



United States Department of Agriculture

valuing you AN R6 UPDATE

February 2019





Inside Pages: A line of people is all smiles as they wait to pay for permits to gather salal on the Olympic National Forest.

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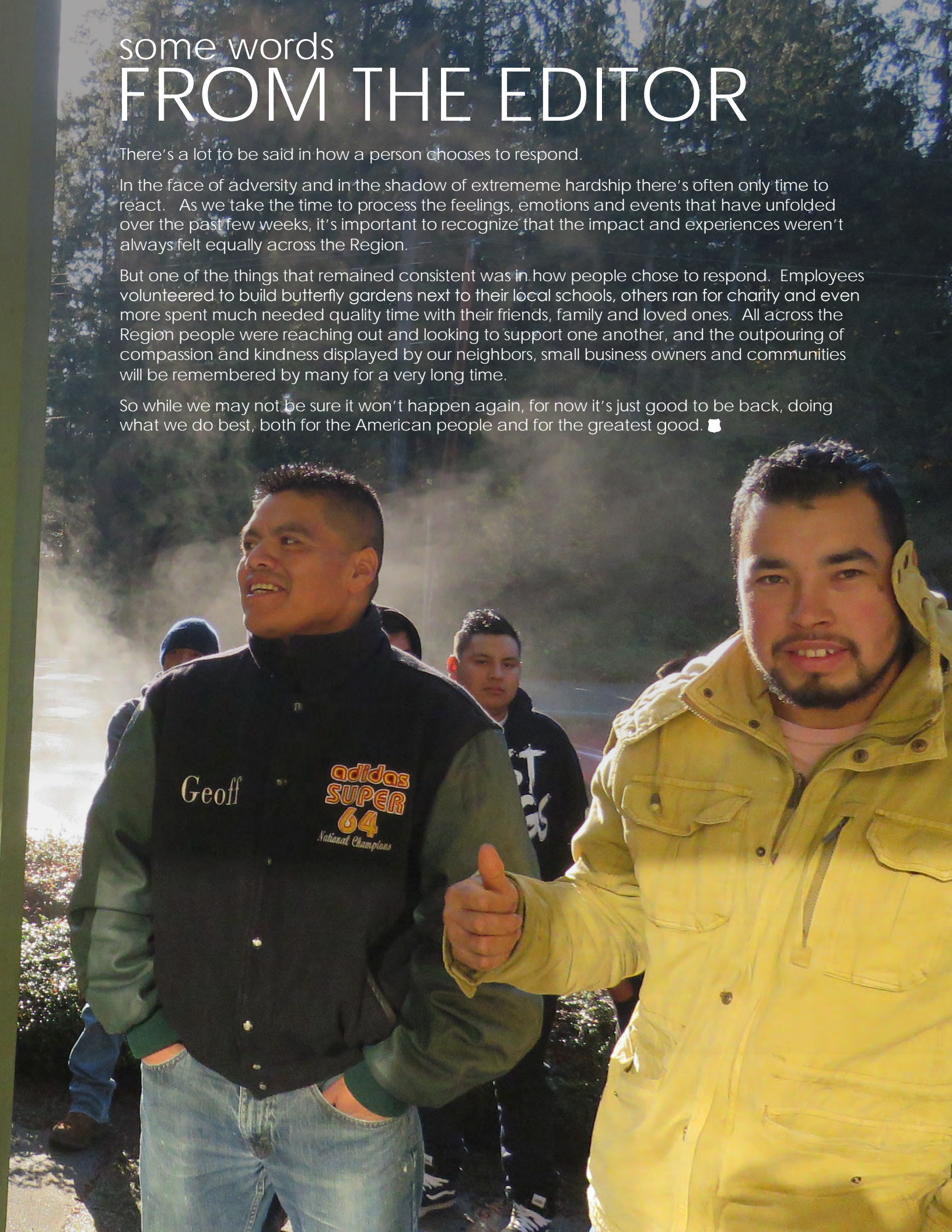
some words FROM THE EDITOR

There's a lot to be said in how a person chooses to respond.

In the face of adversity and in the shadow of extreme hardship there's often only time to react. As we take the time to process the feelings, emotions and events that have unfolded over the past few weeks, it's important to recognize that the impact and experiences weren't always felt equally across the Region.

But one of the things that remained consistent was in how people chose to respond. Employees volunteered to build butterfly gardens next to their local schools, others ran for charity and even more spent much needed quality time with their friends, family and loved ones. All across the Region people were reaching out and looking to support one another, and the outpouring of compassion and kindness displayed by our neighbors, small business owners and communities will be remembered by many for a very long time.

So while we may not be sure it won't happen again, for now it's just good to be back, doing what we do best, both for the American people and for the greatest good. ■





doing a little good by helping TO FEED AMERICANS

Chiara Cipriano; Public Affairs Specialist, Willamette National Forest

While it may not have been a typical January day in the office, five employees from the Bureau of Land Management and Willamette National Forest's interagency office found a great way to give back and to be in community by volunteering in the gardens with their local food bank.

Working with FOOD for Lane County and The GrassRoots Garden, the team spent the day getting down and dirty doing a variety of chores for the Eugene, Oregon garden that produces over 100,000 pounds of organic produce and food per year. Working alongside volunteers, Robin Kaltenbach, Chiara Cipriano, Ian-Huei Yau, Joanie Schmidgall and Jen O'Leary shoveled and wheelbarrowed carts of soil and clay to help establish the foundation of a future butterfly and pollinator garden, one that will sit between the main gardens and a local school.

Led by a vivacious volunteer coordinator who could inspire hummingbirds to dance, the team was driven to serve as they had fun while getting some work done, and halfway through the day they were rewarded with an amazing lunch made by volunteers with food from the garden; warm tomato soup, veggie salads and a tart apple cake with cashew sauce.

So while it may not have been a typical day in the office, it was definitely a good one, both for the people of Lane County, and for the greatest good.

For more information: <https://foodforlanecounty.org/go-learn-more/other-programs/gardens/>



Clockwise:

1) Robin Kaltenbach, Chiara Cipriano, Ian-Huei Yau, Joanie Schmidgall and Jen O'Leary learning about all of the different crops, including giant cabbages, grown at The GrassRoots Garden; 2) Carrot harvesting in December draws a big crowd (source: GrassRoots Garden Facebook page); 3) Two hard working carrot harvesters show off their bounty (source: GrassRoots Garden Facebook page); 4) Joanie Schmidgall and Ian-Huei Yau work on the base of the pollinator garden

the things we did DURING FURLOUGH

I work as a Frontliner and I love my job, but the government shutdown shook my confidence. I was in the midst of a transfer between duty stations and quickly became short on funds, and when I decided to return a Christmas present, a new sewing machine, I was taken aback by the negativity and comments of the store manager.

There were a lot of misconceptions out there, but fortunately many friends and strangers stepped up and treated us with unbelievable kindness. From bookstores to credit unions, offers of pet food from animal shelters welcoming food banks, these good people stepped forward to help.

We never thought we'd be at the receiving end; usually Forest Service employees are used to helping others in our communities, but overall we found solutions, workarounds and comradery with one another.

We checked on each other, held potlucks and coffee meets and connected on social media. If you haven't checked out "Stuff I Did On Furlough" on Facebook take a gander; it was an emotional lifesaver for me, being somewhat isolated and in a new place. I laughed at the comments and memes, felt sorrow for the people posting about their suffering and health concerns and learned about people, their jobs and their interests.

And as a plus I also developed a really good list of inexpensive wines.

Whether or not we will have to face the furlough demon again is unknown. But I learned that we can function as a family both on and off the job. We came together and we got through it. This comment from another Forest Service employee, whom I have never met, is dear to my heart:

"I want each and every one of you to know that, although I don't know you, I think you and your job are important. Every single person in this Agency is important... your work matters and you matter. Do not believe anyone who tells you otherwise."

Marlene McCormack; Visitor Information Assistant, Siuslaw National Forest - Central Coast Ranger District





What do you get when you put some wildlife biologists, a botanist, fisheries biologist, road manager, NEPA planner, District Ranger and Public Affairs Officer with time on their hands in the woods?

The Great Furlough Walkabout.

In order to help keep morale up and to reconnect with each other during the shutdown, staff from the Olympic National Forest met at various trailheads to hike and appreciate the land they all have been serving for years.

Braving wet, wintery conditions, the hikers met weekly to explore and appreciate forest trails like the Duckabush Trail near Sequim, Washington and the Gray Wold Trail which leads to the Buckhorn Wilderness.

In the spirit of shared stewardship, furloughed forest employees were joined by their counterparts at both the Olympic National Park and the United States Geological Survey office, and the hikers enjoyed their time together so well that future hikes are planned - on weekends.

Susan Garner; *Public Affairs Officer, Olympic National Forest*



I live in a small community in McKenzie Bridge, Oregon and have lived and worked up here for the Forest Service for 32 years!

That being said, I know most of the locals and retired FS employees. During the shutdown I had several locals contact me to check in and see if there was any way that they could help. We had offers of food, gas cards, help with electric bills, help finding work in the community and even offers of personal loans.

So I started a McKenzie furloughed employees Facebook page, and I posted this type of information on it as a resource for employees.

It made me so proud to live in a community that cares so deeply about Forest Service employees.

Brenda Hamlow; *Site Manager, HJ Andrews Experimental Forest*

Multiple local businesses went above and beyond to help Southwest Oregon furloughed employees during the shutdown. Just a few amazing examples include:

- Through donations and grant money United Way in Medford provided \$300 gift cards to Safeway or Albertson to any federal employee who contacted them. With the generosity doubly offered for those families with two federal employees, as of the morning of 1/23 they had handed out 80 and they were prepared to hand out more.
- Multiple restaurants in and around the area offered free meals to federal employees.
- A local yoga studio with locations in both Medford and Ashland offered free yoga classes and continues to do so, even after the shutdown has ended.
- Medford-based Harry & David opened the doors of their food bank, providing boxes of fresh meat and produce.
- Otterbee's Market, a community supported agriculture enterprise in Gold Beach, provided furloughed members a \$200 credit with a commitment to extend help as far into the future as needed.

And these are just a few of the examples of generosity business offered, and continue to offer. I know multiple employees have told of near or complete strangers offering cash to help alleviate financial strain. From gym conversations to Facebook comments the offers came, and while they may not have been accepted the urging was often to seek out those who might be in dire need of assistance due to the lack of a network.

Those who were supposed to retire in January were put in an odd position, no matter where they were. The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest had quite a few retirements slated to happen, and the parties for those folks carried on, regardless of the shutdown. On the Powers Ranger District there was a party to celebrate three soon-to-be retirees, and Donna Mickley, District Ranger for the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District and Virginia Gibbons, Forest Public Affairs Officer made the long overnight trip to ensure that ample love and appreciation was shown during such a difficult time.

Last but not least, Greta Smith, our intrepid Forest Planner, braved the chilly air and gloomy skies that icy fog can wreak on the Rogue Valley to run a 5k for a local charity. And even better, she did it with two retirees while wearing a leopard-print onesie! (The retirees chose to opt-out of the onesie program)

Chamise Kramer; Public Affairs Specialist, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest





the government employee FAIR TREATMENT ACT

Introduced and signed into law during the furlough, the **Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019** puts to an end one of the most worst of uncertainties: making sure that federal employees get paid.

“Each employee of the United States Government or of a District of Columbia public employer furloughed as a result of a covered lapse in appropriations shall be paid for the period of the lapse of appropriations,” the act states, “And each excepted employee who is required to perform work during a covered lapse in appropriations shall be paid for such work, at the employee’s standard rate of pay, at the earliest date possible after the lapse in appropriations ends, regardless of scheduled pay dates.”

Also included in the act was language that guarantees that “during a lapse in appropriations, each excepted employee who is required to perform work shall be entitled to use leave.”

An amendment to the Antideficiency Act, the law retroactively covered the ongoing furlough for federal employees, but most importantly it also covers any future lapse of appropriations. So while the threat of another shutdown is indeed still a very real thing, at least we can take some comfort in knowing how some of it is going to end.

For more information: <https://go.usa.gov/xEEFS>

Digger BEAR

by Jimmie Turner



Where

IN THE REGION

previous issue

Last issue's *Where in the Region* photo was of the cleanup at one of the largest former copper mine sites in the United States, the **Holden Mine Remediation Project** on the **Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest** in Washington state.

Developed by the Howe Sound Company in 1938, this remote site, accessible only by boat on Lake Chelan or foot through the rugged Cascade Mountains, produced about 200 million pounds of copper, 40 million pounds of zinc, nearly 2 million ounces of silver and 600,000 ounces of gold in the 20 years it was in operation. Nearly 60 miles of underground tunnels were excavated, but when operations ceased close to 8.5 million tons of mill tailings were still sitting on Forest Service land near Railroad Creek.

Spread across 90 acres of land, the mine was also filled with another 1.5 million tons of tailings, and as it began to fill with water the aluminum, cadmium, copper, iron and zinc started to wash downstream, from Railroad Creek to beautiful Lake Chelan and beyond.

But now, for the first time in 60 years, clean water is once again flowing in Railroad Creek. With remediation costs paid exclusively by Rio Tinto, a global mining company and new owner of the mine, over \$500 million has been invested to clean up the site, and by working with the Forest Service and a myriad of other partners, a legacy of contamination has been turned into a legacy of clean water.

For more information: <https://go.usa.gov/xEQTv>

surf, sand and snow



A rare combination due to a January snowstorm at Umpqua Dunes Beach on the Siuslaw National Forest.

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YOUR NORTHWEST
FORESTS.org



A picture can say a thousand words, and within every picture is a story.

From the shores of every ocean to the back of every office, our workdays are often filled with the types of stories that could only happen with the USDA Forest Service.

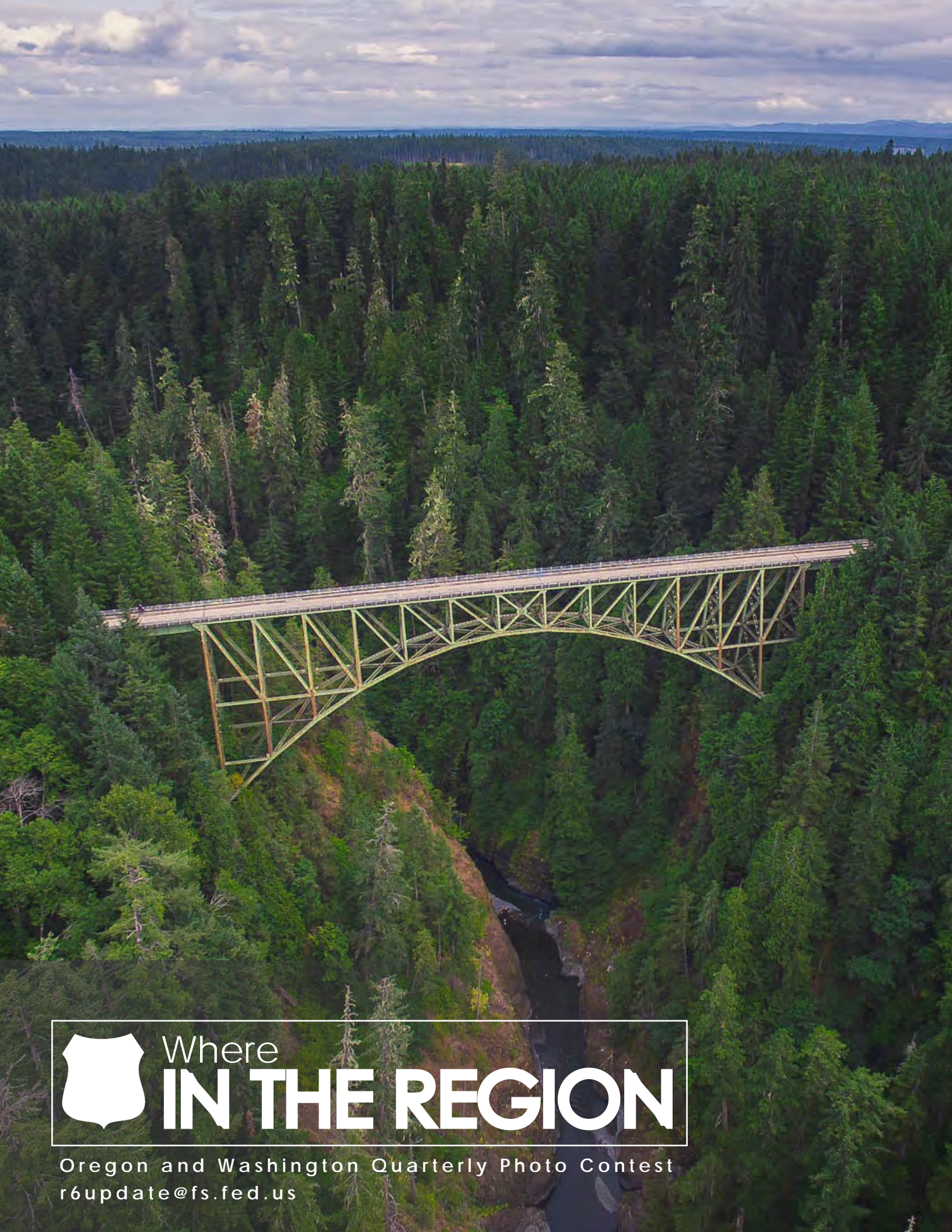
We'd love to help you share, so to make it easy we've simplified our submission guidelines:

- 1) **Pictures:** action shots of people, especially in uniform; use highest quality and file size available
- 2) **People:** direct quotes and permission from non-employees

While we may not be able to run everything, we'd love to see what you've got, so reach out and contact us today at r6update@fs.fed.us

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Where
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