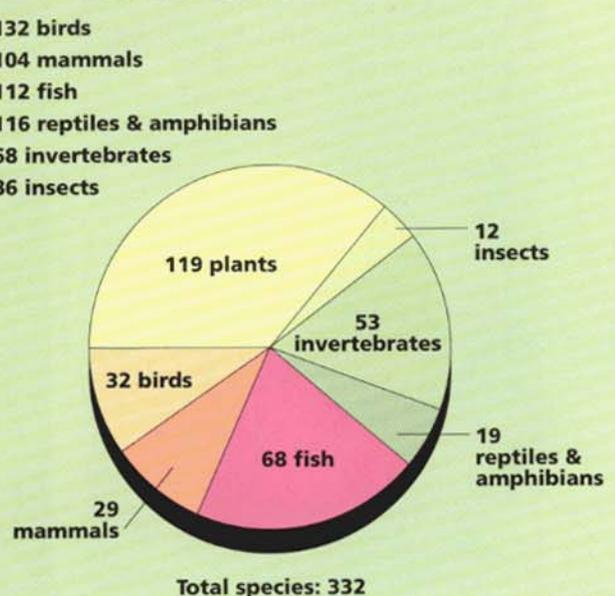


Number of Challenge Cost-Share projects completed: 591

FOREST SERVICE SENSITIVE SPECIES



THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS



Rise to the Future

1995 Highlights

► The fishing at Bartlett Lake on the Tonto National Forest continues to improve with the coordinated efforts of a strong group of partners. The group, which includes Anglers United, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Prisons, Scottsdale Sportsman's Club, Chaparral Rod and Gun, and Boy Scouts of America, builds docks and trails for improved access—including access for physically challenged anglers—and inlake structures designed for specific fish needs. Structures incorporate design features to benefit fish reproduction, predator avoidance, and food needs. This year the group installed 115 structures.

► Christmas came late for the fish in Lake Isabella, on the Sequoia National Forest. Kern Valley Habitat Club, Kern County Waste Management, California Department of Fish and Game, Southern California Edison, and Kern County teamed up with forest personnel to use discarded Christmas trees in a variety of ways to provide fish habitat in the lake. Bluegills and crappies were the immediate beneficiaries, but about 500 kids at a fishing derby, including 40 who were physically challenged, were the big winners. Both the Christmas tree project and the fishing derby are annual events.

► Four high mountain lakes on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest were stabilized with the help of the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission. Hand crews removed dams at three reservoirs, and a track hoe was used to help rebuild the dam on the fourth. Trails to eight lakes were rebuilt, and log structures were sunk in the lakes to improve fish habitat. Not only will the lakes provide better fishing, but amounts of sediments discharged to streams will be reduced.

By the year 2040, public demand for high-quality fishing experiences is expected to double. As more and more Americans take to our national forests to fish, the need to conserve and enhance these resources becomes even greater. The 2.3 million acres of fishable lakes, ponds, and reservoirs and 197,000 miles of streams on National Forest System lands support hundreds of inland and anadromous (species that migrate from the sea, up freshwater rivers and streams to spawn) fish species with important recreational, commercial, cultural, scientific, and ecological values. More than 120 species of fish and other aquatic species are federally listed as threatened or endangered, and more than 340 agency-designated sensitive aquatic species make their homes in and around the waterways of the national forests and grasslands.

The Forest Service and partners fisheries program, Rise to the Future, coordinates aquatic habitat management goals, plans, and programs with State, Federal, and tribal agencies and fish interest groups. Currently, Rise to the Future management activities focus on inland fish, such as walleye, trout, bass; nongame fish (e.g., various darters, shiners, and chubs); mussels, aquatic insects, amphibians, and other aquatic species; as well as anadromous fish, such as salmon, steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout.

Through partnerships with The American Fisheries Society; American Sportfishing Association; Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Inc.; Desert Fishes Council; Izaak Walton League of America; Pacific River Council; Trout Unlimited; and others, the Forest Service protects, restores, and enhances aquatic habitats and recreational, educational, and interpretive (FishWatch) opportunities for forest visitors.

PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL



PHOTO BY DAVID PITKIN



PHOTO BY JEFF MAI

Fly Fishing

Kids All-American Fishing Derby - Georgetown Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest, California

Spawning Coho

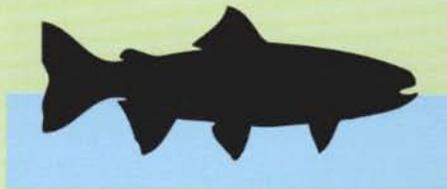
1995 Highlights

▶ Brook trout continue to increase in Fridley Gap on the George Washington and the Jefferson National Forests in Virginia. Devoid of fish for 20 years due to acid deposition, the watershed was treated with 40 tons of limestone sand dropped by helicopter in 1993. Native brook trout from a nearby stream were backpacked into the headwaters and released only a month later, and successfully reproduced that season. Monitoring shows a steady increase in numbers of adult brook trout. Partners include Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fish, James Madison University, Virginia Tech, Trout Unlimited, Chemstone Corp., Nielson Construction Co., T&M Construction, Davis Equipment Services, Camp Horizons, and North Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

▶ A remote fish ladder that provides access for 1,500 valuable "Copper River Delta" sockeye salmon was modified to improve fish passage to an 80-acre lake on the Chugach National Forest. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates 18,000 pounds of high-quality salmon were subsequently harvested by commercial fisheries in 1996. A new electronic fish counter was also installed and calibrated so that salmon populations can be more efficiently monitored. The new ladder and monitoring device will significantly reduce on-going program expenses.

RISE TO THE FUTURE

FISHERIES HABITAT ON THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM



- ▶ 2.3 million acres of fishable lakes, ponds, and reservoirs
- ▶ 197,000 miles of perennial streams
- ▶ Half the Nation's threatened, endangered, and candidate sensitive aquatic species

PEOPLE

- ▶ National forests in 44 States provide ready public access (1 in 3 American freshwater anglers fish on national forests)
- ▶ Over 36.5 million angler days of effort
- ▶ 150 to 200 million pounds of commercial harvest
- ▶ 1 million pounds of harvest in traditional subsistence fisheries
- ▶ 2.0 million days of participation in fish viewing/education activities

BENEFITS

- ▶ Over \$2 billion in annual economic benefits
- ▶ Supporting over 64,000 jobs
- ▶ Thousands of future jobs as healthy environments produce more fish and sustain increased recreational, subsistence, commercial, and nonconsumptive uses
- ▶ Countless other indirect economic benefits associated with healthy watersheds, including: reduced domestic water treatment costs; fewer and smaller-magnitude floods and associated destruction; more stable supplies of water; and extended reservoir storage life

1996 EXPENDITURES

Total Budget: \$35.5 million
Inland fish programs: \$14.5 million
Salmon and steelhead programs: \$21.0 million
Challenge Cost-Share Program
Forest Service contributions
Inland fish: \$2.8 million
Salmon and steelhead: \$2.7 million
Partner contributions
Inland fish: \$5.4 million
Salmon and steelhead: \$3.0 million

1996 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Partnership Accomplishments
Fish Habitat Inventory
Acres of lakes 90,800
Miles of streams 3,250
Fish Habitat Improvement
Acres of lakes 6,350
Miles of streams 1,100
Aquatic Education
Interactive presentations 630
Interpretive sites developed 35
Multimedia products developed 60
Fishing Access
Easements/agreements 19
Increased recreational fishing opportunities
Acres of lakes 1,890
Miles of streams 100



Number of Challenge Cost-Share Projects Completed : 619

NatureWatch

1996 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ In Tennessee, fish watchers snorkel along the Conasauga River Trail on the Cherokee National Forest. Redeye bass and sunfish linger in the deep pools. Alabama hogsuckers, stonerollers, and darters flash through shallow riffles. Forest staff lead snorkel tours and give slide shows that help people appreciate the Conasauga River as critical habitat for the Conasauga logperch.
- ▶ Efforts by a Shawnee National Forest *Watchable Wildlife* team led to the inclusion of nine Forest sites in the Illinois Wildlife Viewing Guide, published in 1996 in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. These nine sites provide some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities in the State.
- ▶ The Pisgah National Forest joins the local community to accent what's green and growing in five seasonal shows at the Cradle of Forestry in Brenard, North Carolina: Appalachian Spring Celebration; Mother's Day; Bogs, Bugs, and Beavers; Fruit and Fiber Day; and Forest Festival Day. The latter attracted 3,000 people who sampled local crafts and explored the natural wealth of wild forests.

No one would travel halfway across the country to see grass grow. But to see native grass, pollinated by wild bees, planted by songbirds, parted by sage grouse, and devoured by elk—now that, as they say in Wyoming, is worth the watching. But it's not only in Wyoming where "nature-watching" is occurring. It turns out there is plenty to watch across the country on our national forests and grasslands.

Partners are springing up across the Nation with the vivacity and passion of a field of wildflowers; bursting forth to provide viewing sites, talks, walks, festivals, school programs, campfire stories, trails, and other opportunities for the American public to experience, view, photograph, and learn about the "nature" of America.

NatureWatch is a cooperative effort of Federal, State, and private partners to conserve wildlife, fish, wildflowers, and their habitats by providing enhanced recreational opportunities for the public; teaching about wildlife, fish, wildflowers, and their habitat needs; generating spending that supports jobs and income in local communities; and encouraging active public support for resource conservation. *NatureWatch* is comprised of three program areas.

- ▶ *Eyes on Wildlife* for wildlife viewing and appreciation.
- ▶ *Celebrating Wildflowers* for native plant appreciation and conservation.
- ▶ *FishWatch* for viewing and appreciation of fish.

NatureWatch is integral to the other three program areas: *Get Wild!*, *Every Species Counts*, and *Rise to the Future*.



PHOTO BY SANDY FROST

Cordova Discovery Room Intertidal Zone
Field Trip, Chugach National Forest, Alaska

1996 HIGHLIGHTS

▶ A hands-on "imaginarium" facilitated by the Chugach National Forest and Prince William Sound Science Center staff reaches 95 percent of Cordova's children each month. Now in its fourth continuous year of offering educational activities, the Discovery Room has offered 12,000 hours of action-packed learning about local ecosystems. A puppet show introduces the day's theme followed by a series of experiential learning activities. Other partners include ARCO Alaska, British Petroleum, Cordova Public Schools, Prince William Sound Community College, and the Skaggs Foundation.

▶ Open the new Watershed Trunk on the Lolo National Forest in Montana and you'll find enclosed an entire teaching unit for K-8 students. The forest joined the Montana Natural History Center and the Tri-State Implementation Council to create a traveling education trunk for all western Montana schools. The trunk integrates science, language arts, history, and social studies into a 2-week curriculum focusing on the Clark Fork River Watershed.

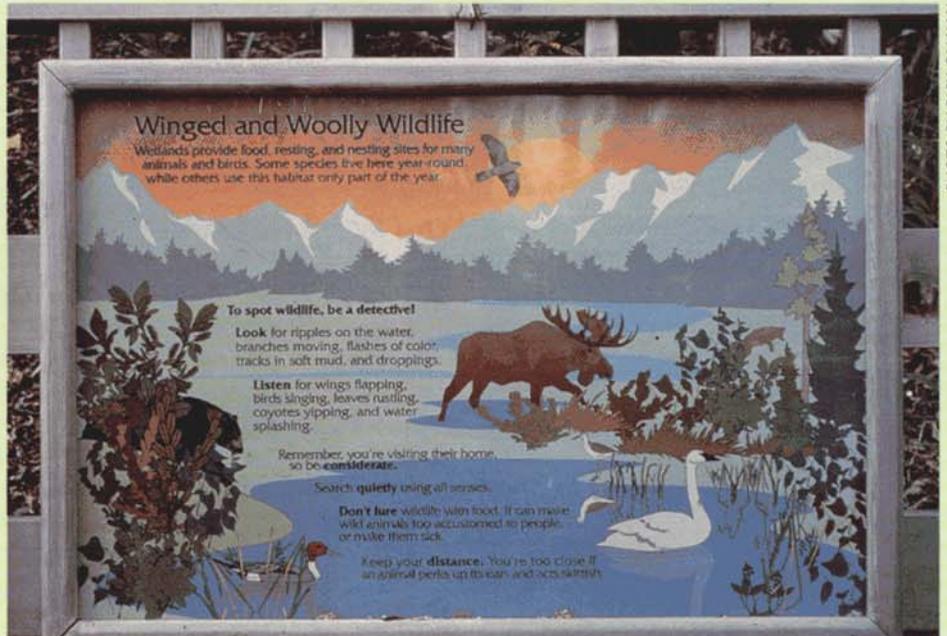


PHOTO BY RICH CALMAN

NATUREWATCH

1996 EXPENDITURES

Total Challenge Cost-Share Program

Forest Service contributions:
\$1.24 million

Partner contributions:
\$2.06 million

1996 ACCOMPLISHMENTS :

800 designated NatureWatch viewing sites

Challenge Cost-Share Program
4,600 environmental education presentations

618 multimedia products

Other funds

6,300 environmental education presentations

18,879 multimedia products

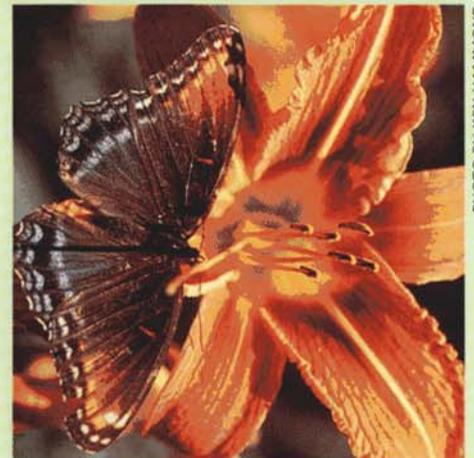


PHOTO BY KEN HAMMOND

Moose Flats Viewing Area,
Glacier Ranger District,
Chugach National Forest,
Alaska

Butterfly
on Lily



Watch for Binoculars Highway Signs - They Identify Upcoming Wildlife, Fish and Wildflower Viewing Areas

Recognizing the Potential, Meeting the Challenge

PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL



Our Work Force

The success of the Wildlife and Fisheries Program reflects the quality and dedication of its work force. Not only must our biologists face complex resource management challenges, they must also be effective communicators and skilled in conflict resolution and budget management. More than 1,255 wildlife and fisheries biologists, botanists, and ecologists do their best to provide a stewardship link to the future. They work on interdisciplinary teams with recreation, range, minerals, watershed, engineering, and timber management professionals in all types of environments—from offices and laboratories to mountains, lakes, forests, and plains.

Our Budget

The wildlife and fisheries portion of the overall Forest Service budget grew dramatically from the late 1970's into the early 1990's, responding to both increased public recognition of the value of fish and wildlife resources, and acceptance of stewardship responsibility to maintain these resources for future generations. Ecosystem management emerged as policy for guiding Forest Service decisions. In the mid 1990's, however, the Nation has had to make hard fiscal decisions. The Forest Service, like all Federal agencies, has accepted reduced budgets and faces difficult times ahead.

Our Challenge

Our biologists are involved in the planning and monitoring of thousands of timber sales, range allotments, and mineral cases annually to ensure they are handled in an environmentally sensitive manner. Providing critical resource coordination and also maintaining our high level of program accomplishments (through habitat enhancement, restoration, and meeting public demands) into the future is going to be a difficult challenge. Establishing priorities for personnel and dollar investments will mean tough choices. The support of our dedicated partners in the Challenge Cost-Share Program will be even more critical to an effective stewardship effort.

PHOTO BY DAVID S. PITKIN



Gulls Over
Mono Lake,
California

Pigeon
Guillemot
Eggs

PHOTO BY GALEN ROWELL

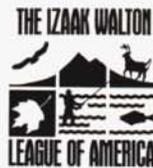


Using All the Senses

The Partners

The following organizations are among the nearly 3,400 partners with whom the Forest Service is working to conserve, manage, and restore wildlife, fish, and rare plant resources on the national forests and grasslands. To our partners in conservation, we extend our appreciation:

- | | |
|--|--|
| American Birding Association | Defenders of Wildlife |
| The American Fisheries Society | Department of the Air Force |
| American Forest Council | Department of the Army |
| American Rivers | Department of the Navy |
| American Sportfishing Association | Desert Fishes Council |
| Amerifish Corporation | Ducks Unlimited |
| Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Inc. | Environmental Law Institute |
| Bureau of Land Management | Environmental Protection Agency |
| The Center for Environmental Study | Federation of Fly Fishers |
| Center for Plant Conservation | FishAmerica Foundation |
| Cornell University, Cornell
Laboratory of Ornithology | Foundation for North American
Wild Sheep |
| | Garden Club of America |
| | The In-fisherman, Inc. |
| | International Association of Fish and
Wildlife Agencies |
| | The Izaak Walton League of
America, Inc. |
| | The Mule Deer Foundation |
| | National Association of State Foresters |
| | National Audubon Society |



National
Fish and Wildlife
Foundation

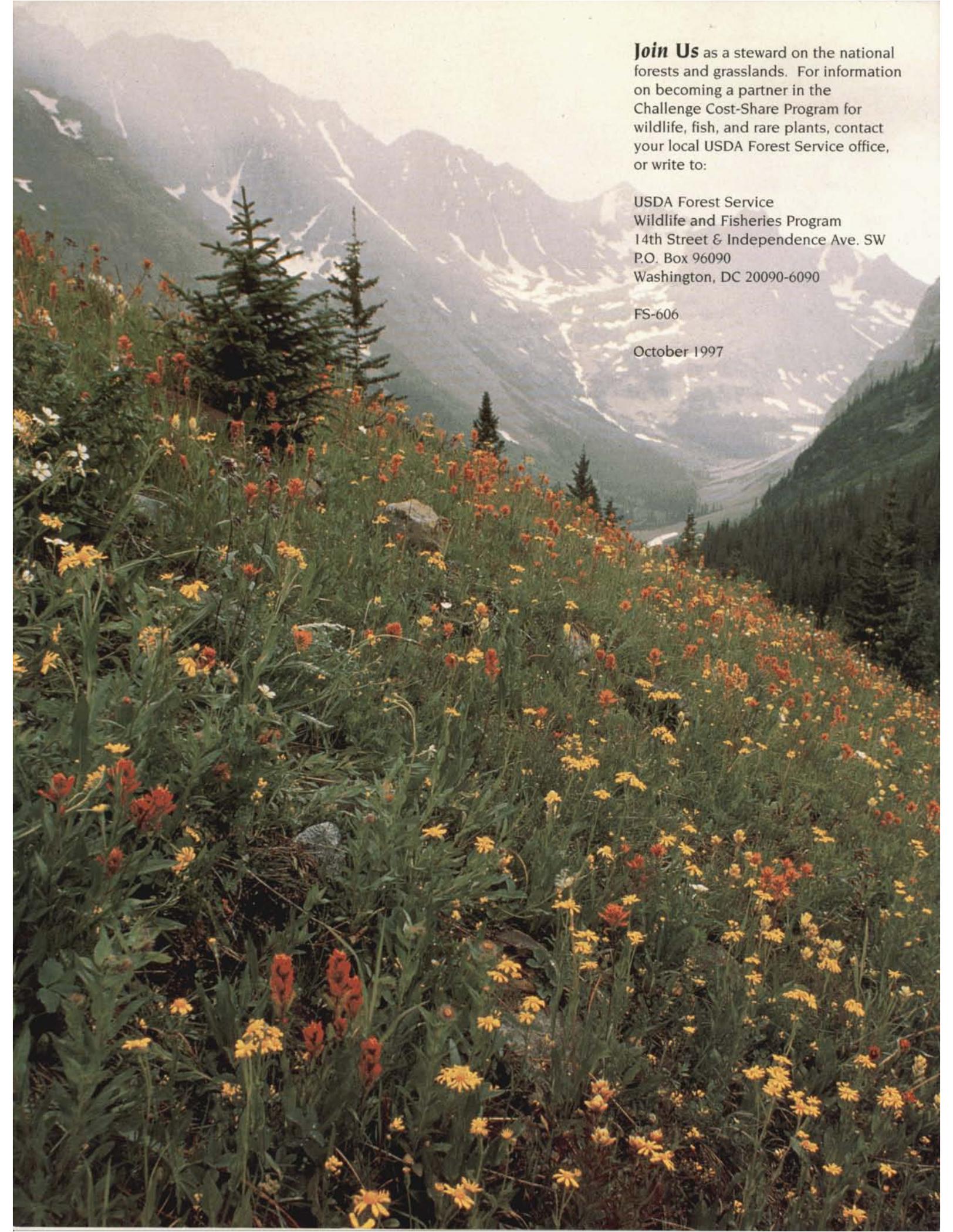


National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 National Forest Foundation
 National Forest Products Association
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 National Park Service
 National Rifle Association of America
 National Wild Turkey Federation
 The Nature Conservancy
 Outdoor Technologies Group
 Quail Unlimited, Inc.
 Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society
 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
 The Ruffed Grouse Society
 Society of American Foresters
 Trout Unlimited
 U.S. Department of Agriculture's
 Animal and Plant Health
 Inspection Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture's
 Cooperative State Research,
 Education, and Extension Service
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Utah State University, Forest
 Resources Department
 Waterfowl USA Limited, Inc.
 Whitetails Unlimited, Inc.
 Wildlife Forever
 Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Council
 Wildlife Management Institute
 The Wildlife Society, Inc.

Many thanks to the 44 State fish and wildlife agencies, 43 State Natural Heritage Inventory Programs, Native American tribes, and numerous local businesses, tourism and recreation organizations, sporting groups, and volunteers who willingly and enthusiastically support habitat improvement work on national forests and grasslands.





Join Us as a steward on the national forests and grasslands. For information on becoming a partner in the Challenge Cost-Share Program for wildlife, fish, and rare plants, contact your local USDA Forest Service office, or write to:

USDA Forest Service
Wildlife and Fisheries Program
14th Street & Independence Ave. SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

FS-606

October 1997