

San Gorgonio Wilderness Association

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PRESS RELEASE

SAN GORGONIO WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION RECEIVES NATIONAL TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA AWARD

On September 30, The Secretary of the Interior, Gale A. Norton, presented a Take Pride in America National Award to representatives of the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association in Washington D.C.. The award was presented for the SGWA's partnership with the US Forest Service in protection and enhancement of the San Bernardino National Forest. This award was earned by 110 wonderful SGWA volunteers who donate over 12,000 hours annually serving, protecting, and educating primarily in and around the San Gorgonio Wilderness.

Accepting the award at the Department of Interior were SGWA officers John Flippin, Ted Schofield, and Jarome Wilson, board members Teddi Boston, Bill Carr, Dee McCoy, and Val Silva, and volunteers Chris Austin, Lee Silva, and Dave Turner. The SGWA works with the US Forest Service to recruit, train, administer, support, and recognize citizens who volunteer their valuable time to protect and maintain natural resources and facilities in the San Bernardino National Forest and to help visitors better understand and enjoy their National Forest. One hundred and ten (110) SGWA volunteers (hikers, backpackers, equestrians, and interpretive specialists), ages 15 to 85, from all walks of life donate over 12,000 hours annually to serve the public.

Volunteers present nature talks, operate visitor centers, maintain trails, remove litter, and perform patrols for fire prevention and assistance to lost, injured, and ill hikers. The volunteers also stage a free public forest festival each summer and provide fishing buddies and a hot lunch to about 85 disadvantaged children at the Forest Service annual fishing festival – most of those children having never been to the mountains or fishing before.

For all users of the forest in and around the wilderness, SGWA volunteer Michael Gordon maintains an extensive website (www.SGWA.org) containing information about weather, trails, camps, the shared experiences of other forest users, and information about how citizens can help their forest through the SGWA. Take Pride in America is a national partnership program established by the U.S. Department of the Interior that engages, supports, and recognizes volunteers who work to improve our public lands, including parks, forests, waterways, grasslands, wildlife refuges, cultural and historical sites, local playgrounds and other recreational sites – more at www.TakePride.gov.