



Association of Christians Reaching Out in Service and Support

(A recognized U.S. Forest Service employee organization since 1997)

[<http://www.acrossweb.us/>]

On behalf of the National Board of Directors and the Regional Coordinators, we appreciate this opportunity to provide U.S. Forest Service employees with introductory information about the USDA recognized employee organization: "Association of Christians Reaching Out in Service and Support" (ACROSS) to our fellow employees throughout the U.S. Forest Service.

ACROSS is a growing and productive employee organization as evidenced by the past accomplishments, current activities, and future initiatives as shared below:

Major accomplishments have included: establishing a website; creating a U.S. Forest Service approved flyer (in lieu of a poster) highlighting our purpose statement; establishing and managing an agency-wide electronic prayer request network; providing advice to employees and managers having concerns about the rights of Christian employees in the Federal workplace; conducting chapter informational and organizational meetings; listing ACROSS on the USDA Civil Rights website under recognized employee organizations; reviewing department/agency policies affecting rights of Christian employees (e.g., religious accommodation); distributing information to members; providing assistance to Forest Service families in need, providing financial assistance to the Haiti relief fund, and representing the Christian concerns and perspectives as they pertain to workplace issues.

Future initiatives may include: expanding the network of local chapters; representation on the USDA Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council and other similar National, regional, and local forums; identifying alternative training opportunities to existing sensitivity training; augmenting the Employee Assistance Program with certified Christian counselors; securing non-appropriated funding sources; collaborating with other Federal employee organizations on projects of mutual interest; encouraging employees in other departments/agencies to adopt the ACROSS model; and designing/displaying theme posters (similar to Special Emphasis Program posters).

We invite you to explore the ACROSS Web Site at <http://acrossweb.us/> to peruse foundational documents such as the ACROSS Charter, and *USDA DR-4020-251*; practical guidance for representing the Christian paradigm in a workplace characterized by ethnic and religious diversity; and several very helpful links.

We are excited about the possibility of establishing chapter(s) of ACROSS on all of the National Forests, providing input on issues of interest to ACROSS to the Forest Leadership Team, participating in Civil Rights forums, and conducting monthly activities of local interest during lunch time or off duty hours in accordance with *DR-4020-251*. Until then, please contact your regional representative (who can be found on the website under the Contacts tab) if you would like additional information.