

**Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs
ALBANY, OR**

Catherine Freer Receives Recognition From U.S. Forest Service

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Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs has been awarded the Middle Fork Ranger District Forest Service Blanket Award in recognition of their volunteer service.

One blanket is awarded each year to a volunteer group that has done outstanding work. Catherine Freer employees and wilderness therapy participants were recognized for their efforts. They built nearly one-quarter mile of the North Fork Trail and filled four cross-country ski shelters with wood this year.

"Working with Catherine Freer has always been fun, easy and productive. Your crews are hard working, respectful, productive and well mannered. Even though the work is hard, your attitude is always great. Thank you for your contributions to the public and the Middle Fork Ranger District," said Stacey L. Smith, Willamette National Forest Middle Fork Ranger District Recreation Supervisory Forester.

"Service learning is a powerful component of our wilderness therapy programs. We believe that participation in service learning helps young people make meaningful contributions to the environment and to their community. This then becomes an important as part of their recovery," explained Robert Cooley, Ph.D., Catherine Freer executive director.

Catherine Freer operates wilderness therapy programs for at-risk youth. Each week, three staff members along with up to eight adolescent participants depart Albany for a wilderness therapy backpacking expedition. One staff member is a master's level therapist. During the expedition adolescents hike approximately eight miles per day, participate in individual and group therapy, and learn new tools and healthy coping mechanisms for addressing emotional and behavioral issues.

Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs serves approximately 350 adolescents annually. The employee owned and operated company was founded in 1988 and is licensed by the State of Oregon as both a substance abuse and mental health treatment program. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHCO) accredits the program. The company also operates Santiam Crossing, an outdoor therapeutic school, and Oregon Transition Homes. For more information, please visit the web site at [www.http://www.cfreer.com](http://www.cfreer.com) or call (800) 390-3983.