



Forest Service

Helena - Lewis and Clark National
Forest

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File Code: 1830

Date: March 19, 2025

Route To:

Subject: Letter of support for Double Diamond Award

To: To Whom it May Concern

I am writing in strong support of a Double Diamond Award for the Last Chance Back Country Horsemen Chapter for their work to support a memorial event honoring 13 firefighters who lost their lives in a wildfire in Mann Gulch on the Helena-Lewis and National Forest.

Last summer, the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest held an event to memorialize the loss of 13 firefighters in Mann Gulch. Mann Gulch is a special area to a lot of people, and there are markers at the site along the hillside where the men died. It's an important area for so many different reasons starting of course with the heartbreaking loss of lives but also because of its importance to the development of fire science and because while it is home to such devastating tragedy, it is an exceptionally beautiful landscape. It's also a place that is difficult to access and in a wilderness area. Last year, local back country horsemen members provided packing support so the Forest Service could complete needed restoration work on the memorial markers on the hillside. This packing project was very technical and in terrain much more challenging than most missions. Without this support, we would not have been able to complete this restoration work.

The impact of this work was significant. As part of the Mann Gulch anniversary last summer, the Forest Service guided family members of those who died to the memorial sites. I wish I could do justice in words to how appreciative the family members were of the care we collectively take for this area. It remains a moving place and a destination not just for family members but for firefighters from across the country and for historians and fire science aficionados as well.

We are appreciative of our local BCH chapters for all the work they do to care for our back country areas and help others appreciate these areas. The LCBCH chapter's work on Mann Gulch will remain particularly close to my heart because of how powerful and impactful it was to so many people.

Thank you for considering a Double Diamond award for the LCBCH chapter,

EMILY PLATT
Forest Supervisor

