



# Engaging and empowering citizen science volunteers to protect against invasive species

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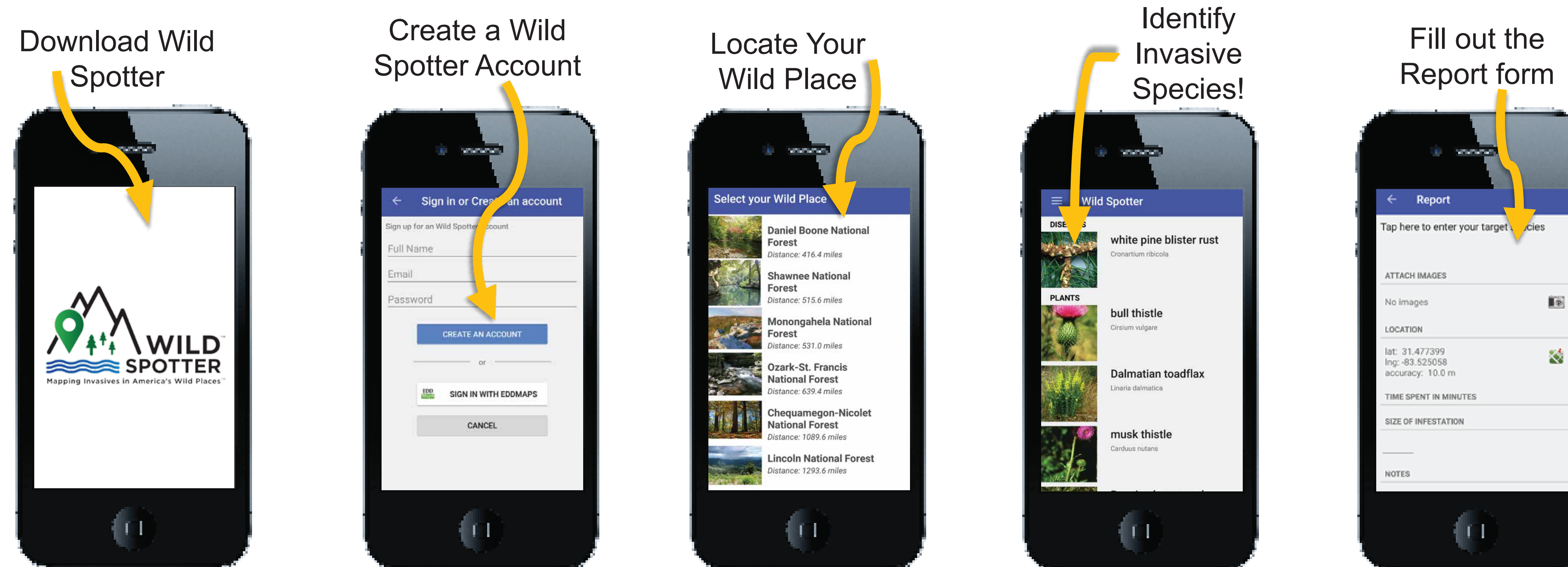
<sup>2</sup> USDA Forest Service

<sup>3</sup> Wildlife Forever

**Project Mission:** To engage and empower the public to help find, map, and prevent invasive species in America's wilderness areas, wild rivers, and other natural areas. Become a Wild Spotter citizen scientist volunteer, download the mobile app, and help protect America's Wild Places!

## Introduction

- Partnership between the University of Georgia-Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health and Wildlife Forever with the USDA Forest Service
- Wild Spotter** is a nationwide effort to detect, quantify, and map targeted invasive species across taxa (plants, pathogens, vertebrates, invertebrates, fungi, and algae)
- Promotes citizen science volunteers to provide critical scientific support to address the expanding threat of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species
- Data collected improves our effectiveness at preventing, controlling, and eradicating invasive species and aids in restoring invaded areas



And lastly, make sure to upload your queue after filling out a report!

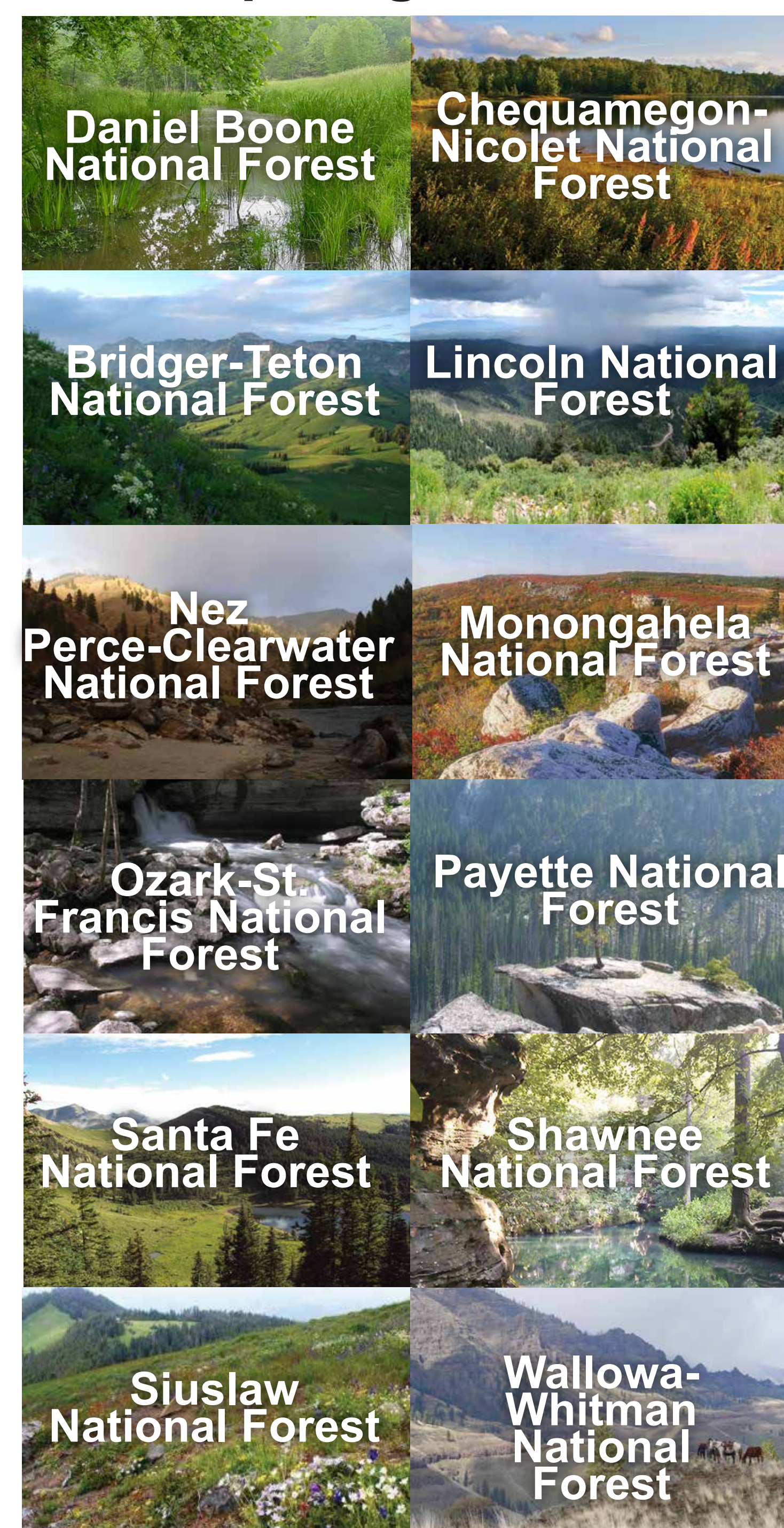
## Next Steps

- Expand the **Wild Spotter** citizen science project into new wild places, wilderness areas, wild rivers, and other natural areas
- Data collection techniques such as traps or samples (i.e., water or soil samples) can be used for prioritized species and the appropriate equipment, supplies, and training is provided to the citizen scientists.
- Continue to: 1) promote the awareness of non-native invasive species, 2) engage the public in creating the first-ever nationwide inventory of invasive species, and 3) defeat invasives by creating effective management strategies
- Create partnerships with public and private organizations at all levels and across all landownerships

## Methods and Materials

- Field (on-the-ground) inventory and mapping activities are accomplished by citizen science volunteers. Data is entered into the Wild Spotter smartphone application.
- Information collected by volunteers is either autofilled or editable. Specific information collected includes:
  - 1) what was found (selected from provided list)
  - 2) where it was found (GPS location)
  - 3) how much was found (area or number)
  - 4) date of collection
- Data collected by volunteers is verified by local experts before becoming public (maps, downloads).
- Citizen scientists can find more information about invasive species and the Wild Spotter project at <https://wildspotter.org/>

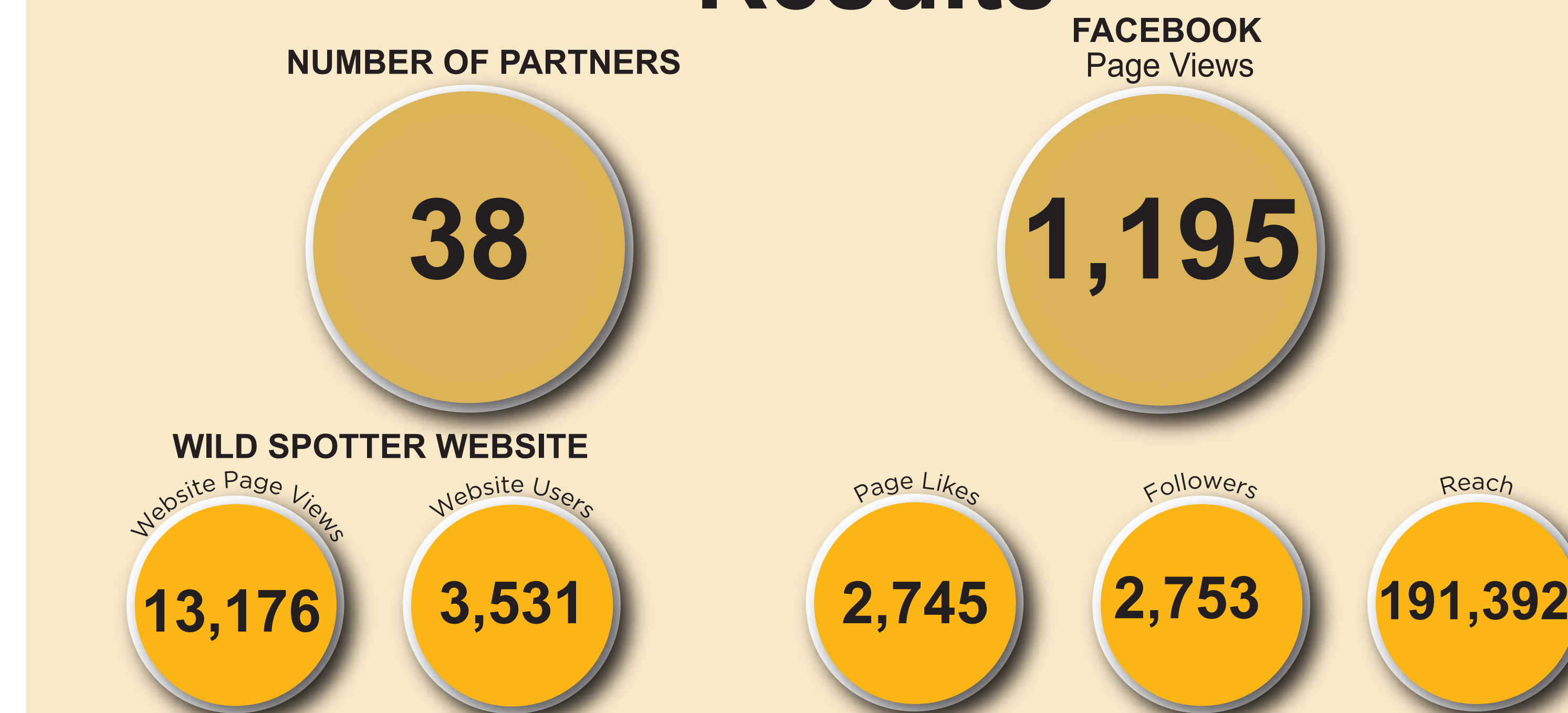
## Participating Wild Places



Anticipated Forests of 2019 include Talladega National Forest, Chugach National Forest, Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest, Ouachita National Forest, Sequoia National Forest, Bitterroot National Forest, and Custer-Gallatin National Forest.

## Results

\*numbers are from data as of March 4, 2019



## Target Audience



Wild Spotter targets outdoor recreationalists that includes boaters, kayakers, canoers, birders, hunters, campers, naturalists, anglers, trail-riders, and wildlife enthusiasts. It targets educational professionals, teachers, families, kids, retired individuals, and anyone who enjoys the outdoors.

Works on iPhone, iPad, and Android devices. Download and install the **FREE** Wild Spotter App to map invasive species in your favorite Wild Place!

