

Press Release February 4, 2008

Local Group Receives Award

The Cloud Peak Chapter of Wilderness Watch recently was the recipient of an award from the Bighorn National Forest in recognition of its volunteer effort in monitoring water quality. The plaque was presented to the group by Dan Scaife, hydrologist, marking the completion of a project measuring stream health in the Cloud Peak Wilderness.

The award stated that “establishing baseline water quality information...is important to our agency’s mission. We are grateful for the assistance over the past 10 years and the information that you have collected and analyzed will be valuable for future monitoring efforts and evaluating the implementation of our Revised Forest Plan.”

Volunteers of the Cloud Peak Chapter visited 21 streams at locations within or near to the Wilderness, collecting data and biological samples. Field equipment was backpacked to these remote locations, previously inaccessible to scientists. The 10-year project was funded entirely by the Cloud Peak Chapter through fundraisers and grants, including one from Conoco/Phillips in 2007, the National Forest Foundation, and WalMart. The group has also received the national Forest Service Chief’s award in recognition of its efforts.

Secretary Karen A. Ferguson noted that the group was grateful for the award, but even more pleased that the hard work produced useful data for the Bighorn National Forest staff. Chairperson Dalreen Kessler stated that volunteers will continue to collect data downstream from the sites that have been sampled, adding to the information available.