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September 2000-14 November 2000. 2000

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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6500

Date: SEP 1 2000

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6023

Dear Senate Byrd:

As a condition of approval for our primary purpose realignment, the Committee requested that the Agency provide monthly reports on both timber sale accomplishments and the capacity of all recreation facilities, commencing on June 30, 2000. I am writing to provide you with our July report on progress towards completion of our Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 Timber Sale Offer goals as well as the current status of our recreation capacity.

Let me begin by highlighting the impact the current fire season is having on our ability to meet targets in all program areas. As I'm sure you know, we are in the midst of what may turn into the worst fire season in the last twenty years. We currently have over 20,000 firefighters on the fire lines. In some cases, over 55% of our Regional work forces are engaged in the fire campaign of FY 2000, and there is no relief in sight. Given this tremendous commitment of personnel, we are unable to make specific estimates of effects to program accomplishments including those associated with the timber and recreation programs at this time. I can report the accomplishments as best we know as of the end of July.

Timber Sales Accomplishments

The Periodic Timber Sale Accomplishment Report as of July 31, 2000, shows that nationally 852.693 MMBF (158.759 MMCF) had been offered. We would propose to update this report on September 8, 2000. It is still our intent to provide the Committee with a listing, by sale greater than 1 MMBF in size, and an amount attributable to small sales that accounts for the shortfall to be offered in the next fiscal year.

Recreation Capacity

In our last report, we identified 198 million PAOT-Days, as the capacity for FY 2000 as of June 30, 2000. We believe we have not deviated from that capacity during the month of July as a result of a shortage of funds. However, as mentioned above, our fire season has continually



worsened since our last report. There have been impacts to the operating capacity of our recreation facilities as a result of the wildfires in the west and we are unable to estimate the degree of impact at this time. We remain committed to reporting any site closures, due to a lack of funds for staffing, promptly to the Committees when they are identified.

I am sending identical letters to Senator Gorton and Congressmen Regula and Dicks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Mike" on the first line and "Dombeck" on the second line.

MIKE DOMBECK

Chief



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Date: SEP 1 2000

The Honorable Norm Dicks, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6932

Dear Norm:

As a condition of approval for our primary purpose realignment, the Committee requested that the Agency provide monthly reports on both timber sale accomplishments and the capacity of all recreation facilities, commencing on June 30, 2000. I am writing to provide you with our July report on progress towards completion of our Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 Timber Sale Offer goals as well as the current status of our recreation capacity.

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MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6500

Date: SEP 1 2000

The Honorable Slade Gorton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6023

Dear Slade:

As a condition of approval for our primary purpose realignment, the Committee requested that the Agency provide monthly reports on both timber sale accomplishments and the capacity of all recreation facilities, commencing on June 30, 2000. I am writing to provide you with our July report on progress towards completion of our Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 Timber Sale Offer goals as well as the current status of our recreation capacity.

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Date: SEP 1 2000

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6023

Dear Ralph:

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MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR ROSALIND D. GRAY, DIRECTOR,
USDA OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

FROM: Mike Dombeck *Mike Dombeck* SEP 14 2000
Chief

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2000 Civil Rights Self-Assessment Report

ISSUE:

Submission of the Forest Service Fiscal Year 2000 Civil Rights Self-Assessment Report to the USDA Office of Civil Rights and an update of the Forest Service Plan of Actions in response to the Secretary's Civil Rights Forum.

DISCUSSION:

Secretary's Memorandum 1010-4, dated May 16, 1997, gives the Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) full authority for the performance and oversight of all civil rights functions within the Department, including the authority to rate the heads of USDA organizations on their performance of civil rights functions. To implement this authority and the recommendations of the Civil Rights Action Team report, the ASA established a civil rights accountability process. This civil rights accountability process requires the submission of a civil rights self-assessment report from the Agency.

SUMMARY:

The Forest Service is committed and supports the Secretary's goal of becoming the Federal leader in Civil Rights. If you need additional information or have questions pertaining to the information provided, please contact Thelma Floyd, Acting Director, Civil Rights at (202) 205-1585. The staff's fax number is (202) 690-1025.

Enclosures



FY 2000
Forest Service
**CIVIL RIGHTS PERFORMANCE
SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Goal 1: Accountability. Incorporate the Secretary's Civil Rights Policy throughout agency operations to ensure that customers and employees are treated fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect.

Performance Objective 1.1 Hold managers, supervisors, and other employees accountable for ensuring that USDA customers and employees are treated in accordance with the Secretary's Civil Rights Policy.

Indicator: 1. Agency displays commitment to the Secretary's Civil Rights goals in its strategic plan.

Response:

1999 Baseline: Does not apply

FY 2000 Actual: Does not apply

The Forest Service Strategic Planning Staff worked closely with employee organizations and the Civil Rights Staff to develop and include objectives in the Agency's Strategic Plan (2000 Revision) that ensure that historically underserved groups and low income communities have access to Forest Service programs and services, and the opportunity to participate in our programs and policy deliberations.

The following 5 objectives and corresponding measures that respond to this indicator are in the Agency's Strategic Plan:

1. Strategic Plan Objective 1d: Increase collaboration with, and participation of, a greater diversity of people and members of underserved and low-income populations in planning and implementing programs and activities.

Strategies to Achieve the Objective:

We will:

- Implement the agencywide Strategic Public Outreach Plan that meets USDA requirements and broadens opportunities at all levels of the organization to increase program delivery to underserved and low-income communities.
- Establish and/or strengthen policy guidance to integrate the participation of diverse people and underserved and low-income communities into USDA Forest Service programs and activities.

Measure: A significant increase in participation in programs and partnerships by diverse people and underserved and low-income communities.

2. Strategic Plan Objective 2d: Increase accessibility to a diversity of people and members of underserved and low-income populations to the full range of uses, values, products, and services.

Strategies to Achieve the Objective:

We will:

- *Create and institutionalize delivery systems that are more responsive to diversity of people and members of underserved and low-income populations.*
- *Enhance broader public accessibility through partnerships and contracts with Federal, State, and Tribal governments and other entities.*
- *Broaden understanding of customer preferences for uses, values, products, and services.*
- *Establish communication networks—rural and urban—that increase accessibility.*

Measure: Trends in increased accessibility

3. Strategic Plan Objective 3d: Broaden the participation of less traditional research groups in research and technical assistance programs.

Strategies to Achieve the Objective:

We will:

- *Complete an assessment of research institutions and organizations participating in Research and Development programs and identify the potential to diversify the research capability that can be tapped.*
- *Expand and strengthened relationships with ethnically identified institutions in order to increase research capacity and to contribute to technical and community assistance to underserved and low-income populations.*
- *Use assessment findings to enrich research, USDA Forest Service programs, and technical assistance.*
- *Conduct and apply social science research related to—*
 - Demographic changes*
 - Cultural differences*
 - Effectiveness of service delivery*
 - Communication strategies*
 - Use of traditional knowledge*
- *Develop and implement plans that broaden information sharing and provide technical assistance to underserved and low-income populations.*

Measure: Trends in opportunities for participation in research and in technical assistance.

4. Strategic Plan Objective 4d: Improve the skills, diversity, and productivity of the workforce.

Strategies to Achieve the Objective:

We

- *Use agencywide techniques, such as the Continuous Improvement Process, to identify critical skill, diversity, and technology needs to improve productivity.*
- *Implement recommendations from surveys and reports, such as the Continuous Improvement Process, Affirmative Employment Program, and the Workforce Planning Report.*
- *Recruit and retain a workforce reflecting the diversity of the Nation.*

Measure: Trend in accomplishment of the objectives stated in the agency's Workforce Management Plan.

5. Strategic Plan Objective 4e: Ensure nondiscrimination in the delivery of all program services and equal opportunity in employee practices.

Strategies to Achieve the Objective:

We

- *Provide timely, effective responses to all internal and external complaints.*
- *Provide basic civil rights training to all employees.*
- *Create culturally sensitive training, communication processes, and information systems that support employees' capabilities to reach broader, more diverse audiences in more effective ways.*
- *Use special emphasis program managers and liaisons to advise and support delivery of services to underserved and low-income populations.*

Measure: Trends in the resolution of complaints at the lowest level of the organization.

Indicator: 2. Managers' performance standards mandate actions that implement the agency's civil rights program objectives and ensure an environment free of discrimination.

Response:

1999 Baseline:

FY 2000 Actual: 1 Element, 22 Performance Measures

In April 1999, the Forest Service Chief sent to all Senior Executives in the FS a revised Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Elements and Standards, which includes the Civil Rights element, and adds a new performance element associated with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

Performance measures have been developed for Senior Executive Service (SES) employees Civil Rights element that are aligned with the Secretary's Performance Goals and the Agency's Strategic Plan. The measures provide executives the opportunity to document their accomplishments and will determine if they are rated "fully successful" in the civil rights element. The first assessment of the Executives using the performance measures was conducted in August 2000 (third quarter). This assessment included written feedback to the Executives and an opportunity for them to dialogue about areas where they may or may not be doing well before the year-end evaluation appraisals are completed.

As a result of this assessment and feedback, there is heightened awareness among Agency's top management, and cross/inter-unit dialogue. Leadership is demonstrating its support and responsibility of the Civil Rights program goals and objectives. Final appraisals will be completed by early September.

Indicator: 3. Agency ensures that all employees' performance standards provide for civil rights accountability.

Response:

1999 Baseline: Does not apply

FY 2000 Actual: Does not apply

The Forest Service and the Union has adopted 5 generic performance elements to be used in all performance plans starting fiscal year 1999 without additions, modifications or alteration. Element No. 4: Leading, Coaching, Developing, Supervising, and Promoting Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights is MANDATORY for all supervisors and management officials. It is OPTIONAL for all other employees, depending on the major duties and responsibilities of the positions, as described in the employee's position description. This element shall be critical for any performance plans in which it is used.

Indicator: 4. Agency allocates resources in a manner that provides for a results-oriented civil rights program.

Response:

1999 Baseline: Not applicable

FY 2000 Actual: Not applicable

Under the leadership of the current Chief, all Regions and Research Units have assigned Civil Rights Directors and staff and resources have been allocated to support their civil rights activities. Organizationally, nationally, the Civil Rights Director reports to the Chief. However, the Deputy Chief for Business Operations oversees the day-to-day operations of the FS Civil Rights staff. This approach has increased the effectiveness of the CR Staff through closer executive involvement.

The contracting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers has conducted an independent review of the organizational structure, staffing, processes and programs of the Forest Service Civil Rights Program. This study and assessment resulted in several new positions that are in line with and embrace the Forest Service Strategic Plan and Civil Rights Goals. These positions include such activities as civil rights training and development, performance management, and data analysis. These positions are slated to be filled in FY 2000-2001.

In preparation for the FY 1999 Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) survey, the CIP Staff developed and published a Manager's Guide to assist managers in implementing the 1999 CIP Model. In August 1999, the Survey was administered to over 33,000 employees and 47% of the employees responded. The Agency continues to receive high favorable ratings from employees in the following dimensions: Work and Family; Personal Life; Diversity; and Work Environment & Quality of Work Life. As a result of this survey, a National CIP Action Plan is being implemented to address issues identified in the 1999 survey. This Plan will use the biennial survey's Servicewide results as a basis for national action that, once taken, will resolve significant workplace problems identified by Forest Service employees.

In the furtherance of the CIP Program, the Lincoln National Forest designed and implemented a pilot program on systems thinking. The learning from the pilot is ready to be packaged for shared Agency-wide. We are also doing research to identify new methods for analyzing and using CIP findings to focus organizational energy on dimensions that the Agency is most able to influence and that are linked to organizational outcomes.

The Forest Service led USDA's way in administering the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) methodology. USDA plans to implement the Forest Service CIP model Departmentwide in FY 2001.

In support of Department issued Personnel Bulletin No. 252-1 that revises and clarifies the benefits to be provided to employee organizations within the Department, the Forest Service Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs), and Employee Groups Chairs are developing innovative ways to support the Civil Rights program goals and objectives. A collaborative effort has resulted in the development of five strategic objectives with action plans and performance measures, which provides the framework and lays the foundation for how the program managers and employee groups will work together in the future.

Indicator: 5. When discrimination, reprisal, or misconduct is found, agency takes appropriate disciplinary or corrective action.

Response:

1999 Baseline: 0 cases

FY 2000 Actual: 2 Cases

In FY 2000, two USDA-issued "Findings of Discrimination". The Agency has taken appropriate disciplinary action.

Goal 2: Program Delivery. Ensure all customers equal access and equal treatment in the delivery of USDA programs and services.

Performance Objective 2.1 Deliver agency programs in compliance with civil rights laws and Departmental regulations, policies, and goals.

Indicator: 6. Agency conducts compliance reviews of Federally assisted and Federally conducted programs and conducts Section 504 Self-Evaluation in a timely, complete, and impartial manner. Reviews comply with Departmental guidelines and are scheduled such that agency examines some programs every year and all major programs at least every 5 years. Section 504 Self-Evaluation plans and evaluations are completed in a timely manner in accordance with Departmental guidelines.

Response:

1999 Baseline: 1,882 Forest Service wide pre-award and post-award compliance reviews

FY 2000 Estimated: Approximately 1,900 (reflecting an estimated 1% increase)

The Washington Office conducted one Title VI Program review of the Rocky Mountain Research Station August 24-25, 2000. The second Title VI Program review is planned for the Southern Region and scheduled for September 27-29, 2000, in Atlanta, GA. Reports for each are forthcoming.

Over the next 3 years, Forest Service plans to conduct federally assisted program compliance reviews of all fifty State forestry organizations. Roughly 35% of these reviews have been completed in fiscal year 2000.

Forest Service completed Section 504 Self-Evaluation plan and evaluation in accordance with USDA guidelines and was submitted to USDA August 11, 2000.

Compliance reviews are conducted at all levels of the Forest Service (Washington Office, Region, Station, Area, Institute, Forests, and Ranger Districts). The Forest Service Handbook FSH 1709.11, Chapter 70, specifies the requirements for compliance reviews including the form which they take, programs and facilities which need to be reviewed, when each type of review should take place, and guidelines for developing preventive and corrective measures for them.

Indicator: 7. **Agency identifies and implements preventive and corrective measures to address deficiencies found as a result of compliance reviews.**

Response:

1999 Baseline: 1

FY 2000 Actual: 0

A joint USDA and Forest Service on-site Title VI compliance review of Mississippi Forestry Commission was conducted and findings report completed May 1999. A corrective action plan was developed in fiscal year 2000, based on the finding of non-compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requirements.

This was the only Forest Service Title VI compliance review resulting in the USDA finding of non-compliance. There were extensive negotiations and a meeting in Jackson, Mississippi, attended by the Washington Office Civil Rights Staff, the Southern Region Staff, and the Mississippi Forestry Commission regarding the content of the proposed corrective action plan. A corrective action plan was developed and is in the process of being signed. Implementation and monitoring of the corrective action plan has begun in fiscal year 2000, and is ongoing.

Indicator: 8. **Agency conducts timely and effective Civil Rights Impact Analyses and Environmental Justice Issue Determinations as required. Reports comply with Departmental guidelines.**

Response:

1999 Baseline: More than 5 completed

FY 2000 Actual: More than 9 completed

All Forest Service Civil Rights Impact Analyses (CRIAs) comply with USDA guidelines.

Washington Office Civil Rights Staff worked with various Director and Deputy Chief staffs and Region, Station, and the Area Director Staffs, to complete nine CRIA's primarily for administrative reorganizations, moving unit administrative offices, and unit administrative office consolidations. The Washington Office CR Staff also worked with several Regions and Stations to review and approve field unit reorganizations and administrative office/unit consolidations.

Two major Washington Office level reorganization CRIAs were completed and approved by USDA during FY 2000. They include 1) the establishment of the Deputy Chief, Chief Financial Officer Area; and 2) the Director of Conservation Education, in the State and Private Forestry Deputy Chief Area.

CRIAs for potential consolidations of the Forest Management and Range Management Director Staffs, and the Watershed, Air and Fish/Wildlife Washington Office Director Staffs will be completed by end of fiscal year 2000.

Several Washington Office level CRIAs were accomplished for environmental decisions that are national in scope, including the Roadless Policy FY 2000, the Roads Policy FY 1999, the New Forest Planning Regulations, FY 2000.

Forest Service continues to improve service delivery and field unit response and application of CRIA to all environmental and administrative decisions. This will continue to be a focus in all administrative and environmental decisions. The Agency updated its Civil Rights Impact Analysis and Environmental Justice policies in the Agency's Manual (FSM 1730) and Handbook (FSH 1709.11, chapter 30), and they are being reviewed by respective Washington Office Staffs for concurrence. Direction and status report to the Field Units regarding CRIA/Social Impact Analysis (SIA) will be provided during fiscal year 2001 after manual and handbook, and guidance documents are completed.

On-going Forest Service CRIA Training

Forest Service Washington Office has completed CRIA and Social Impact Analysis Training with the Southern Region, in Atlanta, GA Regional Office. The Intermountain Region 4 and Northern Region 1 field units completed CRIA training fiscal year 2000. Unit CRIA Training will continue to be the focus of Civil Rights Training fiscal year 2001.

Performance Objective 2.2 Maintain an effective process for handling civil rights program complaints.

Indicator: 9. Agency tracks and processes complaints in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with Departmental guidelines.

Response:

1999 Baseline: 7 of 13 program delivery complaints (program services) settled.
FY 2000 Actual: 2 of 10 program delivery complaints as of August 2000 settled

The Forest Service has also updated its manual and handbook system to include USDA's new program complaint process procedures (DR - 4330- 2 and 3) in chapters that relate to both Federally Assisted and Conducted Programs.

In addition to the USDA Civil Rights Training on Program Complaint Processing (Simple Justice video program), all Forest Service units have supplemented this training with detailed USDA Program Discrimination Complaint process training during fiscal year 2000.

As a result, employees, volunteers, and many special use authorization holders are aware of their responsibility to resolve customer complaints on the spot, if possible, and to provide the customer information about filing a program discrimination complaint.

The USDA OCR processes all program discrimination complaints. The Program Investigations Division of OCR determines all final decisions and closures of cases. OCR therefore determines the closure rate of cases.

Unit Examples:

Region 9: The Eastern Region Civil Rights Web Page also contains information on resolving customer's complaints, the complaint process, and handout materials for customers.

Rocky Mountain Region 2: R2 presented a Program Discrimination Complaints session as integral part of its Regional Visitor Information Service Training.

Indicator: 10. Agency promptly implements preventive and corrective actions resulting from complaint findings.

Response:

1999 Baseline: 2

FY 2000 Actual: 2

The Forest Service follows guidance outlined in DR 4330-2 and 3 for the filing and resolution of any complaint findings. This current year, the Mississippi Forestry Commission corrective plan (see Indicator 11) outlined necessary actions. Any inquiry received whether OCR accepts it as a program complaint or not, is considered constructive criticism to consider for agency preventive measures. The Alabama Forestry Commission review report is still open, although the corrective action plan and recommendation to close the case was sent to USDA fiscal year 1999.

Indicator: 11. Agency promptly implements terms of conciliation agreements.

Response:

1999 Baseline: 2

FY 2000 Actual: 2

*Alabama Forestry Commission – FY 1999, final case closure/resolution pending USDA
Mississippi Forestry Commission – FY 2000, implementation, monitoring ongoing*

Indicator: 12. Agency analyzes trends in the numbers, types, and outcomes of complaints to determine whether program changes are warranted to avoid future complaints and ensure non-discrimination and fair

Response:

1999 Baseline: Total 13 Cases

Bases of 6 cases in "backlog" and 7 "new" cases (some cases site multiple bases):

Race: (2) 15%

Gender/SH: (2) 15%

Age: (2) 15%

National Origin: (1) 7%

Persons with Disability (PWD): (6) 46%

Total of 7 cases closed in FY99.

FY 2000 Actual: Total 10 Pending as of August 25, 2000

Bases of 10 "new" cases (some cases site multiple basis):

Race (3) 30%

Gender/SH (1) 10%

Religion (1) 5%
PWD (5) 50%
Marital status (1) 5%
Total of 2 closed in FY 2000

This information provides an analysis of the trends in program discrimination complaints that the FS receives. Hunters with disabilities have made up the majority of the complaints this fiscal year. Unit's access coordinators and Title VI program managers handle complaints on a case-by-case basis correcting the situation or providing accessible hunting sites to accommodate the complainants.

FS CR can track the backlog and new cases. These are the actual cases that we receive information on and can determine the basis for the alleged discriminatory complaints. Civil Rights have also forwarded cases and inquiries from the field to OCR Program Investigations Division. Within this new process, FS depends on Program Investigations Division to officially transfer cases to our attention. Through our mandatory Program Discrimination Complaints training, employees and managers attempt to settle and resolve any complaints before the customer decides to use the USDA complaint system and form.

Performance Objective 2.3 Improve service delivery to historically underserved populations.

Indicator: 13. Agency prioritizes actions, establishes specific goals, and creates mechanisms to improve service to underserved populations.

Response:

1999 Baseline: Team Established to plan and develop the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan.

FY 2000 Actual: Interim Plan completed, printed, and implemented 25 Action Items established.

The Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan was completed and implemented October 1999 (fiscal year 2000). USDA Office of Outreach and Civil Right was provided a copy of the Interim Plan in fiscal year 2000.

The Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan is tiered to the long-term Forest Service Strategic Plan, and it provides the foundation for managing Forest Service programs, budgets, and measuring results, related to program delivery and outreach to underserved communities. Roughly 65% of the Interim Plan's 25 actions have been implemented and or completed.

All Forest Service Regions, and Stations have developed, or begun to develop their own Strategic Public Outreach Plans tiered to the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan. Forest Service's goal is to engage "underserved" communities, both urban and rural, in the strategic agenda to shape Forest Service policy and programs, and to build and promote mutually beneficial programs and services.

Efforts underway to implement the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan Initiative include:

- *Forest Service was a major participant and contributor in the successful National Black Farmers Association Conference 2000, held in Richmond, Virginia, August 24-25, 2000. One of the benefits from participating has resulted in establishing a team to strategize about potential partnership with the Black Mayors Organization.*
- *Last year the Washington Office Cooperative Forestry Staff and the Southern Region established the North and South Carolina Outreach Pilot Project, lead by Bill Hager. The North and South Carolina Outreach Pilot Project effort has resulted in better coordination among Federal and State agencies and improved services and information delivery to small-forested landowners in both states. More workshops are planned calendar year 2000.*
- *The Forest Service and NRCS sponsored a series of Southern Landowner Outreach Conferences, focusing on building relationships with farmers and underserved landowners and providing technical assistance and information. Some of the partners who helped to sponsor this years event are: Alabama A&M University, Alabama Forestry Commission, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Black Farmers Association, USDA CSREES, USDA Rural Development Agency, and many others.*
- *The Forest Service established several Outreach Liaison positions with our State and Private partners, including:*
 - 1) *The Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Land Assistance Fund, Outreach Liaison, Ralph Paige*
 - 2) *The Alabama Forestry Commission Coordinator, Gus Townes,*
 - 3) *The Southern Research Station is currently advertising to fill their Outreach Liaison position.*
- *Among focused External Public Outreach activities, the Forest Service has awarded a sole source contract with the University of California, Berkeley, to implement one of five planned Forest Service geographic based, regional meetings and symposia, with respective West Coast underserved community based organization networks, to implement collaborative stewardship and public outreach approaches with grass-roots underserved communities, through this winter (FY 2001). We have apprised the USDA Office of Outreach and have solicited their involvement.*

In addition to the above, the Forest Service will collaborate and implement 5-6 geographic based, regional meetings and symposia, with Forest Service field units, their respective community based organization networks to design and develop strategic public outreach approaches with underserved communities, starting this fall through winter, and continuing through FY 2002.

In FY 2000, the Forest Service reviewed and is considering several proposals that focus and test external public outreach, collaborative stewardship, and relationship building activities that involve a broad base of multicultural community based and academic institutions and organizations. These include:

- 1) The University of Texas, at San Antonio Hispanic Research Center Proposal,*
- 2) Memorandum of Understanding between the USDA Forest Service and the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP).*

Unit Example of Public Outreach

Region 8 has developed a Regional Strategic Public Outreach Plan that addresses inequitable participation of underserved groups. As part of the effort, the Region is working with Community-Based Organizations (CBO) Federal, State, and local agencies to increase awareness of Forest Service programs, activities, and services. The Region has taken significant steps to contact and develop positive relationships with other Federal and State agencies, universities, and CBO's.

The Southern Region is also developing an outreach video, brochure, and exhibit targeting these traditionally underserved groups. It will be distributed to internal as well as external customers such as State Foresters, universities, community-based organizations, and other state and local agencies/organizations. The Southern Region's cooperative forestry unit has established a second regional outreach specialist position to help minority forest landowner groups, to broaden Forest Service outreach efforts, and to improve forestry awareness among underserved publics.

Indicator: 14. Agency identifies and takes affirmative steps within the authority of the agency to remove barriers and increase program participation by and service delivery to underserved groups.

Response:

1999 Baseline: Team Established to plan and develop the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan.

FY 2000 Actual: Interim Plan completed, printed, and implemented 25 Action Items established.

Within the Interim Forest Service Public Outreach Plan, the section called "Existing Condition of Outreach", describes barriers to increased participation by the underserved groups in the programs and activities of the Forest Service. A National Action Plan to overcome these barriers was developed integral to the Interim Forest Service Public Outreach Plan and the Action Plan is being implemented service-wide. Additionally, internal and external marketing plans have been established for fiscal year 2000 through 2002.

The Forest Service Washington Office established a program of work and budget for Interim Plan implementation for fiscal years 1999 and 2000. Fiscal year 2001 through 2002 budgets has been projected for implementation of the Interim Plan.

Links to Other Important National Initiatives

The Forest Service has organized a 2002 Farm Bill Inter-Deputy Team to identify issues and facilitate the development of legislative proposals that the agency will consider for the 2002 Farm Bill. A presentation on the 2002 Farm Bill effort will be made at an upcoming to the National Forest Service Leadership Team. We are anticipating an expansion of the Farm Bill to facilitate more effective collaborative partnership opportunities with underserved communities.

The WO Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff is developing and testing the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) that includes the Human Dimensions Module. This system provides US Census demographic data for use in agency social and civil rights impact analysis, integral to environmental and administrative decisions. The Human Dimensions Framework is significant in that it is maintained on-line for field units to use in the daily environmental and administrative decision making processes. This strategic framework will better serve line and staff officers to better integrate diverse perspectives into agency decision-making processes, and improve how the Forest Service resolves issues with underserved communities.

The Forest Service has integrated the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan into the Washington Office's Directors' Forum called the Ecosystem Sustainability Corporate Team (ESCT). The ESCT ensures corporate level action plans are implemented across Deputy Areas and Director Staff Areas. The Team is developing a charter and an action plan for implementing the Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan.

The Forest Service established the National Collaborative Stewardship Network Initiative in fiscal year 2000. This initiative will define and explore collaborative stewardship, and public outreach and program delivery systems, in line with new Forest Planning Regulations, and the Secretary's policy on Civil Rights, and CRAT/CRIT recommendations. The Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan is on converging paths with the National Collaborative Stewardship Network Initiative.

The National Collaborative Stewardship Network initiative has established Five Pilot Field (others will be involved) Units working on the National Collaborative Stewardship Network Project Initiative. This year, the five field leaders will design and develop collaborative stewardship strategies with underserved communities, the academic community, the Forest Service, and other Federal agencies.

The Human Resource Recruitment Strategy Task Force promotes workforce diversity as identified in goal 4 – Effective Public Service, of the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan. The Human Resource Recruitment Strategy promotes direct contact with colleges and universities for employment, technical assistance, research, and the development of future community leaders. It ensures a skilled, diverse, and culturally sensitive workforce to implement effective program delivery.

Indicator: 15. Agency partners with outside groups, minority-serving institutions, and community-based organizations to improve service delivery to underserved populations.

Response:

1999 Baseline: Team Established to plan and develop the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan.

FY 2000 Actual: Interim Plan completed, printed, and implemented 25 Action Items established.

Refer to Indicator 14 for additional information.

Integral to the Interim Forest Service Strategic Public Outreach Plan's Goal 1, Ecosystem Health, and Goal 2, Multiple Benefits to People, the Forest Service has begun to coordinate a national dialogue with underserved communities and non-governmental and community-based organizations. The Implementation team has begun establishing a Forest Service presence within underserved community networks and broadening partnerships with NGO/CBO networks across the country.

In FY 2000, the Collaborative Stewardship Network was established to engage 5 field units in collaborative stewardship process pilots that will integrate public outreach and collaborative stewardship to underserved communities.

Goal 3: Employment. Provide a workplace free of discrimination and enhance the diversity of the workforce.

Performance Objective 3.1 Take affirmative steps to recruit, hire, train, and promote employees of diverse backgrounds.

Indicator: 16. Agency develops and implements effective strategies for improving diversity, using Federally mandated plans to assess under representation and to target improvement efforts. Plans and reports for the following are submitted within prescribed time frames and according to guidelines.

Affirmative Employment Plan for Minorities and Women (AEP)

Affirmative Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (AAP)

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP)

Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP)

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable

FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

All Forest Service Plans have been submitted within prescribed timeframes and in accordance with guidelines.

As of third quarter, approximately 95 percent of the local Units have completed at least 80 percent of the action items identified in their Affirmative Employment Plan for Minorities and Women (AEP) for this fiscal year.

Indicator: 17. Agency identifies and takes affirmative steps within the authority of the agency to remove barriers to workforce diversity.

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable
FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

A national 5-year Recruitment Strategy—2001-2005 has been designed to meet the short and long term hiring needs using a corporate approach and plan of action to recruit for entry-level skills, competencies, and diversity. The overall goal is to attract, recruit, and retain talented employees for a skilled and diverse Forest Service. It is designed to strengthened the Forest Service's image on campuses nationwide, tap into our internal potential, and build on student education and employment programs. The Strategy will enable us to recruit a highly professional workforce representative of America. There are 9 Strategic Actions on Objectives for each of the 5 years and provides for annual program monitoring and evaluation. The Strategy links directly to workforce planning to program goals and budget decisions along with holding managers accountable for meeting skill and diversity objectives of the Agency. Some of the short term actions in FY 2000 include 1) using the Service-wide Recruitment Coordination Board to designated entry-level jobs to recruit for in 2001; 2) developing new marketing materials and ad campaigns; and 3) identify key colleges with substantial minority populations in desired academic programs.

The Agency's Multicultural Work Force Strategic Initiatives remain a source of diversifying our Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) (formerly called the Cooperative Education Program) and entry-level workforce. Local Units are expected to hire in support of the Initiatives in SCEP and in Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). For example, students are recruited through the Hispanic Recruitment Initiative, 2010 Multicultural Work Force Initiative, Research Scientist Initiative, as well as Department sponsored Programs such as the USDA's 1890 Scholars Program, and University Centers of Excellence. Each Unit is assigned a "fair share" that is based on their overall hiring, generally entry level, and on the current number of SCEP students. This fiscal year, most Local Units far exceeded their "fair share" assignments.

The Forest Service has made the following accomplishments in overcoming barriers of persons with disabilities in the workforce:

- *The Forest Service hired a Persons with Disabilities Recruitment Liaison Officer who serves as the primary college recruitment liaison for the Forest Service's Multicultural Workforce Strategic Initiative for the PWD Program and also in the recruitment of disabled veterans.*
- *All vacancy announcements and outreach notices include the special hiring authority as required by the National Vacancy Announcement Guidelines.*

The Forest Service's Information Resource Management Staff overcame a significant barrier when it worked with the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Employees with Disabilities to analyze efforts to accommodate employees with disabilities through the following actions: The FS converted to Lotus Notes and Microsoft Office from office automation software that was not considered accessible to certain employees with disabilities. The Forest Service

purchased special software and hardware to accommodate employees with disabilities. The Forest Service established and is using specific application development guidelines to accommodate employees with disabilities for our PAYCHECK and Travel Voucher applications. The Forest Service has drafted new WEB development standards that include making web pages accessible to employees with disabilities.

Unit Examples:

When the Northeast Research Station and the Northeast Area of State and Private Forestry (NE/NA) considered hiring a deaf employee, 30 Area and Station headquarters employees received training on working with deaf people. The Station Director also contacted the National Pathfinders Association (the Association for People with Disabilities in the Forest Service) to find out the best way to offer classes in American Sign Language to his employees.

Appropriate staff from 100 percent of the Forest Service's Job Corps Centers attended U.S. Department of Labor sponsored Disability Accessibility Training. This training heightened Center Staff awareness to accessibility issues at Civilian Conservation Centers and provided information on how to improve access as well as identify vendors who specialize in such issues.

Indicator: 18. Agency conducts effective civil rights training for all employees, committee members, and volunteers to improve awareness, understanding, and appreciation for workforce diversity.

Response:

1999 Baseline: All Employees

FY 2000: All Employees

The Forest Service continues to meet the mandatory civil rights training as prescribed for all employees by the Department for the past two years. For fiscal year 2000, the Agency is delivering the on-line and hardcopy modules developed by the Department. The Agency's Civil Rights and Corporate Training Staffs have collaborated with the Department's training staff to review, test, and provide feedback regarding this year's modules. Over 400 Forest Service employees participated in the nationwide beta-test of the on-line training.

Employees provided very significant feedback to the Graduate School regarding the system operations and as a result, the training is being delivered as scheduled by the Department. Agency employees are being trained in all 3 modules as designed by the Department. They are being encouraged to use the on-line version first and if it becomes necessary, a hardcopy will be provided to those who are not successful with the on-line version.

Unit Examples:

Several Local Units have developed or contracted for additional training in areas where they believe more in depth work is required. For instance, the Alaska Region offered a workshop on Native protocols and environmental justice related to Alaska Natives. The Northern Region (Northern Idaho and Montana) cooperates with the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment to bring anti-harassment training to the Missoula area. The Eastern Region requires that all employees who either supervise other employees or manage a program to complete the Eastern Region's 3-day Civil Rights Core Competency training. This training module provides in-depth civil rights training in both Equal Employment

Opportunity (2 days) and Program Delivery (1 day). Over 360 Eastern Region employees have completed this advanced training.

Performance Objective 3.2 Conduct a comprehensive equal employment opportunity evaluation program to assess employment policies and practices.

Indicator: 19. Agency completes impartial compliance review of its equal employment opportunity program by September 30, 2000. Review complies with Departmental Employment Compliance Review Guidance.

Response:

1999 Baseline: 2 Units

FY 2000 Actual: 6 Units

During fiscal year 2000, National reviews were conducted by Johnson & Johnson Associates with oversight by the WO-CR Staff of 5 Field Units--Regions 5, 6, 8, 9, and Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, and Northeastern Area. The contractor has issued final review reports to the WO Civil Rights staff.

Next steps in the process:

- *Send final review report to the Leadership of each Unit;*
- *Each Unit discusses the report and develops an action plan addressing the findings with a focus on areas that need improvement within 45 days;*
- *Each Unit develops a communication plan on how to distribute results of review and follow-up action;*
- *WO meets with Unit's Leadership to finalize action plans, monitoring and follow-up sessions; and*
- *WO monitors as agreed upon.*

Unit Example:

The Northeastern Station conducts Business Management Reviews of field units. These reviews, which include civil rights, are scheduled 3-4 per year. These weeklong visits are a good opportunity to verify the integration of CR duties with technical work. The reviewers are looking for evidence of CR activity and compliance as they are briefed. The opportunity to talk to key employees about CR duties and implementation of CR emphasis items is unbeatable.

Performance Objective 3.3 Manage an effective employment complaint processing program.

Indicator: 20. Agency makes good-faith efforts to resolve employment complaints and workplace disputes at all times and, particularly, early in the process. Agency uses alternative dispute resolution programs.

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable

FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

In an ongoing effort to effectively address workplace conflicts, the FS accomplished the following in FY 2000:

1. *Helped fund and actively participated in the filming of a mediation video titled "A Better Way" that was distributed service wide in Spring 2000.*
2. *Helped finance and provided staff participation in an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) conference on environmental disputes at the Udall Center, Tucson, Arizona, in May 2000.*
3. *Through the second quarter (March 31, 2000) successfully resolved 82% of workplace mediations conducted [74 of 90] using the Early Intervention Program's (EIP) mediation resources.*
4. *Six of fourteen informal discrimination complaints mediated through the EIP were resolved.*
5. *The Forest Service's ADR program, the Early Intervention Program, provided advice and counsel to the Natural Resources and Conservation Service and the Farm Agricultural Service on the creation and implementation of their respective ADR programs.*
6. *Conducted a meeting for the agency's dispute resolution specialists to acquaint them with the comprehensive Dispute Resolution Guide and other topics associated with workplace conflicts.*
7. *Assisted the Department's Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center in developing an ADR handbook to be distributed to all USDA agencies.*
8. *Conducted a functional assistance visit to Region 5 for the purpose of evaluating their EIP and determining compliance with the Women's Class Action settlement.*
9. *Provided an ADR resource for the Secretary's Sexual Orientation Task Force.*
10. *Assisted other USDA agencies/mission areas in accomplishing workplace conflict resolution by providing them with trained and experienced FS mediators.*
11. *Developed and implemented an EIP case tracking system service wide, and demonstrated the system for the Secretary's ADR Working Group.*
12. *Provided EIP staff to serve as a panelist in an international ADR meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, in June 2000.*
13. *Conducted training for the Chief's Cadre of Resolving Officials in June 2000.*
14. *Developed the FS Dispute Resolution Guide, a comprehensive document detailing all of the redress options available to employees.*
15. *Provided training to about 50 collateral duty mediators who operate under the EIP*
16. *Ongoing EIP presentations to FS employees.*

In an effort to accelerate resolution of current EEO complaints and to manage the ongoing workload, the Chief's Cadre of Resolving Officials is being revived as a permanent approach to managing civil rights cases. The purpose of the Cadre is to give timely high-level attention to referred EEO complaints in order to make informed management decisions with respect to resolution efforts before complaints reach the formal/litigation stage where costs escalate rapidly. This approach allows for a neutral perspective in reviewing the merits of cases. All cadre members attended a 2-day training session that covered such topics as the Theories of Discrimination and Burdens of Proof, EEOC Regulations, Resolution Model and Justification Statements, Settlement language, etc. Results from this approach have been very successful. All cases that have been referred to Cadre members have resulted in proposed resolution agreements.

Indicators: 21. Agency takes actions within its control to speed processing of complaints, including timely responses to requests for information from counselors, mediators, investigators, and adjudicators.

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable
FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

Forest Service (FS) has established a single point-of-contact in its Washington Office in order to facilitate timely responses from mediators, investigators, and adjudicators and ensure quality control of the administrative processing of employment discrimination complaints. This point-of-contact coordinates with the appropriate Forest Service field units to ensure complaint information is provided to the requesting party as early as possible.

In May 2000, the Forest Service developed and implemented a Disputes Resolution Guide (DR Guide), which establishes procedures for the timely processing of EEO Complaints and other disputes resolution avenues. Concurrent with the release of the DR Guide, the Forest Service held a national meeting of all EEO counselors, Employee Relations Specialist, and ADR practitioners to gain understanding and buy-in from all stakeholders of the new and improved processes. The DR Guide is currently available on the Forest Service Intranet and is being used by Dispute Resolution practitioners, employees, and managers resulting in a more efficient and effective processes due to better-informed participants.

Included in this DR Guide are procedures, which require EEO Counselors to complete counselor's reports within 14 days of the issuing the Notice of Right File a formal complaint. This procedures insures that the counselor's report is complete well in advance of the time it is needed by USDA to begin the Formal EEO Complaint process.

Indicators: 22. Agency promptly implements preventive and corrective actions resulting from complaint findings.

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable
FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Department's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issue the Final Agency Decision with specific direction to agency on taking remedial or corrective action for complaints in which there is a finding of discrimination. Field Employee Relations representatives are responsible for ensuring that the agency implements the terms of the EEOC Order or the Department's Final Agency Decision. The Department's Office of Human Resources Management (HRM) monitors timely implementation. The FS HRM submits quarterly reports to the Department's HRM, which oversees the Forest Service-wide compliance.

Internally, the Forest Service has established procedures for reviewing all Forest Service settlement agreements prior to approval at the Washington Office level. A

description of preventive and corrective actions is a required part of this process and settlement agreements are not approved unless this is adequately addressed.

Indicators: 23. Agency promptly implements terms of settlement agreements.

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable

FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

As a part of its Disputes Resolution Guide (see response to Indicator 21), each settlement is required to include a designated point of contact for compliance. Settlement agreements have clauses that provide names of compliance officers and individuals who have delegated authority to enforce implementation of settlement agreements.

Despite the fact that the Forest Service averages over 300 resolutions per year, the agency has had only 16 (less than 5%) allegations of non-compliance with settlement agreements in FY 2000. Each of these allegations was reviewed by the local compliance officer and in cooperation with the USDA Office of Civil Rights appropriate remedial action has been taken.

Indicators: 24. Agency analyzes trends in number, types, and outcomes of complaints to determine whether changes in employment policies or practices are warranted to avoid future complaints and ensure nondiscrimination and fair treatment.

Response:

1999 Baseline: not applicable

FY 2000 Actual: not applicable

Forest Service Civil Rights maintains a comprehensive database of all its informal and formal EEO complaints. Civil Rights publishes semiannual complaint reports on formal and informal complaints and distributes to each of our Field Units. Each field unit, in turns, conducts its own analysis and takes appropriate actions to address trends, root-causes and avoid future complaints. The results of each Field Unit's efforts in this regard is evaluated through the FS Field Performance Evaluation process and Field Compliance reviews conducted on a regular basis by the Washington Office.

Goal 4: Procurement. Ensure equal opportunity for minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses in all USDA contracting activities.

Performance Objective 4.1 Take affirmative steps to increase procurement with minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses.

Indicator: 25. Agency develops and implements effective strategies for improving participation by minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses using Federally mandated plans to assess participation level and to target improvement efforts.

Response:

1999 Baseline:
FY 2000 Actual:

Procurement Outreach:

We have created a link to the USDA website which contains the Forest Service Forecast of Procurement Opportunities and provides a listing of current Forest Service-wide small business coordinators who can assist potential contractors in providing information about meeting our agency's acquisition needs. Acquisition personnel participated in the monthly USDA Vendor outreach sessions. Acquisition personnel also participated in outreach activities through national outreach initiatives to the National Urban League, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, National Minority Supplier Development Council, and local congressionally sponsored procurement related activities.

Indicator: 26. Agency identifies and takes affirmative steps within the authority of the agency to remove barriers to participation by minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses.

Response:

1999 Baseline:
FY 2000 Actual:

The greatest barrier to participation within the agency control has been vendor opportunities for access to projects, and awareness of available vendors in a given location. Forest Service acquisition units are required to solicit at least one minority, woman-owned, and small business disadvantaged business in accordance with the Rule of One policy established by USDA DR 5090-4. Several units have included this requirement in all of its acquisition requests. The agency has also promoted the use of the SBA Pro-net system for identifying potential sources of goods and services. This system has proven very valuable to the agency in identifying vendors located in a specific geographic region. Potential vendors are encouraged to sign up with Pro-net. Both vendors and field units are encouraged to use electronic means of acquisition where possible. This is done in addition to any field level outreach done at the field level.

Indicator: 27. Agency submits plans, forecasts, and reports within prescribed time frames and according to guidelines from the Department's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

Response:

1999 Baseline:
FY 2000 Actual:

The Forest Service, as a whole, meets minimum Procurement Preference Program (PPP) goals established by USDA-Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU).

<u>Prime Contract Category</u>	<u>FY 2000 Goal % of \$</u>	<u>FY 2000** Accomplishment</u>	<u>FY 1999 Goal & 3rd / 4th Quarter Accomplishments</u>
Small Business Concerns	62.37 %	54.0 %	<u>70.0%</u> 62.41 % / 66.6 %
8(a) Small Business	5.0 %	5.0 %	<u>5.0 %</u> 4.23 % / 3.8 %
Small Disadvantaged Business (not 8(a))	5.0 %	6.2 %	<u>5.0 %</u> 3.46 % / 12.1 %
Women-Owned Small Business	5.0 %	6.0 %	<u>5.0 %</u> 4.14 % / 4.2 %
Historically Underutilized Business (HUBZ) Zone	1.5 %	2.6 %	N/A*
Javits-Wagner O-Day (JWOD) Nonprofit Agencies	.08 %	.05 %	N/A*

- Goals and accomplishments were not set for FY 1999.

** Information is available through July 7, 2000 for most contracts. The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) obligations, collected from financial systems, are still being input. Purchases under \$25,000 on Purchase Orders or Blanket Purchase Agreements are as of the end of the 2nd Quarter, March 31st. The Purchase Order reports are run by NFC, and are not available as of July 10, 2000. Credit Card and convenience Check data is not included in any of the totals at this time.

At this point in time, we believe that the goal percentages will be obtained. However, the lack of complete third quarter information at this time (July 10) requires analysis of the FY 2000 accomplishment data without being able to project the third or fourth quarter statistics total. Historically, our third quarter accomplishments have only been a general indicator of final accomplishments. FY 2000 appears to be on track to make the FY 2000 goals in all but two categories. The missing third quarter NIFC data has a high percentage of small business contractors and should increase the percentage in that area, as should the reported purchase order dollars for actions under \$25,000 which historically are in the 80% range. Statistics in terms of goals and accomplishments have not been kept in previous years for the JWOD non-profit agencies, which make prediction of end of the year statistics somewhat tenuous. In FY 1999 the awards to JWOD agencies represented only .06% of our total obligations, which is below the goal set for the Forest Service by OSDBU for FY 2000.

Subcontracting:

Over 20% of the total dollars obligated are associated with the IBM-615 contract. They have reduced our small business percentages over the last three years. However, contracts with large businesses over \$500,000, or \$1,000,000 for construction, require subcontracting plans, which set goals and accomplishments for the particular large business. For instance, the IBM contract shows approximately 20% of our contract obligations were spent on awards to small business, 2.2% were to Small Disadvantaged firms, and 1.4% to Small Business Women-Owned firms. ***

***Unfortunately, Forest Service consolidated data on subcontracting accomplishments is made available by the Department annually approximately 60 days after the end of the Fiscal Year. Therefore, no FY 2000 data is available for this report.

SECRETARY'S CIVIL RIGHTS FORUM FOREST SERVICE PLAN OF ACTIONS

Forest Service Plan of Actions - STATUS UPDATES AS OF 9/5/00.

A. Workforce Plan and Recruitment Strategy – For FY2000 the Forest Service developed a National Workforce Plan that identifies specific hiring, diversity, and competency needs. Based on the Workforce Plan the agency developed a comprehensive 5-year Recruitment Strategy. The Strategy links workforce planning objectives and affirmative employment goals service-wide. Beginning in FY 2001 through FY 2005 the Forest Service will implement and evaluate a series of actions that address outreach, recruitment, and organizational diversity, along with critical skill gaps and technology needs to improve workforce productivity.

WHO: Deputy Chief for Business Operations

WHEN: Begin Recruitment Strategy Implementation By Oct. 1, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): Recruitment Strategy approved and implementation started Aug. 2000

B. Local Civil Rights Forum – Forest Service will direct each field unit to conduct local Civil Rights Forums dedicated to discuss Civil Rights. This effort continues the discussion begun at the June 29, 2000 Listening Session.

WHO: Executive Leadership of Each Region, Station and Area

WHEN: Operational By Oct. 1, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): Due to the severe fire season, this action has been postponed until Dec. 2000

C. EEO Complaint Management – The Forest Service will institute a collaborative EEO complaint review process of all informal and formal, individual and class complaints service-wide. The review and analysis will be conducted by a team composed of a field unit line officer, Employee Relations Specialist, Civil Rights Director, ADR Specialist, and a field EEO counselor.

WHO: Deputy Chief for Business Operations

WHEN: Begin Team Reviews at all Units By Oct. 1, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): 1st review conducted Aug. 2000; future reviews planned

D. Conflict Management – In June 2000 the Forest Service completed a service-wide Dispute Resolution Guide that consolidated information on all avenues of redress available to Federal employees. The Guide is designed to improve consistency of information, collaborative effort toward resolution, and effectiveness in conflict resolution efforts throughout the agency. The Guide is available to all employees via the FSWeb. Our next step is to develop a ‘user-friendly’ brochure of the Guide for service-wide hard-copy distribution.

SECRETARY'S CIVIL RIGHTS FORUM FOREST SERVICE PLAN OF ACTIONS

WHO: Deputy Chief for Business Operations

WHEN: Begin development of Dispute Resolution Guide brochure by Sept. 1, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): Dispute Resolution Guide currently available to all managers and employees on FS Intranet. Brochure is being finalized for printing in Oct. 2000.

E. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) – FS has an active ADR program in place since October 1999. The agency will continue its work to routinely consider mediation as an alternative to resolve all workplace disputes. The Forest Service's ADR program, Early Intervention Program, is currently an integral part of EEO complaint process. The Forest Service will assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Early Intervention Program.

WHO: Deputy Chief for Business Operations

WHEN: Begin Assessment By Oct. 30, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): Early Intervention Program is fully operational.

F. Accountability - The Forest Service in April 1999 revised its SES Performance Elements and Standards to include an amended Civil Rights element linked with the Government Performance and Results Act. In FY 2000 results-driven measures were implemented that incorporate the Civil Rights Performance Plan goals as outlined by the USDA Office of Civil Rights. These measures will be used to assess Civil Rights performance of the Executive Leadership in FY 2000.

The Forest Service has developed and implemented a separate critical Civil Rights performance element that will be included in the performance plans for all supervisors. Additionally, a civil rights performance will be evaluated as a part of the performance process of all Forest Service employees.

WHO: Chief

WHEN: Evaluation of new standards By Sept. 30, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): Evaluations of all SES managers is being conducted using the new Civil Rights standards in FY2000

G. Strategic Public Outreach Plan – The Forest Service has developed a national strategic plan for outreach to underserved communities in order to increase the understanding, participation and involvement of women, minorities and people with disabilities in all agency programs. The first phase of implementation involves engaging minority based environmental organizations, broadening public information about FS programs with multilingual communications and an assessment of participation data.

SECRETARY'S CIVIL RIGHTS FORUM FOREST SERVICE PLAN OF ACTIONS

WHO: Civil Rights Director

WHEN: Begin Implementation By Oct. 1, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): Plans for several symposia to assist in engaging minority communities will be finalized by the end of FY 2000. Office of Communications and the Civil Rights Staff are working together to produce radio spots on minority community stations providing information on FS programs.

H. Continuous Improvement All Employee Survey – Forest Service

employees completed an all-employee survey in 1999 as part of agency's effort to improve the work environment for all its employees. Following the survey each work unit was required to have follow-up meetings and develop unit specific action plans. The agency is currently analyzing survey data, and focus group results to identify areas of opportunity and set a course of action. A National Work Environment Plan will be developed to address issues relating to communication, training and workload.

WHO: Deputy Chiefs and Civil Rights Director

WHEN: Complete Phase I By Oct. 1, 2000

STATUS (9/5/00): All field units and headquarters staffs have developed CIP action plans and implementation is on-going. The national action plan is in the process of being finalized.

I. Civil Rights Organizational Effectiveness Study – The Forest Service is working through a contract with Pricewaterhouse and Cooper on a study to improve the organizational effectiveness of the agency's Civil Rights program. The agency has reviewed and is beginning the implementation of the study's recommendations. This will assist the agency in developing a results-focus Civil Rights program that will more effectively meet the needs of its employees and managers, and further enhance the agency's capacity to carry out its mission.

WHO: Deputy Chief for Business Operations

WHEN: On-going

STATUS (9/5/00): Implementation of the study's recommendations is proceeding as planned.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1300

Date: September 15, 2000

Route To:

Subject: Fire Rehabilitation and Restoration

To: All Employees

Cool weather and rain are helping to slow the wildfires that have caused so much disruption this summer. I thank the thousands of Forest Service employees, retirees, and families for sacrifices made to help protect communities and natural resources this summer. You have my personal appreciation and the thanks of the American people.

On September 9, President Clinton accepted the Interagency Report: *Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment*. Michael Rains, Director of the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Program, and Tim Hartzell of the Bureau of Land Management, deserve credit for its development along with Under Secretary Jim Lyons and Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Hayes. Thanks to all the others who laid the foundation for the Report. The Report will help ensure that we have the resources for firefighting operations, short-term emergency rehabilitation of communities and ecosystems damaged by fire, and long-term protection and restoration of communities and ecosystems at risk. The Report also highlights the imperative of enhanced state and private efforts to reduce hazardous fuel accumulations on non-federal lands and reduce fire risk to homes and property through programs such as FIREWISE. If you haven't read this Report or the President's address, I encourage you to do so. The report can be accessed through <http://www.fs.fed.us> and the President's radio address can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

Last week in Missoula, Montana, the National Leadership Team developed the following principles to guide our efforts as we implement *Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment*:

1. Assist state and local partners to take actions to reduce fire risk to homes and private property through programs such as FIREWISE.
2. Focus rehabilitation efforts on restoring watershed function including, protection of basic soil, water resources, biological communities, and prevention of invasive species.
3. Assign highest priority for hazardous fuels reduction to communities at risk, readily accessible municipal watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, and other important local features, where conditions favor uncharacteristically intense fires.
4. Restore healthy, diverse, and resilient ecological systems to minimize uncharacteristically intense fires on a priority watershed basis. Methods will include removal of excessive vegetation and dead fuels through thinning, prescribed fire, and other treatment methods.



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5. Focus on achieving the desired future condition on the land in collaboration with communities, interest groups, and state and federal agencies. Streamline process, maximize effectiveness, use an ecologically conservative approach, and minimize controversy in accomplishing restoration projects.
6. Monitor to evaluate the effectiveness of various treatments to reduce unnaturally intense fires while restoring forest ecosystem health and watershed function.
7. Encourage new stewardship industries and collaborate with local people, volunteers, Youth Conservation Corps members, service organizations, and Forest Service work crews, as appropriate.
8. Focus research on the long-term effectiveness of different restoration and rehabilitation methods to determine those methods most effective in protecting and restoring watershed function and forest health. Seek new uses and markets for byproducts of restoration.

The Report calls for strong national oversight as we begin implementation. In the interim, I have asked Michael Rains to continue as the Forest Service lead to begin the implementation phase, as collateral duties to his current position. He will be assisted by Denny Truesdale, Assistant to the Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry. We are counting on the existing field structure and a wide range of partners to ensure we meet our goals.

In many cases, accomplishing our restoration objectives will entail removal of brush and other small diameter low value wood products. Merchantable material generated as a byproduct of restoration may be sold. Explore non-traditional methods such as service contracts which can provide local jobs, accomplish land management objectives and help protect communities.

Some will attempt to use the 2000 fire season to argue for more or less commercial or salvage timber harvest on National Forests. History has taught us that these debates are counterproductive. Commercial timber sales accomplished with existing funding remain a viable stewardship tool provided they contribute to achieving long-term goals, but they are not the only method. We must focus on long-term goals and achieving the desired future conditions on the land, and reducing excessive fuels build-ups that in combination with extreme weather result in uncharacteristically intense fires.

The social and economic disruptions caused by this year's fires are tragic. They also, however, provide a tremendous opportunity to build a constituency for restoration based on the long-term needs of the land. Our progress will be measured by our ability to make a difference on the land, streamline process, and help people learn about the role of fire in healthy and diverse ecosystems. If we are successful, our efforts will provide local jobs, help protect communities and improve the health of the land. I appreciate your hard work.



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

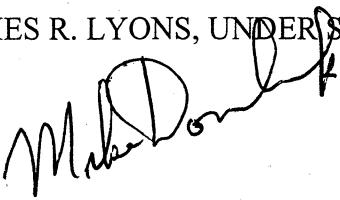
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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES R. LYONS, UNDER SECRETARY, NRE

FROM: Mike Dombeck
Chief


SEP 18 2000

SUBJECT: Nomination for James Hart for the 2000 Government Employees
Insurance Public Service Award

ISSUE:

James Hart of the National Forests in Florida has been nominated by the Forest Supervisor as a candidate to receive the Government Employees Insurance (GEICO) award. He is being nominated for the Fire Prevention and Safety category.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1980, GEICO has acknowledged the outstanding achievements of Federal employees through the GEICO Public Service Awards, an incentive awards program recognized by the Office of Personnel Management to honor four Federal employees and one retired Federal employee for their special achievements and contributions in the following areas: (1) Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, (2) Fire Prevention and Safety, (3) Physical Rehabilitation, and (4) Traffic Safety and Accident Prevention.

RECOMMENDATION:

We would like your approval to send the above nomination to GEICO for their consideration.

DECISION BY THE UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve _____

Date _____

Disapprove _____

Discuss with me _____

Reviewed by _____





United States
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of Agriculture

Forest
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Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 2760
Route To:

Date: SEP 20 2000

Subject: Guadalupe Escarpment Cave Protection Withdrawal

To: Regional Forester, Southwestern Region

Pursuant to FSM 2761.04, I concur with your proposal to withdraw from the Leasing Laws, the
Guadalupe Escarpment Cave Protection Area.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
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Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6170

Date: SEP 20 2000

Mr. John Obst, President
National Federation of Federal Employees
Forest Service Council (NFFE-FSC)
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53705

Dear John:

Congratulations on your recent election as President of the NFFE-FSC. As with your predecessors, my staff and I look forward to working with you and the Council in building upon the positive labor-management relations we have enjoyed over the years.

There are many challenges facing the Forest Service. By working together in finding solutions to those challenges, will enable us to devise outlines that are optional for our employees and the agency. The Forest Service Partnership Council continues to have my full support as a forum through which many of our challenges can and should be addressed.

Arrangements are being made for you to meet with me and members of my staff to get better acquainted and discuss various issues facing members of the bargaining unit. I look forward to that meeting.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Forest Service Partnership Council





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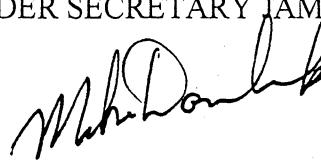
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DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARY JAMES R. LYONS, NRE

FROM: Mike Dombeck
Chief



SEP 20 2000

SUBJECT: Delegation of Authority
FILE CODE: 1230

ISSUE:

Delegation of authority to sign the road management rule.

BACKGROUND:

In February 1999, the Forest Service announced an interim rule that temporarily suspended road construction and reconstruction in certain unroaded areas on national forests and grasslands. The interim rule gave the Agency no more than 18 months to draft a new road management policy and to develop new analytical tools. The Agency published its proposed rule and policy on March 3, 2000. The proposal is designed to rely heavily upon scientific analysis and public involvement at the local level. The Agency held a 60-day public comment period with a 15-day extension and received more than 5,900 letters during the comment period.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the authority to approve and sign the final road management rule be given to the Chief of the Forest Service. This will facilitate the review and clearance of the road management rule and the corollary road management policy, which is to be issued in the Forest Service Manual. Having a single approving official will also be less confusing to the public.

In exercising this authority, the Chief will ensure that the necessary clearances are obtained from the Department and the Office of Management and Budget. Additionally, he will coordinate with your office on the timing and manner of the release of the final rule and policy.

DECISION BY THE UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve _____ Date _____

Disapprove _____

Discuss with me _____

Reviewed by: _____





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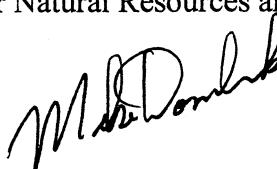
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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

THROUGH: James R. Lyons
Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment

FROM: Mike Dombeck
Chief


SEP 25 2006

SUBJECT: Roadless Area Initiative May Preclude Proposed Pelican Butte Ski Area Development

ISSUE:

The Forest Service Washington Office released the Roadless Area Conservation Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The preferred alternative in this would restrict certain activities such as road construction and reconstruction in the unroaded portions of inventoried roadless areas. All alternatives currently being considered in the Pelican Butte Ski Area Supplemental DEIS require between three and four miles of road construction within the roadless area. Alternatives that considered other locations within the area were analyzed in the EIS process that did not include roads or avoided the roadless area, but these alternatives could be prohibitively expensive. An alternative could be developed on Pelican Butte that would avoid construction of roads in inventoried roadless areas, but construction, operation and maintenance costs could possibly be excessive. Moreover, independent of the outcome of the roadless rule making, the Pelican Butte proposal still faces many obstacles through the project approval process, such as impacts to threatened and endangered species and the Northwest Forest Plan.

DISCUSSION:

The Winema National Forest is currently evaluating a proposal through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, to develop an alpine ski area on Pelican Butte (located 28 miles from the city of Klamath Falls) in southern Oregon. The ski area proposal has existed in one form or another for 30 years. The lower slopes of the 8,000 foot-high volcanic mountain provide habitat for bald eagles. The entire mountain is within the range of the northern spotted owl and land management decisions must comply with the Northwest Forest Plan. The ski resort's potential impact to groundwater resources is a significant issue with a proposed discharge of 60,000 gallons a day into a septic field. There is a concern that this could affect threatened, endangered and sensitive species and their habitats, for example Klamath Lake suckers. The upper mountain is largely roadless.



INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

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SCHEDULE:

On April 11, 2000, the Forest Service proposed to issue a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the Pelican Butte proposal. The release of Supplemental DEIS was expected to be in late summer 2000, with a 45-day public comment period. The Record of Decision (ROD) would follow in the spring of 2001. The expected completion date has been delayed because several consultant reports on the potential impacts of the resort are behind schedule. There is also some uncertainty associated with the pending Roadless Area Conservation initiative.

Over 50 agency and tribal government representatives are involved in a process established to bring specialists together to review comments and answer concerns raised by the agencies and the public at large on the existing Draft EIS on Pelican Butte. Interagency groups reviewed comments, identified data and analysis needs, and reviewed analysis assumptions. They are currently reviewing consultant reports and will be recommending appropriate mitigation.

Thirteen consulting firms have collected and analyzed data as identified by the work groups and the project team to respond to comments on the Draft EIS. Because of the difficulty of some of the technical questions, numerous specialist reports are not completed.

Work is ongoing to assess whether the significant issues identified about the Pelican Butte Ski Area Development can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AS IDENTIFIED IN THE DEIS, CURRENT STATUS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Roadless Area Conservation Rule:

The Roadless Area Conservation Draft EIS identifies a preferred alternative that would prohibit road construction and reconstruction in the unroaded portions of inventoried roadless areas. In fact, three out of four "prohibition" alternatives would do so, with only the No Action alternative not restricting road construction. If the No Action alternative is selected for the prohibitions, other procedural alternatives that require consideration of roadless area values, at the local planning level, could also potentially affect the project.

The proposed action under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule would apply to all projects that do not yet have a NEPA decision in place at the time the rule takes effect. We anticipate the roadless rule will be finalized in the winter of 2000. The decision for Pelican Butte will not likely occur before the roadless rule is finalized. Thus, as proposed, the roadless initiative would prohibit road construction in roadless areas in the Pelican Butte project area.

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

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The Pelican Butte proposal would potentially impact 1670 acres of the 10,900-acre Sky Lakes – B inventoried roadless area (590 directly, 1,080 indirectly).

All current alternatives for the ski area development would require road construction in the inventoried roadless area. Alternatives that considered other locations within the area were analyzed in the EIS process that did not include roads or avoided the roadless area, but these alternatives could be prohibitively expensive. An alternative could be developed on Pelican Butte that would avoid construction of roads in inventoried roadless areas, but construction, operation and maintenance costs could possibly be excessive.

Late Successional Reserve (LSR) Impacts:

The ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP), signed in April 1994, established several land allocations, including Late-Successional Reserves. These reserves, in combination with other aspects of the NFP, are designed to maintain functional, late-successional and old growth forest ecosystems and serve as habitat for late-successional and old growth dependent species. The ROD also adopted Standards and Guidelines for land and resource management, including some that address new developments in LSRs.

As new developments have been proposed in LSRs, questions have arisen that indicate a need to clarify the interpretation of the Northwest Forest Plan's Standards and Guidelines. At the request of Regional Executives responsible for implementing the Northwest Forest Plan, interagency guidance has been developed clarifying the Plan's standards and guidelines that would require full mitigation of any impacts to LSR's from new developments. Because the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior signed the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan, the Secretaries will be requested to sign a memorandum transmitting the new guidance to the leaders of the involved agencies.

The affected LSR has 101,600 acres with 31,282 acres of late seral habitat (old growth). The preferred alternative would directly affect the functionality of 410 acres of late-serial habitat in the LSR. A diversity of habitats for late-successional forest dependent species (specifically spotted owl nesting territories) would be impacted by the development. To mitigate this development, the EIS is proposing to change the allocation of certain 'matrix' (non-reserve) lands, where development and harvest guidelines are more flexible, to a designation of LSR. Three areas on the Klamath Ranger District being considered are Threemile/Nannie (5,800+ acres) and Cold Springs (2,800+ acres).

The lands being considered for this mitigation are being evaluated in the manner suggested by the draft "Interpretation of Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines Regarding New Developments in Late-Successional Reserves." This draft is pending signatures by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior.

An interagency working group is addressing issues related to the LSR.

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

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Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive Species (Suckers, Bald Eagle, Spotted Owl):

Any decrease in water quality could affect two sucker species listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. One bald eagle nest territory and flyout zone for a winter roost could be affected (disturbance effects). Two northern spotted owl territories could be impacted (habitat removal and disturbance effects). Potential effects can be lessened or eliminated through mitigation.

Local area supporters and the proponent are proposing mitigation to benefit bald eagles, and to improve water quality in Upper Klamath Lake. A bald eagle management area, estimated at over 1,000 acres in the "most important bald eagle use area in the state", is proposed near Pelican Butte and adjacent to Klamath Lake. These private and county lands have been identified and will be set aside by a long term Conservation Easement through agreement with Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the landowners. Numerous watershed restoration and water quality improvement projects are also being considered.

An interagency working group is determining if effects can be mitigated.

Water:

A reduction in water quantity is possible, but because of the size of the underground hydrologic system there is no way to measure the effect. Water quality impacts are possible on springs, and the Klamath Lake and National Wildlife Refuge, primarily from septic drain fields. An interagency working group is determining if the effects are measurable and whether they would be harmful to the listed suckers and other aquatic plant and wildlife species. Mitigation for potential impacts would be developed.

An interagency working group is determining if effects can be mitigated.

Off-Site Impacts:

The Rocky Point community (within 5 miles of the proposed ski area) could be substantially changed both socially and economically through increases in residential and commercial developments. Thus, a work group developed an Off-Site Induced Development Scenario and a consultant developed an Analogous Situation Report that compares the type of development that occurred from other similar size resort developments.

Cultural/Heritage Resources:

Possible disturbance impacts to cultural and heritage resources could occur during construction and from seasonal visitors. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is occurring regarding design and operation measures to mitigate potential impacts.

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

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Air Quality/Visibility:

Possible visibility impacts to Crater Lake National Park and Mountain Lakes Wilderness could occur. An interagency working group is discussing mitigation for potential impacts.

SUMMARY:

General Mitigation: Work is ongoing to assess whether the significant issues identified about the Pelican Butte Ski Area development can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

Roadless Area Conservation Rule: As proposed, the Roadless Area Conservation Draft EIS would not allow new road construction into the inventoried roadless area that is part of Pelican Butte.

LSR Mitigation/spotted owls: To mitigate this development, the EIS is proposing to change the allocation of certain 'matrix' (non-reserve) lands, where development and harvest guidelines are more flexible, to a designation of LSR. The lands being considered for this mitigation are being evaluated in the manner suggested by the draft "Interpretation of Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines Regarding New Developments in Late-Successional Reserves." This draft is pending signatures by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior.

Off-Site Mitigation/bald eagles: Local area supporters and the proponent are proposing a bald eagle management area, estimated at over 1,000 acres near Pelican Butte and adjacent to Klamath Lake. These private and county lands have been identified and will be set aside by a long term Conservation Easement through agreement with Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the landowners.

Water Quality: Water quality impacts are possible on springs, and the Klamath Lake and National Wildlife Refuge, primarily from septic drain fields. An interagency working group is determining if the effects are measurable and whether they would be harmful to the listed suckers and other aquatic plant and wildlife species.

Enclosures



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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY GLICKMAN

THROUGH: James R. Lyons
Under Secretary, NRE

FROM: Mike Dombeck
Chief

SUBJECT: Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal Decision

Mike Dombeck SEP 25 2000

ISSUE:

In February 1999, the Forest Service petitioned the Secretary of the Interior to segregate 405,000 acres of the Rocky Mountain Front from mineral entry under the 1872 mining law and began the process to withdraw this area of the Lewis and Clark, and Helena National Forests in Montana. The purpose of the segregation was to prevent the staking of mining claims for the two year segregation period, during which a formal mineral withdrawal report would be prepared.

As required by law, the Forest Service held public hearings and completed an environmental analysis of the segregated area. The Forest Service has decided that public comment and the environmental analysis warrants that the Secretary of the Interior withdraw the Rocky Mountain Front from hard rock mining for the next 20 years.

The withdrawal would prevent the staking of mining claims for a 20-year period, after which the withdrawal may be extended, subject to Secretary of the Interior review, for another 20 years. Withdrawal from hardrock mining logically follows the Forest Service's 1998 decision to prohibit leasing for oil and gas on the Rocky Mountain Front. The area is considered to have higher potential for the occurrence of natural gas than mining, but during the completion of the analysis leading to the decision to prohibit leasing, mining claims were staked in this area. This led the Forest Service to pursue a formal mineral withdrawal.

The withdrawal is needed to maintain other resource values in the area, to preserve the area for traditional and cultural purposes by Native Americans, to protect threatened and endangered species, and to preserve outstanding scenic values and roadless areas. The Front is home to nationally significant populations of wildlife, including the only US population of prairie ranging grizzlies. The final decision recommending that the Secretary of Interior proceed with formal withdrawal has been drafted and I am prepared to sign and release that decision by next Monday, October 2, 2000.



DISCUSSION:

Since the February 1999 announcement, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have completed an Environmental Impact Statement and Mineral Withdrawal Report. Public comments have been overwhelmingly supportive of withdrawing the area. We do not expect this announcement will generate public opposition in the State of Montana, or otherwise. Final decision to proceed with the withdrawal lays with the Secretary of Interior. The Secretary is expected to proceed and publish notice in the Federal Register soon after expiration of the appeal period - a 45 day appeal period upon release of the decision, followed by a 15 day discretionary review period by Under Secretary Lyons.

SUMMARY:

It is in the interest of good management of the National Forests to proceed with this action. The temporary segregation protecting this area from the staking of mining claims, in effect since February 3, 1999, will expire after two years.



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P.O. Box 96090
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File Code: 6170/6600

Date: September 29, 2000

Subject: Limited Personal Use of Telecommunication Resources and Office Equipment

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director,
and WO Staff Directors

This transmits for immediate implementation of the Forest Service policy on Limited Personal Use of Telecommunication Resources and Office Equipment. This policy will be incorporated into Forest Service Manual 6650, Web Services and Technology Management, in the near future.

In March 1999, the USDA issued Department Regulation 3300-1, Telecommunication and Internet Services, which contains policy applicable to employee use of telecommunication equipment and services. This policy permits limited personal use of telecommunication resources by USDA employees. The issue of how this new policy should be implemented within the Forest Service was referred to the Forest Service Partnership Council (FSPC) in December 1999 for resolution.

In addressing the issue, the FSPC formed a task group with Human Resources and Information Resources staff representation. Based largely on the recommendations from the task group, the FSPC adopted the enclosed policy at their June 2000, meeting. This policy is consistent with that issued by the Department as well as with the current Office of Government Ethics regulations.

Please contact Hugh Maxwell of WO-HRM at (703) 605-5200, ext 3075 or Jayne Handley of WO-IRM (703) 605-4558, if you have any questions.

/s/ Clyde Thompson

CLYDE THOMPSON
Deputy Chief for Business Operations

Enclosure



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Limited Personal Use of Telecommunication Resources and Office Equipment

(Based on Departmental Regulation 3300-1)

(As agreed to by the FSPC - 3/28/00, confirmed 6/14/00)

This policy authorizes the limited personal use of telecommunications resources and office equipment by USDA Forest Service employees in the workplace on an occasional basis provided that the use involves minimal expense to the government and does not interfere with official business. Occasional personal use of telecommunications resources and office equipment shall normally take place during the employees' personal time. Official government business always takes precedence over the personal use of telecommunications resources and office equipment. Application of this policy is subject to the following criteria and inappropriate personal uses listed below.

This policy is to be applied using the following criteria:

- 1. Employees who have questions related to the application of this policy are expected to contact their supervisor for a determination on appropriate use.**
- 2. Application of this FS policy within the same management unit must be applied consistently, with exceptions based on individual circumstances (e.g. misuse, special employee needs, etc.)**

Inappropriate Personal Uses

- 1. Any personal use that causes congestion, delay, or disruption of service to any government system, equipment or service, including but not limited to: large electronic file attachments, "push" technology on the internet, other continuous electronic data streams that can degrade the network, frequent or lengthy personal local phone calls/faxes, or more than occasional use of a copier to make 1-2 personal copies.**
- 2. Using the government systems as a staging ground or platform to gain unauthorized access to other systems (i.e. hacking).**
- 3. The creation, copying, transmission, or retransmission of chain letters or other unauthorized mass mailings (i.e. to lists of multiple unknown recipients where no official business relationship exists) regardless of the subject matter.**
- 4. Using the government office equipment for activities that are illegal, inappropriate, or offensive and, if done absent use of such equipment would be deemed misconduct (e.g. hate speech, offensive jokes/ stories/language).**
- 5. The unauthorized acquisition, use reproduction, transmission, and distribution of computer**

software or other material protected by national and international copyright laws, trade marks or other intellectual property rights.

6. The creation, downloading, viewing, storage, copying or transmission of sexually explicit or sexually oriented materials, illegal gambling, illegal weapons, workplace violence, or activities otherwise prohibited by law or regulation.
7. Use for commercial purposes or in support of "for profit" personal activities or in support of other outside employment, business activity (e.g. consulting for pay, sales or administration of personal business/financial transactions, sales of goods or services).
8. Engaging in any outside fund raising activity, endorsing any product or service, participating in any lobbying activity, or partisan political activity, unless authorized by law or labor contract.
9. Sending or posting agency information to external newsgroups, bulletin boards or other forums without authorization.
10. Any use that generates more than minimal additional expense to the government. An employee who exceeds a reasonable expense threshold will normally first be cautioned before administrative action is taken for subsequent similar offenses.



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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

THROUGH: James R. Lyons
Under Secretary, NRE

OCT 2 2000

Mike Dombeck
Chief

SUBJECT: Effort to Improve Accountability and Consistency in Forest Service
Land Exchange Program

FILE CODE: 5430

ISSUE:

As requested in your July 21, 2000, memo, I have enclosed my report on the actions taken to respond to the breakdown in accountability and consistency in the Forest Service Land Exchange Program.

DISCUSSION:

This report outlines the efforts taken to date, as well as remaining action items which will be completed within the next 7 months. I am confident that over the past 22 months we have addressed the specific issues noted in the two OIG Audit Reports to ensure that these will not occur again. Also, we initiated various other actions to strengthen this program Forest Service-wide. We will continue to monitor this activity closely to ensure all items are fully implemented Forest Service-wide, and that all land exchanges are in full compliance with applicable law, regulations, and policy. It is important that these are equal value transactions which clearly serve the public interest.

SUMMARY:

Enclosed report contains:

- Executive Summary
- Report to the Secretary
- Action Plan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report on the Forest Service Land Exchange Program

This report is in response to your July 21, 2000, letter requesting an accounting of the Forest Service's efforts to strengthen the Land Exchange Program with emphasis on the valuation function, organization, training, accountability and consistency. It also includes the identification of remaining actions and a timeline for completion of those actions.

The land exchange cases in which a breakdown in consistency and accountability occurred are transactions that were consummated in 1996 and 1997. The Forest Service has taken aggressive and extensive action to address these issues not only as they relate to these specific transactions, but also to ensure that these problems are not occurring elsewhere in the Forest Service. We have also taken other actions to strengthen all aspects of the land exchange program to ensure that the use of this critical land consolidation tool is utilized in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policy and to ensure that all land exchanges clearly serve the public interest.

In the short term, the National Lands Oversight Team is reviewing all land exchange transactions in the Forest Service over \$500,000; and below this threshold when proposals involve high public concern, complexity, or potential for risk and abuse. Due to downsizing, retirements and transfers, some regional lands organizations do not have a tenured program manager to provide the needed oversight on the land exchange program. Until this level of expertise is available in each region, the National Lands Oversight Team will continue to monitor cases and recommend modifications in its oversight role on region-by-region basis.

Expanded and/or updated national policy and technical guidance have been developed to address the issues noted in these OIG Audit Reports. Valuation procedures associated with land exchanges have also been clarified and supplemented. Implementation of this direction is being monitored through the National Team Oversight Reviews.

We have strengthened appraisal and realty expertise in the Forest Service by establishing 12 new lands program understudy and apprentice positions. Individuals have been selected for these positions and are currently undergoing extensive training in all aspects of the lands program areas. They have been assigned to work under the supervision of lands program mentors who are providing "hands-on" training.

We have developed, in partnership with BLM, an in-depth appraisal and overall lands program training session for line and staff officers and have to date provided training for approximately 300 senior Forest Service managers. These national training sessions are provided twice annually. In addition, we have designed and are co-teaching a comprehensive Lands and Realty Foundation training program at the National BLM Training Center in Phoenix. The first module was completed last spring and the final session will be presented in January 2001. Our understudies and apprentices are required to complete this training program along with other selected personnel assigned to lands activities. Consideration is also being given to a certification program to ensure minimal performance abilities in the lands program area.

The appraisal function and organization has been reviewed by an external professional organization, the Appraisal Foundation. Its recommendations have been evaluated and reform action items are noted in this report.

Appropriate disciplinary actions have also been initiated. Some of the personnel actions would have been completed much sooner if it were not for the OIG request of March 12, 1999, that the Forest Service not take any personnel action pending the completion of the OIG investigation.

The action items summarized in this report also includes the remaining steps that are needed to ensure consistency and accountability in the Forest Service Land Exchange Program. These items address the continued need for national oversight, training, and formalization of the various policy letters, interim directives, and Forest Service response items in OIG Reports. The manual and handbook will also include appropriate revisions to incorporate recommendations from the Appraisal Foundation Review Report and Congressman Miller's suggestions noted in his July 12, 2000, letter.

Report to the Secretary of Agriculture
On the
Forest Service Land Exchange Program

This report is in response to the July 21, 2000, request for an accounting of the Forest Service's efforts to address the issues noted in the Office of Inspector General Audits and General Accounting Office Report in the Land Exchange Program. This report also identifies further actions that are warranted to strengthen aspects of the Lands Adjustment Program and a timeline for completion of those actions.

The land exchange cases in which a breakdown in consistency and accountability occurred are transactions that were consummated in 1996 and 1997. These were the subjects of the August 1998 Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Land Adjustment Program Audit and August 1998 Zephyr Cove Land Exchange, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Evaluation Report by the USDA, Office of Inspector General. Both were later addressed in the June 2000 General Accounting Office Report.

The Forest Service has taken aggressive and extensive action in response to these issues not only to address how they relate to these specific transactions, but also to ensure that these problems are not occurring elsewhere in the Forest Service. In addition, we have taken numerous actions to strengthen all aspects of the land exchange program including valuation procedures to ensure that the use of this critical land consolidation tool is utilized in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policy; and that all land exchanges are equal in value and clearly serve the public interest.

Background

Beginning in 1996, the Forest Service identified problems in third-party facilitated cases in Nevada and began to initiate corrective actions. The initial issue involved the use of "bargaining" as a means of settling value disputes between the exchange parties. In this particular exchange, the Region had not fully complied with the bargaining procedures that were outlined by the Washington Office (WO) Lands Staff. As a result, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) eventually approved questionable values for the non-Federal lands (Deer Creek properties) that the Forest Service would receive through a BLM land exchange transaction. As an initial action, Interim Directive No. 5400-96-2 was issued in 1996, which provided for WO oversight on the further use of bargaining or arbitration in land exchanges prior to consummation of an exchange. This direction was formally incorporated into the FSM 5400 in January 1999. Formal expanded policy guidance on bargaining and arbitration was provided through Deputy Chief memo dated December 4, 1996.

Shortly thereafter, in 1997, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated an audit of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Land Adjustment Program and through Management Alerts began to note other valuation and specific procedural issues related to involvement of the third-party activities in the Deer Creek and other proposed exchanges. The Forest Service responded to the OIG findings and increased oversight on third-party facilitated exchanges. Effective May 29, 1998, the Deputy Chief directed the WO Lands Staff to review all pending third-party land exchanges prior to closure to ensure that these problems were not occurring elsewhere in the Forest Service. On June 11, 1998, the OIG provided the Forest Service with the draft audit report for review and comment. The Forest Service responded to the recommendation in this Audit and at that time the required WO oversight and approval on third-party pending cases was extended indefinitely on July 23, 1998, via memo from Deputy Chief.

In early 1998, the Forest Service identified and began to deal with title and appraisal issues associated with another transaction involving a 1997 BLM exchange involving non-Federal land (Zephyr Cove Parcel) along Lake Tahoe that the Forest Service received through this transaction. In August 1998, the OIG completed an evaluation report on this case and highlighted inappropriate valuation and procedural issues associated with this transaction. A supplemental Audit Report was issued by OIG in July 2000. This report contained further findings and recommendations relative to the Zephyr Cove transaction.

Actions Taken to Date

First, all specific recommendations noted in the OIG Audits have or are currently being addressed with management agreement reached with the OIG on the appropriate action items. In addition, the Forest Service has taken numerous steps to strengthen all aspects of the Land Exchange Program with emphasis on accountability, program consistency and improved efficiency, staffing and training, and valuation reform and management. These are summarized as below:

Accountability:

- Directed the Regional Foresters to aggressively correct problems and deficiencies and initiated corrective actions in the land exchange programs.
- Created a National Lands Oversight Team that became effective in November 1998. Since its inception, the Team has completed reviews of all transactions over \$500,000 (and below this threshold when proposals involve high public concern, complexity, or involve potential for risk and abuse) to ensure that they were consistent with laws, regulations, and policy. Over 100 transactions have been reviewed to date. The National Oversight Team will be maintained until each region clearly demonstrates that it has adequate staffing in place and is providing the necessary oversight on their exchanges.

- Initiated a semi-annual monitoring system to track progress (competency) of each region in meeting “full compliance” standard in the landownership adjustment programs. This monitoring has resulted in adjustments in the oversight threshold in some regions. Additionally, the National Oversight Team will now review all assembled exchanges, regardless of value, in all regions to ensure consistency in the use of these transactions.
- Initiated appropriate disciplinary actions. Some of the personnel actions would have been completed much sooner if it were not for the OIG request of March 12, 1999, that the Forest Service not take any personnel action pending the completion of the OIG investigation. Since receiving the OIG letter of December 29, 1999, releasing the Forest Service to take action, the Forest Service has proceeded with these actions in a manner consistent with the rights of the involved individuals.

Program Consistency and Improved Efficiency:

- Established national guidance on defining roles and responsibilities of both Forest Service and third-party facilitators in landownership adjustments. This was a primary issue noted in the August 1998 OIG Audit on Humboldt-Toiyabe NF Land Adjustment Program.
- Developed a uniform format for the initial screening of all land exchange proposals. This feasibility analysis screening procedure was coordinated and standardized with WO BLM.
- Revised and standardized the Land Exchange Implementation Schedule to identify and track the key process steps. Use of this tool has improved efficiency in exchange processing.
- Developed national direction on numerous emphasis areas of case development, valuation, and NEPA procedures associated with land transactions. These items were identified through Team Reviews over the previous year as well as formally addressing the significant OIG recommendations and findings.
- Developed national direction for the appropriate procedures for collecting, managing and sharing transaction cost with non-Federal parties.
- Developed national direction on incorporating landownership adjustments as integrated component in Land and Resource Management Plan Revisions.
- Clarified national direction on public release of approved appraisals involved in land transactions.

- Provided national standardized format for an Agreement to Initiate to Exchange, which includes a “Notification” to clarify our intention that all documents associated with processing an exchange are subject to public availability at the discretion of the Forest Service.
- Revising Forest Service manual and handbook to incorporate policy revisions and updates contained in earlier WO memos, which address the OIG and Forest Service noted problems, as well as reflect current regulatory and authority provisions. First draft was provided as guidance to all field units in fall of 1999.
- Provided national direction and procedures, including a form, to standardize and certify land descriptions for both Federal and non-Federal lands associated with land transactions.

Staffing and Training:

- Strengthened appraisal and realty expertise in the Forest Service by establishing 12 new lands program understudy and apprentice positions. Individuals have been selected for these positions and are currently undergoing extensive training in all aspects of the lands program areas. They have been assigned to work under the supervision of lands program mentors, who will provide “hands-on” training.
- Initiated review to utilize zone organizations to maximize effectiveness of the scarce Lands expertise in the Forest Service.
- Developed, in partnership with BLM, an in-depth appraisal and transaction training program for line and staff officers and completed training for approximately 300 senior Forest Service managers. Training sessions are provided twice annually.
- Provided training opportunities for district, forest, and regional employees through participation as member of National Oversight Team as well as through the review process itself.
- Provided individual training sessions by the National Oversight Team for land personnel in Regions 1, 5, and 8 on the draft revised manual and handbook revisions. This training will be completed for the remainder of the regions in CY 2000 and 2001.

Valuation Reform and Management:

- Awarded a contract for an independent review of the appraisal procedures and organization by the Appraisal Foundation. The report of the review has been completed and the evaluation by the Forest Service was completed as of August 7, 2000. Appropriate action will be initiated, as noted in the following action plan.

- Provided national direction on appropriate valuation procedures for unique exchange transactions involving assembled exchanges, phased closings, and multiple transactions. These were problem areas noted in both OIG Audits.
- Designed joint BLM/FS national training course offered by the Appraisal Institute dealing with the appraisal of complex properties that are transitional in their market appeal. This course was offered in October 1999, and attendance was mandatory for Forest Service staff appraisers. This course was designed to address the OIG findings noted in the 1998 Audit Report to prevent re-occurrence of these valuation issues.
- Revising FSM 5410 and FSH 5409.12 to provide expanded direction and guidance specifically addressing the OIG appraisal issues noted in the two OIG Audit reports.

Summary of Team Findings and Notable Improvements in Land Exchange Program:

Overall, there have been significant gains made in strengthening all aspects of the Forest Service Land Exchange Program.

The National Oversight Team is reviewing all land exchange transactions in the Forest Service over \$500,000 (and below this threshold when proposals involve high public concern, complexity, or involve potential for risk and abuse) to ensure that they were consistent with laws, regulations, and policy and that these transactions serve the public interest.

Due to downsizing, retirements, and transfers, some regional lands organizations do not have a master level program manager to provide the needed oversight on the land exchange program. Until this level of expertise is available in each region, the National Oversight Team will continue to monitor cases and adjust oversight requirements as needed. Originally, the Team was directed to review all land exchanges valued at \$500,000 and over. The Team has monitored staffing and expertise in each region and has made recommendations for adjustments in their oversight threshold. Currently, all exchange cases are being reviewed by the Team in Region 3 and in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, regardless of value. In addition, as a further emphasis item, the Team is reviewing all assembled exchanges in all regions, regardless of value levels.

The National Oversight Team reviews have been received very positively and we have seen a genuine interest by employees at all levels in improving knowledge and skill levels in land transactions. In fact, there is a competitive spirit developing among various regions to be the first to consistently meet all compliance measures anticipating the potential for reduced oversight by the Team.

The findings of these reviews range from the need for minor additional documentation to rejection of the proposal due to inadequate public benefits. To date, the majority of the issues noted by the Team can be summarized as inadequate documentation of legal and policy compliance matters and valuation issues. These typically involve forest plan direction documentation, public benefits determinations, inappropriate valuation procedures, NEPA evaluation process compliance and documentation of the roles of third-party facilitators.

The Team is reviewing each transaction at two stages of the land exchange process. The first review occurs at the proposal stage (Feasibility Analysis) and then again once the NEPA evaluation has been completed but prior to the authorized official making a decision. Each review is documented and identifies the deficiencies that need to be addressed if the proposal is continued for further evaluation.

A Regional Appraiser or Senior Review Appraiser from outside the region also participates with the Team and completes a peer review of the appraisals associated with an exchange transaction for conformance with Federal standards and Forest Service policy. Valuation problems specific to the 1998 OIG Reports are specifically examined during this review.

OIG Auditors have been encouraged to accompany the Oversight Team on reviews and, to date, have attended two reviews as well as attended a manual and handbook training session provided by the Team.

Joint BLM and FS transactions are reviewed by both National Oversight Teams, and the Forest Service is taking full responsibility for review and approval of all actions, including all resource reports and title issues associated with the non-Federal lands that will be added to the National Forest system. Final appraisal approval will remain with BLM. Memorandum of Understandings (MOU's) have been signed in Regions 3, 4, and 5 with BLM's corresponding State Offices that clearly outline roles and responsibilities between the two agencies in these transactions.

The Team is responsible for monitoring the adequacy of lands staff and skill levels at the region, zone, and forest levels. Some regions do not have a senior level program manager in land adjustments on the Regional Office Lands staff. In those situations, the Team has increased its oversight to provide additional support to the regions until this expertise is developed. Examples of this are the Team now reviews all land exchanges (regardless of the value threshold) in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and in R-3.

The Appraisal Foundation Recommendations:

As a result of the OIG findings in the Humboldt-Toiyabe Land Adjustment Program Audit in 1998, a contract to review the Forest Service appraisal organization was awarded to the Appraisal Foundation.¹ They were to review for appropriate credentials, organizational efficiency, and professional policy and procedures to determine if these were consistent with established professional practices.

Overall, the Foundation report was highly supportive of the Forest Service appraisal function from a knowledge, skills, and abilities perspective. The technical aspects of the recommendations are generally for clarification and do not indicate that current policy is inconsistent with recognized professional practices.

¹ The Appraisal Foundation is a nonprofit organization with national responsibility for professional appraisal practices and standards for all licensed professional appraisers. The Appraisal Foundation was recognized by Congress in Title IX of the 1988 Financial Reform Act that was a result from the Savings and Loan scandals of the 80's. The Foundation is responsible for licensing requirements, professional standards and ethical practices for all appraisers involved in actions where Federal funds are involved.

A summary of significant findings and recommendations are as follows:

- **Require that all staff appraisers be directly under the supervision of the regional appraisers. Further that all regional appraisers be directly under the supervision of the Chief Appraiser.**

Comment: We do not fully agree with this recommendation because it would create an independent organization within the Forest Service that would be difficult to administer, to establish work priorities, and to hold accountable. Technical supervision is currently separate from the administrative supervision. The Forest Service will respond to this recommendation in action item # 5.

- **Require that all appraisals be prepared by either Forest Service staff appraisers or by contractors to the Forest Service, and that the appraiser has no current or past significant involvement with the non-Federal property owner or third party.**

Comment: The Forest Service does not fully agree with this recommendation. A substantial percentage (more than 40%), of the approximately 1500 appraisals reviewed by the Forest Service annually is obtained by the non-Federal party at their own expense. Procedures where all such appraisals were to be contracted by the Forest Service would have a significant impact on both the land acquisition and exchange program costs. Action item # 8 is designed to address this situation to the extent practical.

- **Recommends the establishment of firm policy on the release of appraisals to the public.**

Comment: Policy on the release of appraisals has been implemented through a policy memo signed by Deputy Chief James Furnish on July 27, 2000, which will be formally incorporated into the Forest Service Directives System.

- **Support for continued use of Federal Standards as reflected in the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (UASFLA) with no change.**
- **Praise for the Forest Service training policies and commented that Forest Service certification and experience requirements for staff appraisers was excellent, and should be continued. The Foundation indicated that Forest Service staff appraisers were extremely well trained and experienced.**

- **Suggested clarification and expansion of direction found in FSM 5410.**

Comment: A team comprised of all of the Forest Service Regional appraisers will respond to the suggested changes/additions in the form of a complete review of the more than 500 pages of technical direction found in the 5410 Manual and 5409.12 Handbook. The principal focus of the Manual revisions is the inclusion of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) in addition to UASFLA. This revision will also formally include provisions that were noted as action items by the Forest Service in the OIG Audit Reports. The FSM and FSH revisions will be accomplished under action item # 3.

Congressmen Miller's Recommendations for Reforms:

Congressman Miller's July 12, 2000, letter identified reforms that he believed needed evaluation. These specific items and our response are summarized below:

- **The automatic release of all appraisal information to the public upon completion of review by the agency appraiser.**

Response: On July 27, 2000, Deputy Chief James Furnish provided policy direction on the release of approved appraisals. The Forest Service policy provides that final approved appraisals will be made available as follows:

- a) upon release of an environmental assessment or draft environmental impact statement for initial public comment when the document identifies a preferred alternative that defines a specific land exchange proposal and if the appraisals have been reviewed and approved for agency use;
- b) when the decision to approve an exchange is made and public notice given;
- c) if the exchange proposal is withdrawn or terminated.

Privacy Act considerations and requests involving the release of confidential business information contained in these documents, unless waived by the provider, must be processed in accordance with Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations, part 1.11.

- **Limits on the ability of proponents to select appraisers.**

Response: The Forest Service cannot bar or otherwise restrict a landowner's choice of credentialed appraisers due to restraint of trade issues and potential for legal actions. However, a policy will be developed that will attempt to optimize the use of collection agreements which would increase the use of direct contracting by the Forest Service. See action item # 8.

- **Application of the NEPA and NHPA requirements in Muckleshoot v. Forest Service to all exchanges.**

Response: This court case involved a 9th Circuit Court ruling and was based on specific issues and circumstances associated with a particular land exchange and as such may not have broad applicability. However, the Forest Service will consult with the Office of General Counsel as to the applicability of this ruling to all exchanges. Appropriate direction will be provided as part of action item # 3.

- **Incorporation of the agency's priorities for acquisition in the exchange process.**

Response: Under current policy, the non-Federal lands included in land exchanges must be a priority for acquisition and support the forest plan management goals and objectives. Exchange proposals that are inconsistent with the forest plan management goals and objectives are rejected. The National Lands Oversight Team validates this specific item during the Feasibility Analysis review on exchange proposal.

- **Greater notification of adjacent landowners.**

Response: Currently the Forest Service directly notifies, at a minimum, all Congressional delegation members, local government, and provides a notice in the local newspaper for four consecutive weeks when considering a land exchange proposal. In addition, any group or individuals who have expressed an interest in any pending exchange. Also, local Forest Service officials make an attempt to notify all adjacent non-Federal landowners. This is often difficult since Federal parcels considered for exchange are frequently located adjacent to subdivisions or developments with multiple owners, many who are non-local or seasonal owners. However, a provision will be added to the draft Forest Service Land Adjustment Handbook that will emphasize that a reasonable "good faith" effort be made by authorized officer to notify landowners owning property adjacent to the Federal lands being considered for exchange. This will be addressed under action item # 3.

- **The compilation of better system-wide financial and environmental information on all exchanges.**

Response: The level of data and information collection on the program continues to be adequate for Forest Service needs. Currently, the regional offices prepares a digest on each consummated land exchange which summarizes the appraised values of both the Federal and non-Federal lands, acres and property interest that is conveyed and acquired, and the public benefits associated with the exchange. At the WO level, this information is utilized in developing a Land Exchange Program Summary that is included in the Annual Report to Congress.

ACTION PLAN

The following action items will be implemented according to the schedule outlined below. These represent the remaining steps that are needed to ensure consistency and accountability in the Forest Service Land Exchange Program. These items address the continued need for national oversight, training and formalizing the various policy letters, interim directives, Forest Service response items in OIG Reports into the Appraisal and Land Exchange Handbook and Manual directive system. These will also address the Forest Service responses to the Appraisal Foundation recommendations and Congressman Miller's suggestions.

- 1. Continue National Lands Oversight Team reviews on all land exchanges cases over \$500,000 threshold (and below this threshold when proposals involve high public concern, complexity, or involve potential for risk and abuse).**

Timeline for Completion: Reviews will continue until each regional lands organization clearly demonstrates that it can provide necessary "oversight" to ensure cases are in full compliance with laws, regulations, and policy and that these transactions well serve the public interest. Each region's competency in providing necessary oversight will continue to be monitored and reported on a semi-annual basis to the Deputy Chief with recommendations as to modifications in National Team oversight thresholds and requirements by region.

- 2. Continue to provide the National Lands Training for line officers and program managers. Require all line officers and Forest level and above program managers with lands program responsibilities to attend this session.**

Timeline for Completion: WO Director of Lands will ensure that this training is provided and that a directive is prepared for Deputy Chief signature on required attendance by October 1, 2000.

- 3. Formalize all policy memos, interim directives, and Forest Service response items noted in the OIG Audit Reports, Congressman Miller's recommendations, and the Appraisal Foundations recommendations into the formal Forest Service Directives System. This will involve incorporating revisions in Forest Service Manuals (FSM) 5410, 5400, and 5430 and Forest Service Handbooks (FSH) 5409.13 and 5409.12.**

Timeline for Completion: The FSM 5410 and 5409.12 (appraisal) Handbook revisions will be incorporated into the Directives System by March 1, 2001. The FSM 5400, 5430, and 5409.13 (chapter 30) Handbook revisions will be incorporated by April 1, 2001. These dates may need to be extended if these revisions require publication in the Federal Register.

- 4. Provide training on Landownership Adjustments FSH and FSM 5400 and 5430 revisions to regional lands personnel.**

Timeline for Completion: To date, this training has been provided by the National Lands Oversight Team for Regions 1, 5, and 8 in CY 2000. The training will be provided to all land personnel in the remaining 6 regions during CY 2000 and CY 2001.

5. **Reorganize the appraisal organization as follows:** All Forest Service staff appraisers within the regions will be organized under the direct supervision of the Regional Appraiser and the Regional Appraiser will be under the direct supervision of the Regional Director with lands program responsibilities. Coordination of the regional program of appraisal work will be the responsibility of the Regional Appraiser. Under this reorganization, the technical performance evaluation of the regional appraisers will be completed annually and provided to the Regional Director by the Chief Appraiser.

Timeline for Completion: The WO Director of Lands will ensure that this organizational modification will become effective by October 31, 2000.

6. **Require review appraisers to complete a certification, as part of the appraisal review, that as of the date of value, the estate appraised is consistent with the physical property (Certificate of Inspection) and in conformance with the legal description and current highest and best use of the property. The "Certificate of Inspection" and legal description of both the Federal and non-Federal lands will be provided to the review appraiser by the case manager.**

Timeline for Completion: This will be initiated on all future exchange proposals and incorporated into the revised appraisal FSH 5409.12 under item # 3 above.

7. **Develop a checklist of specific items that will be reviewed during both regional and WO level appraisal compliance reviews. These items will specifically include those valuation issued noted in the two OIG Audit reports as well as other required technical procedures.**

Timeline for Completion: This checklist will be developed and utilized of all future reviews and incorporated into the revised appraisal FSH 5409.12 under item # 3 above.

8. **Develop policy that requires the optimization of the use of collection agreements with non-Federal parties and initiate direct agency contracting in lieu of appraisals being obtaining by the non-Federal party. However, in every case where non-Federal party is to provide the appraisal, the Forest Service shall provide a list of appraisers who have done acceptable work for the Forest Service for consideration. In addition, the Forest Service Regional appraiser will ensure that a pre-work conference occurs with the non-Federal appraiser and non-Federal party and instructions are provided to the appraiser as to the requirements for meeting Federal appraisal standards along a concise description estate to be appraised.**

Timeline for Completion: This direction will be incorporated into the revised appraisal FSH 5409.12 under item # 3 above.

9. Complete evaluation of the use of zone organizations (centers of excellence) as means to better utilize and leverage scarce lands skills.

Timeline for Completion: Regional Foresters and WO Director of Lands will make a report with recommendations to Deputy Chief of NFS by April 1, 2001.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O.Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 2430-2-1

Route To:

Date: OCT 10 2000

Subject: Delegation of Authority to Serve as a Nonprocurement Debarring and Suspending Official

To: Deputy Chief, NFS
Associate Deputy Chief(s), NFS

You are hereby delegated authority to serve as a Forest Service nonprocurement debarring or suspending official pursuant to Title 7, Part 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Currently, Paul Brouha, Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System, serves as the nonprocurement debarring and suspending official. This delegation allows him to continue to serve in the position, but also allows others to serve in this capacity during periods when Paul may be absent.

My authority to redelegate the authority to serve as Forest Service nonprocurement debarring or suspending official to the Deputy Chief or an Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System is found at 7 CFR 3017.105 (63 FR 27667; May 20, 1998).

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

CC: Regional Foresters
Ann Bartuska
Richard Fitzgerald
Sherry Gardner
Lori Jones, OGC-NRD (Fax 202-690-2730)





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1910-1
Date: **Oct 20 2000**

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Governor
State of Utah
Office of the Governor
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-0601

Dear Governor Leavitt:

Thank you for your letter of June 26, 2000, requesting additional mapping information and an extension of time to review additional materials before commenting on the Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule and Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Your letter was forwarded to me for consideration and response.

The maps of inventoried roadless areas were provided by each affected national forest and grassland and reflect their latest information on boundary locations. Your concern about the extent of the area that will be affected by a final rule was considered during development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The proposal would limit new road construction but not current access or approved activities, and would except road construction pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights or as provided for by statute or treaty.

Regarding your request to extend the public comment period, I earlier decided that such an extension is unnecessary. I reached that decision in light of the extensive public involvement we have carried out. To that end, we provided more than 10,500 copies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Rule to municipal libraries, thousands of copies to individuals who took advantage of our pre-publication and post-publication ordering opportunities and offers; we posted the documents on our **roadless.fs.fed.us** website on the Internet; made the documents available at hundreds of Forest Service offices across the country; and distributed thousands of copies to the public at several hundred public meetings. Your office will be provided copies of the documents upon publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. A Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Rule are expected to be completed in November and December 2000, respectively.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Governor

Thanks again for the gracious
hospitality at our recent
fire meeting.



The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt

Page 2

DRAFT:FS:NFS:Roadless:Ciapusci:pmc:605-5138:08/08/00:roadless correspondence
team/uncontrolled/government/GOVT_Leavitt

REWRITE:FS:NFS:Roadless-Involvement:Elston:rme:605-5168:09/13/00: roadless
correspondence team/uncontrolled/government/GOVT_Leavitt

REWRITE:FS:NFS:Roadless-Involvement:Ciapusci and DeLost(Data):tac:605-5138:09/21/00:
roadless correspondence team/uncontrolled/government/GOVT_Leavitt

REWRITE:FS:NFS:Roadless-Involvement:Conroy:tac:605-5138:09/28/00: roadless
correspondence team/uncontrolled/government/GOVT_Leavitt

Name	Staff	Initial	Sign	Release	Date
Elston	Roadless Areas Team	rme ✓			09/13/00
Ciapusci	Roadless Areas Team	Tac ✓			09/28/00
DeLost	Roadless Areas Team	✓			
Marshall	Roadless Areas Team	✓			
Conroy	Roadless Areas Team	✓			
Furnish	NFS	✓			
Dombeck	Chief		✓		
Newman/Waddy	Roadless Areas Team			✓	



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 5100

Date: OCT 17, 2000

Route To:

Subject: Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire Adapted Ecosystems

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, and WO Staff

I am pleased to announce that on October 13, 2000, the Forest Service released, **Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems: A Cohesive Strategy**. The Strategy may be viewed at www.fs.fed.us. The focus of the strategy is on protecting communities at risk and restoring ecosystems that evolved with frequently occurring low intensity fire. Many of these forests and rangelands have grown out of balance due to past management practices and decades of fire suppression.

The Strategy provides a framework for implementing the hazardous fuels component of Secretary Glickman and Secretary Babbitt's report to the President, *Managing Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment*. The strategy identifies restoration priorities in fire dependent ecosystems – urban-wildland interface areas, threatened and endangered species habitat, and readily accessible municipal watersheds.

It is important to note that the strategy is iterative. It will change and evolve as we coordinate with States, tribes, local governments, and interest groups and finalize ongoing rulemakings and manual direction, forest plan direction, and activity plans. In addition, consistent with the direction within the FY 2001 Interior Appropriation (Public Law 106-291), we will publish **Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems: A Cohesive Strategy** in the Federal Register and make it available for 30 days of public review and comment.

This summer's fire season can only be viewed as tragic for the social and economic disruption it caused. However, Congress and the Administration have worked together to provide the resources that can help to improve fire management, prevention, and restoration. Our challenge is to strike a balance between aggressive action and intelligent caution. We must make certain that we thoroughly document the results of our restoration efforts and learn what works, what doesn't, and why. We must communicate what we learn, even—perhaps especially—about projects that might not work as intended, to Congress and the American people.

We must be smart in how we spend these new appropriations. The surest way to ensure that these levels of funding are *not* sustained is to propose projects that are certain to engender controversy and conflict. Ensure that initial treatment focuses on areas where risks to communities are greatest and on other managed and roaded areas where the risk of unintended adverse effects is least. This is our chance to perform, to put our best foot forward for the health of the lands we manage and the communities we serve.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1910-1

Date: OCT 17 2000

Mr. James T. Martin
Executive Director
United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated
711 Stewarts Ferry Pike
Suite 100
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for your letter of July 17, 2000, and attached Resolution No. 2000:76 (Support of U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Program) by the United South and Eastern Tribes. The support expressed in your resolution is greatly appreciated. Your resolution and comments are important and are being considered as we complete the remaining phases of the rulemaking and environmental analysis processes.

National forest roadless areas provide a wide range of benefits including clean air and water, wildlife and fish habitat, and opportunities for dispersed recreation. The Forest Service is committed to using sound management practices based on the best available science to ensure that these lands, and all national forests and grasslands, continue to provide a variety of benefits while maintaining their ecological integrity.

The United South and Eastern Tribes will be provided copies of the Final Environmental Impact Statement upon publication. A Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Rule are expected to be completed in November and December 2000, respectively.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1910-1

Date: OCT 23 2000

The Honorable John A. Kitzhaber
Governor, State of Oregon
State Capital
900 Court Street Northeast
Suite 160
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

FILE

Thank you for your July 17, 2000, letter providing comments about the Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule and Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I appreciate the insights and experience expressed in your comments and want you to know they are being considered as we complete the remaining phases of the rulemaking and environmental analysis processes.

Regarding your request to extend the public comment period, I earlier decided that such an extension is unnecessary. I reached that decision in light of the extensive public involvement we have carried out. To that end, we provided more than 10,500 copies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Rule to municipal libraries, thousands of copies to individuals who took advantage of our pre-publication and post-publication ordering opportunities and offers; we posted the documents on our **roadless.fs.fed.us** website on the Internet; made the documents available at hundreds of Forest Service offices across the country; and distributed thousands of copies to the public at several hundred public meetings.

Your comments were made part of the administrative record for this rulemaking. In compliance with National Environmental Policy Act procedures, responses will be published in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. A Final Environmental Impact Statement and decision are scheduled for completion by November and December, respectively. Your office will be provided copies of the documents upon publication.

The State of Oregon has been, and continues to be, a leader in natural resource management and conservation. I greatly value the commitment and experience reflected in your comments.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

*Mike Dombeck I appreciate your
staunch support
and counsel
Mike*



[3410-11-P]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems –

A Cohesive Strategy

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is adopting a cohesive strategy for fire management and forest health programs. The full text of the report, *Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems - A Cohesive Strategy*, is set out at the end of this notice. This report responds to direction from Congress and the President to provide a strategic plan to reduce wildland fire risk, protect communities, and restore and maintain forest ecosystem health in the interior West. The report also responds to findings and recommendations in a recent General Accounting Office report, and it provides a strategic framework for reducing hazardous fuels buildup as addressed in the September 8 report to the President by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, *Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment*.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the cohesive strategy report and related materials are available electronically from the Forest Service World Wide Web/Internet home page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/>. Paper copies of the report also may be obtained by writing to Director, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, 2nd Floor-SW, Sidney R. Yates Federal Building (Mail Stop 1107), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Beighley, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, (202) 205-0888.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: During the 2000 fire season more than 6.8 million acres of public and private lands had burned as of early October – more than twice the 10-year national average. The magnitude of these fires is the result of two primary factors: a severe drought, accompanied by a series of storms that produced thousands of lightning strikes followed by windy conditions; and the long-term effects of almost a century of suppressing all wildfires that has led to a buildup of brush and small trees in the nation's forests and rangelands.

On August 8, 2000, the President directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to prepare a report recommending how best to respond to this year's severe fires, reduce the impacts of those fires on rural communities, and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future. On September 8, 2000, the President accepted their report, *Managing Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment*, which provides an overall framework for forest health and fire management.

Subsequently, the Forest Service issued the report entitled, *Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems – A Cohesive Strategy*, which is set out in its entirety in this notice. This report provides the strategic framework for reducing hazardous fuels buildup within wildland–urban interface communities, readily accessible municipal watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, and other important local features. The Chief of the Forest Service signed the cohesive strategy report on October 13, and it was released to agency managers on October 17.

The report responds to Congressional direction to provide a strategic plan to reduce wildland fire risk and restore forest ecosystem health in the interior West. The report is set

out in its entirety at the end of this notice as directed by Title IV of the fiscal year 2001 appropriations act for Interior and related agencies (Pub. L. 106-291). As further directed by the act, the agency also has reviewed other policies and rulemakings currently in development for consistency with the cohesive strategy, including proposed rules and policies for National Forest System road management and transportation system (65 FR 11675, March 3, 2000) and roadless area conservation (65 FR 30276, May 10, 2000); and the Interior Columbia Basin Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Sierra Nevada Framework/Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This report also responds to the General Accounting Office report, *Western National Forests: A Cohesive Strategy Is Needed To Address Catastrophic Wildfire Threats* (GAO/RCED-99-65).

This cohesive strategy addresses the restoration and maintenance of ecosystem health in fire-adapted ecosystems for priority areas, with emphasis on the interior West. The focus of the strategy is on protecting communities at risk and restoring ecosystems that evolved with frequently occurring, low-intensity fire. Many of these forests and rangelands have grown out of balance due in part to past management practices and decades of fire suppression. The strategy identifies restoration priorities in fire dependent ecosystems for urban-wildland interface areas, threatened and endangered species habitat, and readily accessible municipal watersheds.

Mike Domke

11/1/2000
(Dated)



File Code: 1300, 1930, 6520
Route To:

Date: NOV 1 2000

Subject: Budget Formulation and Execution System

To: All Employees

I am pleased to announce the Forest Service is taking another step forward to improve agency performance and financial accountability through the implementation of a new budget formulation, presentation, and execution process. We will implement the new budget process, known as the Budget Formulation and Execution System, beginning with fiscal year (FY) 2003 budget formulation. The Budget Formulation and Execution System is a response to Congressional requirements and Forest Service leadership's desires for a new budget process that assures our agency's budget requests reflect linkages between field-based program capabilities, the Strategic Plan, and the Natural Resource Agenda.

The Budget Formulation and Execution System represents a significant departure from the way we currently do business. In the past, budgets were based more on historic funding levels rather than on-the-ground needs. The new budget process will provide the Forest Service with a consistent and efficient method of formulating programs by enabling managers to build budget proposals at the field-level. In the process, we will more effectively communicate our priorities, needs, and capabilities to Congress and the American people. The new budget process recognizes that field managers are in the best position to assess and link on-the-ground priorities, needs, and capabilities to the agency's Natural Resource Agenda.

As discussed with the National Leadership team, I fully support the implementation of the Budget Formulation and Execution System. As a result of the new budget process, we expect our agency to realize the following benefits:

- Improved performance accountability
- Increased credibility in Congress and with the American people
- Improved accountability for performance in the field
- Stronger linkages between our budget requests and the Natural Resource Agenda, annual performance measures, and national priorities
- Improved performance through the use of innovative technologies

The new budget process will be implemented by the end of the calendar year. In preparation, we have assembled a dedicated team of Washington Office and field staff to develop and deliver a training program for the new budget process. Training is scheduled to begin this month and continue into early next year. Instructions for operating under this new budget formulation process for FY 2003 will be sent to the field in early 2001 along with the policy and technical guidance to support our new process. I expect the benefits of the new process to greatly outweigh the costs. We are doing everything possible to minimize the impact to the field by ensuring that the design and implementation of the new budget process remain simple and clear.



I am aware that the transition we are undertaking as an agency to merge good business practices with sound resource decisions has been no small undertaking. Therefore, I sincerely thank you for your cooperation and support as we continue to move our agency forward. I view the new budget process as a critical step in improving our performance accountability.



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1200/1300

Date: NOV 2 2000

Subject: Washington Office Responsibilities

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, and
WO Staff

Several years ago, we restructured the Washington Office to improve our financial management practices and accountability. The positions of Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer were created to expedite reform of the agency's business management practices and ensure a clean financial audit. Our objective was to put business management and natural resource management on an equal plane with the goal of getting on top of our financial management and accountability problems.

I deviated from the new organization because the position of Associate Chief for Natural Resources was vacant and because of Phil Janik's unique strengths and skills. For over a year and half, Phil has pulled double duty – overseeing both State and Private Forestry and serving as the Chief Operating Officer.

We are fortunate to have two exceptionally talented people such as Hilda and Phil overseeing our natural resource and business management programs. Hilda's energy and commitment to conservation are remarkable. Phil's strengths in partnerships and relationship building have helped to improve the visibility and effectiveness of State and Private Forestry.

In order to maintain continuity and to enhance the integration of our natural resource program areas, and to strengthen focus on improving business management, I have decided to return to the approved Washington Office organization. Effective immediately, Hilda will oversee International Programs, State and Private Forestry, including tactical fire management and implementation of the National Fire Plan, Research and Development, and the National Forest System programs. Phil will focus all of his efforts on Business Operations, Finance, Communications and Programs and Legislation. Civil Rights and Law Enforcement will report to me through Phil.

It is my firm belief that these changes will enable us to ensure coordination of our national conservation efforts such as the roadless rulemaking, the national fire plan, and implementing the planning regulations, while increasing emphasis on accountability, budget reform, pushing more dollars to the ground, receiving a clean financial audit, civil rights and building a work force for the future.



Caring for the Land and Serving People

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Please make every effort to assist Phil and Hilda in their programs, assuring that the Forest Service continues to become the most effective and efficient organization.



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
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Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1300

Date: NOV 2 2000

Route To:

Subject: Transition to the New Administration

To: All Employees

Tuesday, November 7, is Election Day. Voting is one of the most important responsibilities of citizens of the United States of America. I remind all of you of the importance of exercising your right to vote in local, state and national elections.

Tuesday's election will determine our next President. The Forest Service will do all we can to assist the incoming Administration to make a smooth and effective transition. Many of you, especially line managers, will receive information requests regarding the transition. Please direct all inquiries to the Deputy Chief for Programs and Legislation, attention Linda Brett, either by email at Lbrett@fs.fed.us, or by phone at (202) 205-3611. Linda will coordinate all requests with the Chief's and Secretary's Offices.

I appreciate all you do in caring for the land and serving people. Have a good weekend!!!

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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United States
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Washington Office

14th & Independence
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090

File Code: 1510

Date: NOV 2 2000

The Honorable Rodney E. Slater
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Slater:

On behalf of the United States Forest Service, I would like to express my full support of the Scenic Byway grant application for the Wyoming Centennial Scenic Byway Visitors Project. The 2.8 million dollar grant proposal would provide the necessary visitor services in Jackson Hole, centrally located along the Wyoming Centennial Scenic Byway, which extends between Dubois and Pinedale Wyoming.

The scope of the proposal is to construct an Interpretive Center that would enhance the visitor experience of the 4 million people that travel the Wyoming Centennial Scenic Byway annually. As part of a 29-acre Multi-Agency Visitor Campus (MAC), the proposed Interpretive Center will become a focal point to the entire Greater Yellowstone Area. Information and interpretive materials will focus on the exceptional natural, cultural and scenic attributes of the Scenic Byway and the diverse landscapes through which it traverses.

The 2.8 million dollar grant proposal is a small portion (approximately 13%) of the total funding needed to construct the 29-acre Multi-Agency Visitor Campus. The many project partners are securing the remaining funding.

The proposal, initiated by members of the local community, has grown into a collaborative effort among local, town, State, and Federal governments, agencies and organizations. Partners include: the Town of Jackson, Teton County, the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Elk Refuge, the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish, the Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce and the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.

Congress has also recognized the merits of this project with the recent passing of legislation, enabling and authorizing the development and maintenance of the Multi-Agency Visitor Campus. This legislation, combined with the overwhelming support shown by an extremely diverse collection of participants, is truly remarkable.



The Honorable Rodney E. Slater

2

I trust you will also recognize the benefits of implementing such a comprehensive approach to enhanced visitor services, facilitating economic growth, and highlighting these nationally significant resources.

Thank you for your consideration of this unique and important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dombeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'M' at the beginning.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090

File Code: 1510

Date: NOV 12 2000

Mr. Kenneth R. Wykle
Federal Highway Administration
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Wykle:

On behalf of the United States Forest Service, I would like to express my full support of the Scenic Byway grant application for the Wyoming Centennial Scenic Byway Visitors Project. The 2.8 million dollar grant proposal would provide the necessary visitor services in Jackson Hole, centrally located along the Wyoming Centennial Scenic Byway, which extends between Dubois and Pinedale Wyoming.

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I trust you will also recognize the benefits of implementing such a comprehensive approach to enhanced visitor services, facilitating economic growth, and highlighting these nationally significant resources.

Thank you for your consideration of this unique and important project.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1950-3
Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Citizen:

I am pleased to present the Summary for the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, which describes a strategy for conserving National Forest System inventoried roadless areas and their important values. The full four-volume Final Environmental Impact Statement can be accessed via the Internet at the **roadless.fs.fed.us** website. You may also obtain a printed copy or CD version of the Final Environmental Impact Statement by sending a request to:

USDA Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Research Station
Publications Distribution
240 West Prospect Road
Fort Collins, Colorado 80526-2098

I want to thank all those who participated in this rulemaking. The wealth of insights and experience improved the proposal and the analyses of social, economic, and environmental effects. A Record of Decision and final rulemaking on this will follow in 30 days.

I appreciate your interest and concern in conservation of our public land heritage. For further information, contact Scott Conroy, Project Director, at (703) 605-5299.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1950-3

Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Citizen:

I am pleased to present the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement. These volumes describe a strategy for conserving National Forest System inventoried roadless areas and their important values. They contain an analysis of management options and the Forest Service's preferred alternative. I expect to render a final decision on this matter in no sooner than 30 days.

I want to thank all those who participated in this rulemaking. The wealth of insights and experience they provided contributed to improvements in development of the proposal and the analysis of social, economic, and environmental effects.

I remain confident that taking action now to conserve roadless areas through this national effort will result in these lands providing lasting values for future generations. I appreciate your participation in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures (4):

1. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1*
2. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2*
3. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3*
4. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 4*





United States
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Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1510

Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Senator:

I am pleased to present the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement. These volumes describe a strategy for conserving National Forest System inventoried roadless areas and their important values. They contain an analysis of management options and the Forest Service's preferred alternative. I expect to render a final decision on this matter in no sooner than 30 days.

I want to thank all those who participated in this rulemaking. The wealth of insights and experience they provided contributed to improvements in development of the proposal and the analysis of social, economic, and environmental effects.

I remain confident that taking action now to conserve roadless areas through this national effort will result in these lands providing lasting values for future generations. I appreciate your participation in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures (4):

1. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1*
2. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2*
3. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3*
4. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 4*





United States
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Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1510

Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Governor:

I am pleased to present the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement. These volumes describe a strategy for conserving National Forest System inventoried roadless areas and their important values. They contain an analysis of management options and the Forest Service's preferred alternative. I expect to render a final decision on this matter in no sooner than 30 days.

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I remain confident that taking action now to conserve roadless areas through this national effort will result in these lands providing lasting values for future generations. I appreciate your participation in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures (4):

1. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1*
2. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2*
3. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3*
4. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 4*





United States
Department of
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Forest
Service

Washington
Office

201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1670

Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Librarian:

The enclosed Roadless Area Conservation Final Rule and Final Environmental Impact Statement were produced by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Please make these documents available for public review at your facility.

To assure adequate public access to the information contained in these documents, the Forest Service is providing them to over 10,500 county and municipal libraries nationwide. The agency is taking this extraordinary measure in response to the large amount of public interest expressed about the Roadless Area Conservation rulemaking. The documents may also be accessed electronically on the Internet through the Forest Service's roadless.fs.fed.us website; some of your patrons may prefer this option.

Your assistance in facilitating public access to these documents is appreciated.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures (4):

1. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1*
2. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2*
3. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3*
4. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 4*





United States
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Service

Washington
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201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1510

Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am pleased to present the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement. These volumes describe a strategy for conserving National Forest System inventoried roadless areas and their important values. They contain an analysis of management options and the Forest Service's preferred alternative. I expect to render a final decision on this matter in no sooner than 30 days.

I want to thank the tribal leaders, representatives, and members who participated in this rulemaking for their interest and assistance. The wealth of insights and experience they provided contributed to improvements in development of the proposal and the analysis of social, economic, and environmental effects.

I remain confident that taking action now to conserve roadless areas through this national effort will result in these lands providing lasting values for future generations. I appreciate your participation in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures (4):

1. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1*
2. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2*
3. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3*
4. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 4*





United States
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201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1510

Date: November 9, 2000

Dear Representative:

I am pleased to present the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement. These volumes describe a strategy for conserving National Forest System inventoried roadless areas and their important values. They contain an analysis of management options and the Forest Service's preferred alternative. I expect to render a final decision on this matter in no sooner than 30 days.

I want to thank all those who participated in this rulemaking. The wealth of insights and experience they provided contributed to improvements in development of the proposal and the analysis of social, economic, and environmental effects.

I remain confident that taking action now to conserve roadless areas through this national effort will result in these lands providing lasting values for future generations. I appreciate your participation in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures (4):

1. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1*
2. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2*
3. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3*
4. *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 4*





United States
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Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1300

Route To:

Date: November 9, 2000

Subject: New Planning Regulations

To: All Employees

I am pleased to announce that after more than 11 years of preparation, the National Forest and Grassland planning regulations are finalized and available for our use. The new planning rule will help to guide management of 191 million acres of public land over the next several decades.

Consistent with the recommendations of our Committee of Scientists, the new planning rule is based on the simple premise that we cannot meet the needs of people without securing the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. Ecological sustainability serves as the guiding star of the new regulations. The new rule will improve how we work with people to make sound and lasting resource decisions. For example, the new rule:

- Integrates the principles of ecological, economic, and social sustainability to provide a wide variety of uses, values, products, and services.
- Requires us to actively engage the public and our other federal, state, local, and tribal partners in the stewardship of our National Forests and Grasslands;
- Integrates science effectively into planning requiring a focus on managing entire ecosystems rather than single species; and
- Institutes innovative problem solving approaches to the management of natural resources.

Our new planning procedures are effective immediately and applicable to broad-scale decisions as well as site-specific projects. They focus on improving existing plans and building on our successful relationships with our neighbors and partners throughout the nation. A copy of the new rule, as well as some explanatory material can be found on the Forest Service web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/forum/nepa/rule>.

I am excited about the final planning rule and proud of those who made it happen. The new planning rule and the way we go about implementing it will have long-lasting effects on the conservation of public lands for many years to come.


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1300

Date: November 13, 2000

Route To:

Subject: Release of the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement
and Preferred Alternative

To: All Employees

Today we released the preferred alternative of the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement. This effort culminates much hard work by thousands of Forest Service employees. From the front-liners that arranged more than 600 public meetings and met with thousands of people, to the dozens of field employees that sacrificed personal time with their families to help analyze the more than 1.5 million public comments, you have come through again and again. I am exceptionally proud of all of you. The National Leadership Team and I deeply appreciate all of your efforts.

Details of the preferred alternative may be found on the Forest Service Intranet and on the Internet at roadless.fs.fed.us. After 30 days, a final rule will be developed based upon the preferred alternative and other alternatives.

Before getting to the specifics of the preferred alternative, I want to stress that our proposal would not block any existing access to National Forests and Grasslands for hunting, fishing, off road vehicle use and other dispersed recreation, wildlife habitat management or any other permitted or authorized use of National Forests. Not a single mile of road would be closed under our proposal. Allow me now to highlight the key differences between the preferred alternative and the proposed rule released in May.

First, the preferred alternative would prohibit both new road construction and timber harvest except for clearly defined stewardship purposes in inventoried roadless areas. Hundreds of thousands of people called for the outright prohibition of timber harvest from inventoried roadless areas. As Chief of the Forest Service, I could not say that there would never be a need to manage vegetation in these areas. Needless to say, entry into roadless areas would be rare and subject to an open and public process. The preferred alternative would only allow stewardship harvest if it were designed to maintain or enhance roadless area values *and*:

- Restore habitat for threatened and endangered species, or
- Reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe fire, or
- Restore ecological structure, function, and processes.



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Second, the preferred alternative would include the Tongass National Forest after a 4-year transition period designed to assist small timber dependent communities in Southeast Alaska. I am fully aware of the impact this decision could have on people and families affected by an estimated 375 lost timber jobs. In order to begin to lessen this impact, we will develop and implement an economic package to assist the transition for these workers, their families, and their communities. Knowing of this impact, I did not make this decision lightly. We cannot, however, advance protection of roadless areas that exist in remnant fashion in the lower 48 States, while allowing the intact and abundant areas within the Tongass to remain unprotected.

Third, we have moved the requirement that managers evaluate the need to extend additional protections to other smaller unroaded areas to the planning rule. This change is in response to public and internal comments that such analyses are the essence of local planning. The planning rule provides a forum where communities of place and communities of interest may come together to develop a shared vision for protecting, conserving, and developing natural resources. This will facilitate that values debate in the appropriate forum.

Taken together with the new planning rules that were released on Thursday, and the soon-to-be-released roads rule, the roadless effort contributes to the continuing evolution of our multiple use mission of caring for the land and serving people. Recognizing those areas and values that most deserve special protection, whether they be roadless areas, old growth forests, or municipal drinking water supplies is just as important as employing active management to restore fire dependent ecosystems, provide abundant recreation opportunities, and supply goods and services for local communities.

The confluence of the 2000 fire season and the culmination of the roadless area conservation strategy provide the Forest Service with an unparalleled opportunity. For decades, controversy over roadless areas has sapped organizational energy and scarce resources. The final roadless rule will help to resolve the debate over roadless areas and allow us to employ our science, technology, and experience to restore fire dependent ecosystems along the urban wildland interface, in accessible municipal watersheds, and for threatened and endangered species habitat. The roadless proposal conserves millions of acres of wild, unfragmented landscapes. Meanwhile, we can direct our energies to protecting communities at risk and restoring ecological processes to fire dependent landscapes. Rarely have our priorities been clearer.

For many years, competing interests have placed us squarely between opposing points of view in a changing social, value-laden debate. For those that thrive on controversy, “success” is too often defined as that place where everyone is equally unhappy with the Forest Service. None of us became public servants and natural resource managers because we thrive on gridlock, phone book length environmental analyses, or endless planning. We became Forest Service employees because of our desire to extend a land ethic to the people we serve and the lands we manage – to serve as conservation leaders, not arbiters in a politically charged and litigious debate.

Conservation leadership requires that we stand up for the values and lands entrusted to our care by the American people. Creation of the National Forest System by Gifford Pinchot and Teddy Roosevelt, although unpopular with some at the time, is today viewed as an enduring victory for conservation. It is my firm belief future generations will regard this proposal to protect wild unfragmented landscapes, in the same light. Our predecessors that protected and left these resources to our care understood full well the need to serve as conservation advocates. This proposal celebrates their legacy.

Thanks for all that you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dombeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" at the beginning.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

14th and Independence
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 2090-6090

File Code: 2320

Date: NOV 13 2001

Rebecca Wodder, President
American Rivers
1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 720
Washington, DC 20005-3516

Dear Rebecca:

Thank you for your letter of August 29, 2000, concerning the establishment of a separate Director and staff unit for congressionally designated areas in the Forest Service (FS). I appreciate your thoughts and suggestions on how to improve our management of wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and other congressionally designated areas. I am considering this staffing option and will let you know of my final decision.

I also want to share with you some of our recent efforts that I believe clearly communicate our commitment to quality management of our congressionally designated areas.

Wilderness

During the 75th Anniversary Commemoration of the Gila Wilderness in June 1999, I made six commitments to wilderness management that underscore a continuing emphasis on maintaining the pre-eminence in wilderness management within the FS.

Coordinated Management

Working with leadership in the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Dr. Perry Brown has formed a panel of distinguished colleagues to assess the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The "Brown Panel," as it is called, has met twice and is preparing a report on their thoughts about the status of the NWPS. We expect them to address organizational issues raised during the scoping for their effort.

The Wilderness Summit, a gathering of interested publics to address wilderness issues, was held May 16-18, 2000, in Washington, DC. Over 100 people participated.

The Interagency Wilderness Policy Council, composed of senior leadership from the FS, NPS, FWS, and United States Geological Sciences Biological Resources Division, has been established. The Council met at the Wilderness Summit and is looking at ways to provide more management consistency between the agencies. Meetings are scheduled for later this fall.



Wilderness Advisory Group

We have established the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group composed of representatives from Washington, DC, forests, districts, and regions. Over the next couple of years, this group plans to think strategically and provide recommendations for building a solid wilderness program that crosses disciplines, funds our field program, and makes the connection between wilderness and the American public. The Wilderness Advisory Group has solicited and incorporated field input into the FS Wilderness Agenda, "Thinking Like a Mountain." They are now working on implementation of the Agenda.

Wilderness Planning

We have appointed a National Wilderness Information Manager who is focusing on the development of wilderness information management tools. He is leading a Wilderness Information Management Steering Group, composed of field employees, to ensure that decisions made regarding information management are informed and include professional input representative of the complexity of information needs from throughout the wilderness program. A wilderness database application, Infra-WILD, has been released as part of our Infrastructure Project, to provide wilderness managers with the tools they need to plan their work, manage their data, and improve service to the public. A visitor use permit module will be released later this fall.

Wilderness Monitoring

We are continuing to collect data on wilderness use levels and patterns, and on public perceptions and values of wilderness as part of the National Recreation Use Monitoring Project and National Survey on Recreation and the Environment.

We have established an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Forest Inventory and Monitoring (FIM) and wilderness programs. This MOU sets up the structure for improved communication between these programs and the use of FIM data for wilderness monitoring purposes. This effort clearly has improved communication between the wilderness program and the FS Inventory and Monitoring Institute.

We have initiated a Wilderness Monitoring Committee with responsibilities to develop recommendations on wilderness monitoring. This committee is being formed under the guidance of Dr. Peter Landres from the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Institute.

Wilderness Recreation

A task force of wilderness managers and researchers developed a strategy that recognizes that wilderness areas are a necessary part of many American's lives. The strategy also recognizes that visitor use must be actively managed and cannot be allowed to grow unchecked and that

there may be other opportunities for wildland recreation outside of wilderness both on and off National Forest System lands that must be explored. Ways to implement the strategy are being explored.

Wilderness Stewardship Training

The FS continues to support the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center (ACNWTC) in funding, personnel, and attendance at training courses. The ACNWTC has grown to a full interagency organization, providing wilderness training for 300-400 employees at 6-8 courses each year.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Wild and Scenic Rivers Program Manager

We have appointed a Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) Program Manager. She is currently assembling the latest WSR information into a useable database and helping field units with planning issues for future designations and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing.

Rebecca, I share these examples with you to highlight that congressionally designated areas are supported by senior management here in the Forest Service. There currently exists a unit within our recently implemented organization for Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources that provides leadership for congressionally designated areas. Once I make my final decision on the Director position, I will contact you.

I appreciate your continuing interest in National Forest management and our special areas. We look forward to working with your organization and others to fully implement the Wilderness Agenda and to fulfill our responsibilities to provide the benefits for future generations of an enduring resource of wilderness and for our other special areas.

Sincerely,

Mike

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

*Thanks for your staunch
support. Have a great fall.*



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 2600

Date: NOV 13 2000

Mr. Bruce Matthews
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation
601 N. Fairfax St., Suite 140
Alexandria, VA 22314-2054

Dear Mr. Matthews:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your strategy for support of the 2001 National Fishing and Boating Week. Your strategy is sound and will provide stability and industry support for the Week. As you are aware the Forest Service has been an enthusiastic supporter of National Fishing Week for many years. Annually during the week, we host several hundred events and inform thousands of individuals nationally with aquatic conservation messages and recreational fishing opportunities on National Forest lands. We look forward to continued participation with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation in this effort.

The Forest Service looks forward to working with the Foundation in 2001 and coming years and will actively participate in National Fishing and Boating Week. I am designating Associate Deputy Chief Paul Brouha as my representative to the Board of Directors. Please communicate directly with him on all issues related to our participation.

I look forward to a continuing successful partnership between the Forest Service and the Foundation.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1550

Date: NOV 13 2000

Minister Lufter Xhuveli
Ministry of Agriculture
Tirana, Albania

Dear Minister Xhuveli:

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to visit the USDA Forest Service staff on Friday, August 25, 2000.

It is disappointing that I missed the opportunity to meet you and to discuss our joint efforts with watershed management and entrepreneurial training. However, I have heard from Ms. Hilda Diaz-Soltero, my Associate Chief for Natural Resources, that your meeting was very successful. Enclosed please find the information that we wanted to share with you:

1. Sikes Act (which the U.S. Forest Service used to buy degraded agricultural lands)
2. Natural Resources Agenda
3. Organic Act of the Forest Service
4. National Forest Management Act

I would like to know if you require any further information on advancing technical cooperation with the Forest Service. Additionally, is there any scientific literature or data that we can provide for you that would be useful?

Should you have any questions, or require assistance in obtaining information or written materials, please feel free to contact me at 202-205-1661 or Dr. Val Mezainis, Director of International Programs, at 202-205-1650.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures
ip/correspondence/Minister Xhuveli
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rewrite:HDizaSoltero:orq:11/13/2000





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1570
Route To:

Date: NOV 13 2000

Subject: Little East Creek Emergency Stay Exemption Request

To: Regional Forester, R-9

This letter constitutes my decision to grant Forest Supervisor James W. Sanders' request for an emergency situation determination and exemption from stay, in accordance with administrative appeal regulations at 36 CFR 215.10(d), for the Little East Creek project on the Superior National Forest. I am granting the stay exemption due to the urgent need to conduct fuels treatment this winter to protect human health and safety and private property. Winter logging over frozen ground is necessary in order to minimize land disturbance (Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), p. 3-67) and avoid putting the area at risk for another fire season. The winter season is typically December 1 through March 15 (DEIS, p. 3-51). Waiting for the administrative appeals process to run its course would not allow sufficient time this winter to complete activities in the areas at risk.

My decision is based on a review of the record, which included the DEIS, "Fuels Risk Assessment of Blowdown in Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and Adjacent Lands" (Fuels Risk Assessment) and the Executive Summary; "Superior National Forest Little East Creek Fuels Reduction EIS Emergency Situation Determination Request Briefing Paper" (Briefing Paper); Supervisor Sanders' letter of October 16, 2000, to Regional Forester Robert Jacobs requesting an exemption from stay; Regional Forester Jacobs' October 23, 2000, letter to the Chief forwarding the exemption request; documented conference calls between the forest, region, and Washington Office staff; and letters from Federal, State, county, and private interests.

Background

On July 4, 1999, a storm event resulted in 477,000 acres of the Superior National Forest having wind and rain damage severe enough to cause President Clinton to declare the area a disaster (Declaration No: FEMA-DR-1283) (Briefing Paper, p. 1). The storm damage occurred in an already high fire hazard area resulting from a massive spruce budworm epidemic, which killed the majority of balsam fir and white spruce (Briefing Paper, p. 2). The storm, combined with damage from the spruce budworm epidemic, increased fuel loads from 10 tons per acre in a healthy stand to an estimated 20-100 tons per acre (Briefing Paper, p. 2; DEIS, p. 3-29, Table 3-14). The increased fuel load and curing has increased volatility (Briefing Paper, p. 2), meaning a potentially higher number of fire starts. Also, because of additional fuel created from both the budworm epidemic and storm damage, the fire behavior fuel model indicates that fire rate of spread has potentially tripled and fire intensity approximately doubled (Briefing Paper, p. 2; DEIS, p. 3-30, Figure 3-4; Fuels Risk Assessment, p. 18).



Wildfires historically have been part of the area's natural ecosystem and the project area has been prone to frequent and sometimes large fires. Past suppression efforts combined with the windstorm have created a situation that would result in potential fire intensities outside of the natural range of variability (Briefing Paper, p. 2; DEIS, pp. 3-27 through 3-28; DEIS Appendix H).

Prior to the storm, a number of areas were already being considered for fuel reduction because of a recognized hazard posed by the spruce budworm kill (Briefing Paper, p. 2; November 3, 2000, conference call notes, p. 3).

Of 2,814 acres included in the Little East Creek EIS project area, a stay exemption is requested for 2,446 acres (Briefing Paper, p. 2), as these are the acres in most urgent need of treatment to protect human health and safety. Treatment must take place during winter freeze in order to minimize land disturbance (FEIS, p. 3-67; 3-70). Missing the winter season for treatment would put the area at risk for another fire season. St. Louis County has stated that it is moving forward this winter to treat 500 acres of county land that are within or adjacent to the exemption request area (Sanders' letter of October 16, 2000; November 3, 2000, conference call notes, p. 2).

Hazard

The Fuels Risk Assessment (p. 1) states that occurrence of a large significant fire in the area is not a matter of "if" but rather "when." Current conditions could result in a plume-dominated fire with extreme fire behavior having strong winds, spotting in all directions up to 3 miles and high rates of fire spread (Fuels Risk Assessment, Executive Summary, p. 1).

The situation created by the storm has put human health and safety at risk, as well as personal property. The storm-damaged area involves intermingled ownership, including National Forest System, county, State, and private lands (Briefing Paper, p. 2; DEIS, p. 1-19, Figure 1-2). Over 75 structures, including 33 private homes and cabins and a variety of other buildings, are within a ½-mile of the project boundary (DEIS, p. 3-14).

In addition, there is a risk to the Trout Lake Unit of the BWCAW, which is adjacent to the project area. Prevailing winds would normally put the Trout Lake Unit in the path of a wildfire. Ingress and egress to the area is limited to watercraft and/or foot. Consequently, the ability to evacuate visitors rapidly from this area of the Wilderness in event of a fire is of concern to local, county, State, and Federal agencies (Briefing Paper, p. 2).

Resources

While the record was reviewed with regard to the stay exemption's effects on natural resources, the review should by no means be considered a review of the merits of the project. Such a review of the merits is appropriately performed during the administrative appeal process. This review considered only whether the record supports a determination that a stay exemption would not adversely affect natural resources and that a situation exists necessitating a stay exemption.

The Briefing Paper (pp. 4 through 5) discusses impacts to resources associated with the exemption request and concludes there would be no negative impacts.

Lynx – Activities associated with the project as a whole may affect the lynx. However, activities specifically associated with granting the exemption will not negatively affect the lynx.

The DEIS addresses other threatened and endangered species with regard to the project as a whole and concludes there would be no negative impacts with implementation (DEIS, p. 3-108 through 3-109; Appendix C Biological Evaluation; November 3, 2000, conference call notes, p. 4)

Unloaded Areas – Unloaded areas will not be affected as no activities associated with the exemption request are in unloaded areas (Briefing Paper, p. 4).

Special Management Complexes – Activities associated with the exemption request are consistent with management direction for special management complexes (DEIS, pp. A-22 through A-23).

Shipstead-Newton-Nolan (SNN) Law – Activities associated with the exemption request are consistent with the SNN Law. In addition, the DEIS provides for mitigation for activities within the SNN Law zone (DEIS, pp. A-4, A-8, A-22).

Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) – Activities associated with the exemption request will maintain the outstandingly remarkable qualities of the Vermillion River corridor, as they are consistent with activities associated with the project as a whole, which are geared toward long-term rehabilitation, visual quality enhancement, and fuel reduction (DEIS, pp. A-4, A-6, A-22; Briefing Paper, p. 5).

Representative Old-growth – Activities associated with the exemption request would not include inventoried old-growth or future old-growth stands (Briefing Paper, p. 5).

Determination

The combination of fire history, a spruce budworm epidemic, and the storm damage have put human health and safety at risk, as well as private land and property. While fuel reduction activities included in the exemption request are not intended to eliminate the possibility of a wildfire, they would reduce fire intensities and make suppression efforts more effective, as well as provide escape routes and safety zones for firefighters (Briefing Paper, p. 4).

A comparison of the high and moderate damaged areas identified in Figure 3-3 (DEIS, p. 3-17) correlates with the area requested for stay exemption, showing that the scope of exemption was properly requested.

The Forest has confirmed with the Region and Washington Office that activities associated with the exemption request can be completed within the winter timeframe, barring any acts of nature preventing such completion, to accomplish the goals of the request.

For these reasons I have determined that an emergency situation exists in the Little East Creek project area and grant a stay exemption as requested in accordance with 36 CFR 215.10(d). The stay exemption is granted for both project implementation and non-significant amendment to the land and resource management plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dombeck".

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6520
Date: NOV 14 2000

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6023

Dear Senator Byrd:

Section 354 of the fiscal year 2000 Interior Appropriations Act authorized the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to establish and use transfer appropriation accounts for the purposes of carrying out joint *Service First* programs to promote customer service and efficiency in the management of the public lands and national forests. The accompanying Conference Report (Report 106-406) requested that the agencies provide a combined report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations on the use of these accounts.

This letter serves as that report for both agencies. The transfer appropriation accounts have not yet been established because of the technical complexities and procedures involved as established by the Treasury Department. These procedures are considerably more cumbersome than the existing money transfer protocols currently used at Forest Service/BLM *Service First* field sites. The steps involved to establish and use transfer appropriation accounts require a much greater commitment of resources than originally envisioned.

Until these obstacles are resolved, we do not plan to use the transfer appropriation accounts and will continue the use of existing money transfer protocols. However, we have not abandoned our desire to develop a smooth and efficient process to address money transfer issues at Forest Service/BLM *Service First* field sites. We are continuing to explore other money transfer options at several *Service First* sites in Washington and Oregon and are confident that we can find an innovative solution.



The Forest Service and the BLM are committed to the goals and objectives of *Service First*. Leadership in both agencies is dedicated to achieving increased customer service, operational efficiency and the quality of resource stewardship. We look forward to continuing our working relationship with you in the management of the public lands and the national forests. Please feel free to contact Mark H. Davis at the Forest Service on (202) 205-1046 or Robert Scruggs at the BLM on (202) 452-7729 if you have any questions about this report.

Identical letters are being sent to Senator Gorton and Congressman Regula and Dicks.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Robert Scruggs, BLM



United States
Department of
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Forest
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Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6520
Date: NOV 14 2000

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6932

Dear Congressman Dicks:

Section 354 of the fiscal year 2000 Interior Appropriations Act authorized the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to establish and use transfer appropriation accounts for the purposes of carrying out joint *Service First* programs to promote customer service and efficiency in the management of the public lands and national forests. The accompanying Conference Report (Report 106-406) requested that the agencies provide a combined report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations on the use of these accounts.

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Identical letters are being sent to Senators Byrd and Gorton and Congressman Regula.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Robert Scruggs, BLM



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6520
Date: NOV 14 2000

The Honorable Slade Gorton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6023

Dear Senator Gorton:

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Identical letters are being sent to Senator Byrd and Congressmen Regula and Dicks.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Robert Scruggs, BLM



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington Office

14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6520
Date: **NOV. 14, 2000**

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6023

Dear Congressman Regula:

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Identical letters are being sent to Senators Byrd and Gorton and Congressman Dicks.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Robert Scruggs, BLM