



File Code: 5300; 1830**Date:** April 6, 2020**Route To:****Subject:** Agency Designated Volunteer Firearm Users for Stock Euthanasia**To:** Forest and Grasslands Supervisors

In response to concerns that were shared recently by the state chapters of Back Country Horsemen in Montana and Idaho, the Northern Region will be piloting a framework that will allow Agency designated volunteers to carry and use firearms for euthanasia of personally owned stock (equines) when they signed up under a Forest Service volunteer agreement (OF-301a). This framework will only be applicable to Forests and Grasslands in the Northern Region. In Idaho, where we share the state with Region 4 and share Hells Canyon National Recreation Area with Region 6, the framework will only apply to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Under the framework, there will be no cap on the number of volunteers who can request and be an Agency designated volunteer firearm user, and the Forest Service will not determine what kind of firearm can be used. All Agency designated volunteer firearm users must comply with local, state and federal laws.

To be an Agency designated volunteer firearm user, the volunteer must pass a background inquiry, which will be done by the local Forest Service law enforcement unit. If a volunteer does not pass the background check, they cannot be designated. Confidentiality will be retained, and Forest and Grassland Supervisors will only know if a volunteer passed or did not pass the background check. The inquiry document will be shredded after the background check is completed. Letters of designation will be issued by the Forest or Grassland Supervisor and will not be delegated to District Rangers or Forest or Grassland Staff.

Drug testing, and the annual agency firearms training/firearms proficiency certification are not required.

The Agency designation as a volunteer firearm user will be good for three years; a background check must be conducted again for each renewal.

Revocation of designation by the Forest or Grassland Supervisor may occur at any time including but not limited to if the volunteer engages in activity that is unlawful per 18 U.S.C. 922 (g), engages in activity that is a violation of local, state and federal laws, and/or engages in any behavior or actions that put other volunteers, self, partners, Agency employees, or the public at risk.

It's important to note that this required designation is only applicable to those volunteers who are signed up under a Forest Service volunteer agreement (OF-301a), either directly



with the Forest Service or through an authorized cooperator/partner, where the Agency is providing workers' compensation, tort, and personal property damage or loss to the volunteers to the same extent as a federal employee. This framework is **not** applicable to a volunteer's personal, recreational or other use on a National Forest or National Grassland.

Attached you will find the R1 Framework document, template designation letter, inquiry document, signed Regional JHA, Risk Assessment, template language to be added to Forest Service volunteer agreements (OF-301a), and other information to help with implementation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joni Packard, Regional Volunteer, Youth and Service Program Manager at joni.packard@usda.gov or (406) 329-3187.

LEANNE M. MARTEN
Regional Forester

Attachments (7):

R1 – Framework – Firearm Use by Volunteers for Stock Euthanasia
R1 – FS Volunteer Agreement Template Wording for Agency Designated Volunteers for
Firearm Use – Stock Euthanasia
R1 – JHA – Volunteer Firearms Animal Disposal
R1 – Request to be Designated as Volunteer Firearm User
R1 – Risk Assessment Stock Disposal – Designated Volunteer Firearm User
R1 – Sample Template FS Correspondence R1 Authorization Volunteer to Carry Firearm
R1 – Volunteer Qualification Inquiry 3-31-20

cc: Joe Alexander, Scott Bragonier, Rich Carl (BCH of Montana), Rod Parks (BCH of Idaho),
Joni Packard