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**Subject:** 2012 National Forest System Invasive Species Program Award Winners

**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs  
and WO Directors

I am pleased to announce the recipients of the 2012 National Forest System Invasive Species Program Awards. Each year, these national awards honor individuals and groups for outstanding work against aquatic and terrestrial invasive species threatening the National Forest System. Awards were presented for excellence in partnership development, prevention, early detection and rapid response, innovative control and management, and landscape-scale restoration and rehabilitation. To honor the work of our external cooperators and partners, two additional external partner award categories were again given this year: Education and Awareness on Invasive Species, and Outstanding Partner Against Invasive Species.

The following are the recipients of the 2012 National Forest System Invasive Species Program Awards:

**Excellence in Invasive Species Partnership Development** - This national award recognizes a Forest Service individual or office demonstrating outstanding, dedicated leadership in the development of partnerships to address invasive species threatening the National Forest System.

*Andrea Hille, Forest Silviculturalist, Allegheny National Forest*, in recognition of her exceptional partnership development work to address invasive species threats on the forest, including partnerships with The Nature Conservancy, FS State and Private Forestry, FS Northern Research Station, state forestry entities, native American tribes, neighboring national forests, and many other partners. Andrea has a long-standing, high-quality reputation of addressing invasive species using an all-inclusive approach, particularly with her work against beech bark disease, emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, and gypsy moth. Through her leadership in partnership development she has secured the resources necessary to continue work against these invaders into the future.

**Excellence in Invasive Species Prevention** – This national award recognizes a Forest Service individual or office who demonstrates outstanding, dedicated leadership in the prevention of invasive species threatening aquatic or terrestrial areas of the National Forest System.

*Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF)*, in recognition of their high level of support and leadership to develop prevention Best Management Practices for Invasive Species in four key areas of emphasis within the State of Wisconsin: Forestry, Recreation, Urban Forestry, and Transportation and Utility Corridors. This exceptional effort was accomplished through a state-wide partnership, with the employees of the



CNNF playing a pivotal role during the entire development process, working closely with a broad spectrum of public and private stakeholders in Wisconsin in each of the emphasis areas. This work in Wisconsin has served as a valuable resource for invasive species prevention efforts nationwide.

**Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR)** - This national award recognizes a Forest Service individual or office who demonstrates outstanding, dedicated leadership in Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) against invasive species threatening National Forests or Grasslands.

*Daniel L. Linder, Northern Research Station*, in recognition of his efforts to develop DNA-based early detection techniques for the invasive fungus *Geomyces destructans* which causes White Nose Syndrome disease in many North American bat populations, including rare species such as Indiana bats and gray bats. This fungus has been directly linked to extremely high mortality (upwards of 90 percent in some cases) in native bat populations. Mr. Linder's work was an important step forward to protect America's native bat populations against this deadly invasive fungus, particularly those bats which roost and hibernate in caves or abandoned mines located on National Forest System lands. His work was based on a broad range of collaborations with numerous federal and state agencies, universities, medical and research organizations, wildlife health and veterinary groups, and other private organizations such as Bat Conservation International, and Symbiology, LLC.

**Innovative Control and Management** - This national award recognizes a Forest Service individual or office who demonstrates outstanding, dedicated leadership in control and management of invasive species threatening National Forests or Grasslands.

*Robert Progar, Research Entomologist, Pacific Northwest Region*, in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments to develop and implement the concept of inundative release of a biological control agent on a riparian invasive plant, specifically *Aphthona* spp. flea beetles to control leafy spurge. His innovative biological control techniques and "Hold the Line" program activities were highly successful because of his extensive collaboration with National Forest managers, FS Research Stations, FS Forest Health Protection staff, USDA Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Research Service, other federal agencies, state agencies, and several private landowners and organizations in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

**Landscape Restoration and Rehabilitation Against Invasive Species** - This national award recognizes a Forest Service individual or office who demonstrates outstanding, dedicated leadership in landscape restoration and rehabilitation against invasive species on the National Forest System.

*Dr. Dean Pearson, Rocky Mountain Research Station*, in recognition of his high level of leadership and expertise on invasion biology and invasive species management, linking management concepts to long-term landscape restoration and rehabilitation. Dr. Pearson has worked tirelessly to increase collaboration between research and

management entities and led the RMRS invasive species working group for four years, with the primary objective of creating a common front for FS researchers to engage with their customers and ensure that research products are readily available to managers as soon as possible and through as many outlets as possible. His extensive work has spanned multiple ecosystems and helped build cooperative ventures between local, state, tribal, federal, and private partners to address landscape-scale invasive species problems and develop innovative and practical solutions for land managers and other stakeholders.

**Education and Awareness on Invasive Species – Partner Award** - This national award recognizes a partner or cooperator with the Forest Service who demonstrated outstanding cooperation and achievements related to environmental education and awareness of invasive species issues at the national, regional, or community level.

*John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, Illinois*, in recognition of their outstanding cooperation and achievements in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service on projects related to environmental education and awareness of invasive species issues. The aquarium hosts nearly 2 million visitors annually with award winning exhibits and a wide range of educational programming. Leveraging the aquarium's resources, staff expertise, and its commitment to conservation, the aquarium works closely with the Forest Service Eastern Region and other partners to better engage citizens in the fight against invasive species. The aquarium provides the Forest Service with exceptional networking opportunities with dozens of public and private organizations to provide high quality invasive species education and outreach. Information about the invasive species problem has reached millions of adults, children, families, teachers, and students at all levels, particularly since the opening of the invasive species exhibit and the debut of Camp Shedd in 2006. The Forest Service partnership with the John G. Shedd Aquarium serves as a model of success for invasive species education and awareness nationwide.

**Outstanding Partner Against Invasive Species – Partner Award** - This national award recognizes a partner or cooperator with the Forest Service who demonstrated outstanding collaboration, cooperation, and achievements related to the management of invasive species at the national, regional, or community level.

*Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF)*, in recognition of their exceptional work as a partner with the Forest Service to manage invasive species threatening aquatic and terrestrial areas of the National Forest System and beyond. The RMEF partnership has helped restore and protect tens of millions of acres of habitat for native fish and wildlife, in multiple states and on numerous National Forests and Grasslands. Their work includes efforts to inventory and map invasive species, prevent and control infestations, conduct early detection activities, educate and raise awareness about the invasive species threat, provide funding for treatment equipment and supplies, and also to rally and unite a multitude of external partners in the public and private sectors to maximize the effectiveness of these invasive species management efforts across the broader landscape.

As always, the selection of award recipients was difficult, as all nominations demonstrated very commendable work. I congratulate each of the National Forest System Invasive Species Program Award recipients, as well as all of the nominees. Through their outstanding efforts and leadership, we will continue a legacy of strong invasive species management program integration and ensure enduring protection of our aquatic and terrestrial resources for future generations.

To address agency-wide travel cost limitations for the awardees and other logistical issues this year, the original plan to present these awards during the 2013 National Invasive Species Awareness Week has been changed. Instead, awardees will receive their award plaques at their local office or station by mail. In addition, the Washington Office will work closely with the awardees and their respective office to coordinate a phone call from senior program leadership to personally thank each awardee for their exceptional achievement.

If you have any questions please contact Mr. Mike Ielmini, National Invasive Species Program Manager, National Forest System, Washington, DC ([mielmini@fs.fed.us](mailto:mielmini@fs.fed.us)).

*/s/ James M. Pena (for)*

LESLIE A. C. WELDON

Deputy Chief, National Forest System