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October 31, 2017

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The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture,
Tony Tooke, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service

Dear Sirs:

The Board of Directors of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees is concerned about the future of the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers program that is currently operated by the U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor.

It has recently come to our attention that the Treasure Lake and Ouachita Centers were closed, and the Golconda Center has been notified that it is now listed for possible closure. Allegedly these actions were taken because of chronically low performance at these centers.

A significant number of our members had direct and indirect involvement with this program since it was founded in 1964. We consider the program to be beneficial to both the enrollees and the natural resource programs of the U.S. Forest Service. The involvement of the enrollees as members of wildland firefighting teams has and is currently of specific interest. Over the years the program has accomplished many valuable projects to improve the natural resources of the National Forests, as well as construction projects in the National Forests and many times in local rural communities.

We hope you both have an interest in continuing the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center so that the National Forest can benefit while training enrollees to be productive citizens once they have completed the program.

Please let NAFSR know if there is anything we can properly do to stop the closure action on the Golconda Center and ensure the future of the program.

Sincerely,

James L. Caswell
James L. Caswell

G. Sam Foster
G. Sam Foster