



# LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## **Box 1, Folder 13: Speeches, Dale Robertson, 1988. 1988**

[s.l.]: [s.n.], 1988

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/VPQDOQXEBBUN28T>

<http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC/1.0/>

For information on re-use see:

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Copyright>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.

[12 JAN. 1988]

## **COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS**

Remarks of F.Dale Robertson, Chief of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, to the Forest Servicewide Civil Rights Committee, the Region 3 Civil Rights Committee, and Forest Service Civil Rights Directors, Albuquerque, NM, Jan. 12, 1988.

**I'm delighted to be here, in Albuquerque, with the Servicewide Civil Rights Committee, the Region 3 Civil Rights Committee, and the Civil Rights Staff Directors.**

**You are an important group. You've got a very important job to do, and we've got some serious, important things to talk about.**

**Even more importantly, I need your feedback, advice, and counsel in the whole civil rights and equal opportunity area.**

**The Forest Service has made a lot of progress in civil rights and equal opportunity in the past 10 years.**

Since 1976, we've had about a 50 percent increase in the number of women and minorities we employ.

**We should be proud of that, but we've got a long ways to go.**

**We have set for ourselves an ambitious goal of having a work force in 1995 that reflects the diversity of the national work force.**

That's another 50 percent increase in minorities, and almost another 50 percent increase in women.

**I'm committed to meeting that goal by (1) making steady progress each year, and (2) laying the groundwork for ever greater progress in each succeeding year.**

**And the Forest Service needs your help in developing the strategy and details of carrying out that commitment,**

**and delivering on it in every part of the Forest Service.**

We can't afford to have any units lagging.

**I'm also proud of our new brochure on "Work Force 1995--Strength through Diversity."**

In fact, when I met with Secretary Lyng last week, I showed him the brochure and discussed it with him.



I agree with every word in the brochure, and am committed to its goals.

I thank the Civil Rights Committee, both for coming up with the idea,  
and for being willing to roll up their sleeves and deliver a product.

Too often, in the Forest Service, we're long on talking and short on action. But that's not so, in this case, and I thank you and the civil rights staff for that.

**I strongly believe in the concept of "strength through diversity,"**

whether we are talking about the Nation,

ecology and forest management,

or the Forest Service's work force.

**The United States is unlike many other nations of the World which derive from a single race.**

Except for the native Americans, which represent a small percentage of our population, we come from all over the World.

Our roots reach back to Europe, Africa, Latin and South America, and Asia.

**We are one of the most diverse nations on Earth, and our Nation has thrived on that diversity.**

It's been a strength.

**The concept of "Strength through Diversity" is equally applicable to the Forest Service.**

The best example of this is the Job Corps,

and the number of Forest Service managers who have different perspectives today because of their experiences with the Job Corps, and are better for it.

**I believe a diverse work force is good for the Forest Service.**

It gives us people with different perspectives to blend into the overall management of the Forest Service.

It enables us to better relate to what our increasingly pluralistic society wants.

It rounds all of us out as individuals, by rubbing shoulders with people unlike ourselves, and causing us to think about our own values and points of view that may never have been examined or even questioned.



**Greater diversity in the work force may make management a little more complicated,**

but we live in a complicated world.

**The Forest Service just can't become insulated from the real world in our external environment.**

We have to reflect the pluralistic culture and multi-dimensional environment in which we operate,

or we will get out of step if we don't stay in tune with our customers--the American people.

**Diversity is something we should treasure, and which makes us stronger and better over the long term.**

### *Picking up the pace*

**Again, we've made a lot of progress toward a diverse work force in the Forest Service.**

We use more professional disciplines than ever before.

We have much better representation of women now than we did a decade ago.

We have much better representation of minorities.

And we have more women and minorities moving into the upper grades of the Forest Service . . .

into our significant line and top staff positions.

**We've made progress and laid a good foundation for the future, but we've got to pick up the pace.**

**Progress in equal opportunity involves change, and if we pick up the pace it means even more rapid change.**

**I've been around the Forest Service long enough to know that rapid change brings some difficulty.**

It causes some people to be skeptical,

and resistance to set in--even outright opposition by a few.

Finally, change usually causes some pain on the part of some, and we need to be sensitive to that.

And we should never lose sight of the fact that change is a lot more palatable and accepted if people perceive that it's being carried out in a fair and equitable manner.

**In this regard, we have to be sensitive to the effects that affirmative action has on the majority--the white males.**



I've heard comments about backlash to affirmative action,

and that the Forest Service isn't hiring white males or promoting white male foresters.

**Some of the people who say these things may be experiencing the same pain that minorities, women, or handicapped have felt about being discriminated against in the Forest Service.**

**But the facts are:**

From 1981 through 1986, we hired about 5,500 new employees--one-seventh of our work force.

More than a third were white men.

More than half were women.

Nearly a sixth of them were minorities.

**Let's look at just the foresters:**

About 40 percent of the foresters we hired were white men.

Nearly one-half of the foresters were women.

More than one-eighth were minorities.

**In looking at promotions, we promoted 523 foresters at all levels in 1987.**

Nearly three-fourths of them were men.

More than a fourth of them were women--about the same proportion as our population of foresters.

Nearly one tenth of them were minorities.

**The fact is, no group is being left out in the recruitment or promotions.**

We still have a very competitive personnel system based on merit.

At the same time, we're making progress in building a diverse work force, and that is making us a better, stronger organization.

**Building on our progress to date, we've set an ambitious goal for ourselves:**

**By 1995, we will have a work force at all levels that is as diverse as the communities we work in,**

and, when you add it all up, that is representative of the Nation's work force.

**That is a major challenge in managing our work force,**

**but we have faced bigger challenges before, and have met them.**

**I believe we'll meet this one, too.**



**It starts with commitment and determination, and I've got it.**

In 1995, I'll be 55 and eligible for retirement,

and--when I retire--I want to leave the Forest Service having met this goal.

I want this to be the accomplishment I'm most proud of.

**This commitment has to be followed up with an attitude of persistence,**

**and of action throughout the Forest Service directed at recruitment, retention . . .**

**training, and developing people to be competitive.**

**We also want to improve the organizational culture of the Forest Service,**

so all people feel wanted and valued, and judged on the basis of their abilities, performance, and overall contribution to the organization.

**That's where the Forest Service needs to be by 1995,**

**but we'll need the help of everyone in this room to get there.**

I don't know all of the steps we need to take to get there.

*You* are the experts, and we are depending on you to help us develop the details of our effort.

**Our efforts in civil rights and equal opportunity need to be a broad, encompassing program affecting everything we do in regard to people.**

**Too often, we just focus on the selection of personnel for positions, and that's very important,**

**but it's just the tip of the iceberg.**

**We've got to focus on all of the actions which feed the selection process.**

Selection is important,

but it's a quick, visible action which capitalizes on previous efforts,

and it's only a small part of what needs to be done if we're going to make steady progress in affirmative action over time.

**I'm reminded of the experience of my son, who was a swimmer--an all-American--and the tremendous amount of effort it took to reach that goal.**

That took early morning practices,

sacrifice and hard training under the principle of "no pain, no gain,"

and supporting efforts by parents and coaches.

**It didn't just happen in one swim-meet.**



**It took a lot of help from others, over a period of 15 years,**

who taught him and helped him train,

encouraged and counseled him when he came in 2nd, 3rd, or 4th in a race,

and helped make him competitive.

**It takes the same sort of effort to move into the upper levels of the Forest Service.**

We need to pay attention to what gets us there,

and keep feeding a continuous supply of highly competitive men and women of all races to select from.

**Any day when we move a well-qualified woman or minority competitively into a top-level position should be a day for celebration.**

**But we need to give credit, not only to the individuals who succeeded,**

**but also to what gets these people there in the first place.**

We need to realize what brings them into the Forest Service,

trains them and develops them,

and makes them competitive.

**It starts with the outreach effort,**

to encourage people to enter natural resource professions and get the skills we need.

**It includes recruitment,**

to get them to want to work for the Forest Service.

**We need to credit the mentors and supervisors,**

who recommend training and career direction,

take risks to give these people assignments where they can learn and develop,

nudge them along in their careers,

and encourage them to stick with it.

**It takes all of that effort just for people to qualify and compete for these positions.**

**These are the basics of civil rights and equal employment, and we need to attend to them.**

We cannot afford to select people who are less than the best . . .

who aren't well-qualified and competitive for our positions.



**If we just focus our efforts on *selecting* women and minorities,**

**instead of on the underlying steps that get them there and make them competitive,**

**our commitment to diversify our work force is going to fall short.**

**That's why the spirit of civil rights and affirmative action has got to penetrate every nook and cranny of the Forest Service,**

**and why it has to be an integral part of our overall workforce management.**

*Close*

**We've made a great deal of progress in equal opportunity, but we need to step up the pace to make a great deal more.**

**We need to do it, *not* because the law requires it,**

**but because our long-term success demands it and it's the right thing to do.**

**We've got a lot of work ahead of us, and I'm committed to doing it.**

We have problems to overcome, and we're committed to overcoming them.

We have steps to take toward a more diversified work force, and we're committed to taking them.

We have an ambitious goal, and I'm determined to meet it.

**We need to do this by working on all fronts, in all parts of the Forest Service.**

**I need your help at every step of the way.**

**I need your advice in shaping our commitment.**

I need you to tell me what more we should be saying to our managers.

What more should we be expecting of them?

What more should we be expecting of ourselves that we aren't expecting now?

**We have a goal, and I'm committed to push ahead hard to diversify our work Force.**

**And I want your feedback, value your advice, and need your help in *delivering* on that commitment.**



# STATE OF THE FOREST SERVICE

## 1988

Remarks by F. Dale Robertson, Chief, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, at the winter meeting of the Forest Service Regional Foresters and Directors, Old Colony Inn, Alexandria, VA, January 26, 1988

### INTRODUCTION

With the President making his "State of the Union" address to the Nation last night, I thought that it would be appropriate for me to open this meeting with a "State of the Forest Service" speech.

From my perspective after serving as your Chief for a year now, 1987 was a fast-paced, challenging, but fun year--and, overall, a very good year for the Forest Service.

I believe our successes and achievements far outweigh our few setbacks.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

Some things we can be very proud of:

1. The Forest service successfully handled the worst fire situation since 1929. We had about 1500 fires going at one time, under very hazardous burning conditions. Our mobilization of 25,000 firefighters over a 2- to 3-day period is unmatched in our history.

This successful effort should dispel any doubts in anyone's mind about the underlying strength of the Forest Service, and whether we have the guts, determination, and willingness to put forth extra effort to get a tough job done! We did it, and we did it well.

Unfortunately, 12 lives were lost in this firefighting effort. The loss of these lives is a dark blemish on what was otherwise an outstanding accomplishment. Let's not let the loss of those 12 lives fade from our memory. We need to think long and hard about what we can do differently next time to make it safer for our people to work on the fireline.

2. We set an all-time record of 12.7 billion board feet of timber harvested on the National Forests. Again, I think this record timber harvest, much of it unplanned and unfinanced in the budget, demonstrates the strength and flexibility of the Forest Service and the willingness of our people to put forth an extra effort to get the job done.

3. I think we are on a roll with our fish and wildlife program. We started out the year with our fishery initiative, "Rise to the Future--Fish Your National Forests." We put the finishing touches on it at this meeting last January.

This initiative has gotten a lot of outside attention and support, and we had a very good first year. We now must keep up the momentum to make sure that our actions continue to match our high-sounding words, and I think we will do that!



4. We've strengthened our partnership with national fish and wildlife organizations by signing national cooperative agreements with Ducks Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Wild Turkey Federation, Trout Unlimited, and the Isaac Walton League.

This national commitment to a "Partnership approach" to managing the fish and wildlife on the National Forests has been backed up with strong actions at the local level with Challenge Cost Share Projects. More than 200 groups have matched Forest Service funds in doing high-priority fish and wildlife habitat improvement work--a big bang for the Federal dollar, and a big success story.

I think it all adds up, perhaps, to doing a better job for fish and wildlife on the National Forests than ever before. As I said, we're on a roll in fish and wildlife, and let's keep on trucking!

5. The Forest Service was the most prominent Federal agency involved in the bicentennial celebration of our Constitution. Some far-sighted Forest Service people early on saw the potential of tying tree planting and conservation to the celebration of our 200-year-old Constitution. Our bicentennial efforts were a big success in 1987, with tree-planting ceremonies all over the United States, involving Forest Service people and the State Foresters. I even got to plant a tree at Mt. Vernon, an event televised on the Today show.

6. Smokey joined the pros and appeared at all 26 professional baseball stadiums. He also worked with some of the NFL professional football teams.

I found out that even Smokey can get the Chief in hot water. Last week, and again yesterday, a large, colorful poster was going around the office, Courtesy of Gary Cargill and Region 2. The poster shows Smokey with his arm around John Elway, quarterback of the Denver Broncos. The cleaning lady, being a loyal Redskin fan, chewed me out and even threatened to never clean my office again. And, you know what? She was convincing. I really may have a dirty office for the rest of my career.

Anyway, Smokey's activities gave a big boost to fire prevention--another big success!

7. Our tremendous research talents and capability continue to add strength to the Forest Service and enhance our reputation.

As an example, a few weeks ago John Ohman and I were invited over to meet with the Assistant Director of the Office of Science and Technology. The staff of that office are the science advisors to the President. They told John and me that they had heard a lot of good things about the scientific capability of the Forest Service. They asked if we could help the White House staff out in dealing with specific scientific issues. Knowing our capability, John and I made a commitment, on the spot, for our scientists to help the President out.

The more I visit with our scientists, the more I'm impressed with them and the exciting things they are doing. Our scientists continue to push the outer boundary of our knowledge in forestry. We are making some significant breakthroughs in such areas as biotechnology. I also think we are making progress in making research more "user friendly"--a concept that we need to keep pushing.

8. Job Corps is another success story in 1987. We received the top award from the Department of Labor for having the best-run Job Corps centers in 1987. And, you know what? We're even better now than we were when we got the award. That's something that I'm really proud of. All



of us ought to be telling our hard-working, dedicated Job Corps staff how much we appreciate the great job they're doing.

9. Finally, we had a very successful year in getting a good, well balanced budget for FY 1988, even if it was three months late in coming. A lot of credit goes to the WO staff and field staffs in being responsive to requests for information from Congress.

You may have seen a copy of the letter signed by Senators Byrd, Johnston, Hatfield, and McClure. They complimented the Forest Service for the great job we did in providing good, credible, objective information to help Congress address the controversial issues in our budget.

We were successful in avoiding big budget cuts in our timber sale and road programs and ended up with significant increases in trails, recreation, fish and wildlife, state and private forestry and research. We made a lot of commitments along the way in getting the FY 1988 budget approved, but, with our track record, I'm confident our field people can get an even bigger job done in 1988, even though we left you in limbo for the first three months.

Well, that's just a few of our success stories. There are many, many others, and they all add up to a good year in 1987.

Of course, we had a few setbacks that we shouldn't ignore--we had a few damaging court decisions; we had an overload of appeal cases; the consent decree in California has not gone well; we're still losing too many valuable resources to insects and diseases; the big debate on the Tongass National Forest was a draw, but, in the process, we lost a significant part of our Tongass budget; and, as always, there were a few isolated incidents that flared up on us and weren't handled very well.

But those are some things you just have to expect at times when you run an outfit as big as the Forest Service.

## STRENGTHS

Now, I would like to shift to the future, and share with you some of my thoughts and philosophy.

I believe one of the most important jobs of top management--and that's all of us in this room--is to take time to objectively size up our relative strengths and weaknesses, and then plan to do something *new and different in 1988* to capitalize on our strengths or to turn our weaknesses into strengths.

I've spent a little time thinking about that. Let me tell you where I came out. Here are what I perceive as our strengths:

First, our basic mission of "Caring for the land and serving people" is very important. Our mission is a winner and naturally attracts strong public support.

Second, I truly believe we have the best group of people ever put together in one large organization. We're the best at what we do. We know our jobs and do them well.

Third, we collectively have more knowledge about the management of natural resources than any other organization. No one can match our capability, knowledge, and knowhow.



Fourth, we have a strong organization with a rich culture and good core values. We spent a lot of time talking about our culture and core values as we were writing our Vision Statement a little more than a year ago, and I don't need to repeat all of that. But our rich culture and core values are obviously a strength of the Forest Service.

Fifth, we are rich in land and resources. Even though the National Forests and Grasslands represent only about 8-1/2 percent of the United States, in many ways they are "the 50 percent lands". We have

50 percent of the Nation's big game animals,  
50 percent of the coldwater fisheries,  
50 percent of anadromous fish spawning grounds along the West Coast,

(Really, the future of the Nation's fish and wildlife depends on us. No wonder, there is such a strong public interest in fish and wildlife on the National Forests and grasslands. I think we have turned the corner on capitalizing on the strong public support for fish and wildlife.)

50 percent of the Nation's standing softwood sawtimber,

(We can't ignore this basic fact of life. The National Forests must continue to be a significant, reliable supplier of timber in this country.)

More than 50 percent of the precipitation in the West,

(How we manage these watersheds in the western National Forests and Grasslands affects both water quality and rate of water flow. The lifeblood of the West is in our hands.)

43 percent of the Federal market share in outdoor recreation,

(But I think we will exceed 50 percent once we get rolling on our Recreation Initiative, which we will be discussing all day tomorrow.)

And about 80 percent of the Wilderness and more than 50 percent of the wild and scenic rivers in the lower 48 states.

In the grazing and minerals business, we don't come anywhere close to the 50 percent, but we still play an important role in meeting the Nation's needs.

The National Forests and National Grasslands are a tremendous economic and environmental asset to the country, and a strength of the Forest Service. So, when you add up all of these strengths,—our mission, the capability of Forest Service people, our knowledge and knowhow, our rich culture and strong core values, and being rich in land and resources—It's pretty impressive, isn't it? We're in an enviable situation in comparison with all other large organizations in the world!

Yet, we have so much untapped potential, so many unturned stones of opportunity on the National Forests and Grasslands, so many high-payoff research opportunities foregone, so many opportunities to advance the cause of forestry on private land by working with the State Foresters—our most important partners.



## WEAKNESSES

So, what are the weak spots? What are the barriers holding the Forest Service back, keeping us from ever greater strides of progress, keeping us from being all we can be and becoming an even greater outfit?

I believe we have four weak spots that are holding us back, and we ought to do something about them.

Our First weakness is that our strong public support is pulling in different directions. This tugging and pulling results in a lot of stalemate and just slugging things out on an issue-by-issue basis. It has created a situation that requires a very high energy level to just get the basic job done, and it is sapping our strength.

We have to face the reality that we operate in a pluralistic society with many conflicting, even contradictory, attitudes and points of view about the management of our natural resources. Furthermore, people are willing to stand up and speak their minds and get involved. All of this creates a lot of tension and makes our job more difficult. At times, it gives us bad publicity and undermines our credibility.

For example, a daughter of a very good friend of mine, who I've known all of her life, got married and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, 8 months ago. She came home at Christmas and told me the bad news. She was shocked to learn that her lifelong good friend and the Forest Service were not playing well in Cleveland.

According to the newspapers, we're destroying the last remaining old-growth forest. We're spoiling Alaska. We're destroying wilderness by building roads to nowhere. We're giving away government timber at a great expense to the Cleveland taxpayer, and we're destroying the natural habitat for the Nation's wildlife.

She asked me, "Are you really doing all of those things?"

Now, we all know the answer and the real story, but the people in Cleveland don't. I don't subscribe to Gary Hart's philosophy that the press is the cause of all our problems. The press is just reporting on what's being said in the debate, even though it may be one sided, exaggerated, and only partially factual. Nevertheless, the root cause is basic disagreement among our interest groups over how we are managing the National Forests.

Obviously, we don't have control over the debate. We're just one party of many in the whole natural resource arena. But I do think as the leading professionals in forestry, we have some obligation to try harder to bring our interest groups into more of a mutually supporting role, rather than fighting each other and dragging us down with them.

Fortunately, we have a very fragmented situation with hundreds, perhaps a thousand or more, forums throughout the United States. We can have a failure in one forest or one state with little effect on the success in another.

I hear a lot of success stories, but overall we're not making as much progress as I would like to see. I would hope all line and staff officers throughout the Forest Service would size up their situations and make a special effort to see what they can do *new and different in 1988* to bring about a little closer agreement among our interest groups.



I have some ideas on what we can do at the national level, and the Chief's Office will pursue them this year. For example, George Leonard, Jeff Sirmon, and I plan to spend a lot of time over the next 2 months explaining our FY 1989 budget to the interest groups based in Washington, DC. But, when you add it all up, this pulling and tugging of our interest groups in many different directions constitutes a real cap on our overall potential that I would like to see raised.

The second limiting factor is, obviously, the budget. Being part of the Federal government, we automatically inherit the strengths and weaknesses of the Federal bureaucracy. One of these weaknesses, even in normal times, is a mismatch between our potential and available funding.

The Federal government has always had difficulty, and always will, in maintaining a commitment to a long-term program. Why? Because the Federal government is constantly bombarded with new, emerging, pressing priorities that have to be financed, at least in part, from existing funds. That results in a continuous process of shifting priorities and eroding of financial support for long-term programs in order to make room for new priorities.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon is exaggerated now that the Federal government is caught up in some broader critical national and international issues, such as the trade deficit, the budget deficit, the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law, and at the same time trying to maintain the Nation's military strength and a basic safety net for the needy.

That focuses extra scrutiny and attention on the rest of government, such as the Forest Service, which has a discretionary budget. It's not that people are against forestry and all the good things that the Forest Service does. Instead, it's a matter of priorities, and these broader critical issues have to be dealt with. It creates a very competitive environment, where success in today's budget climate is avoiding further budget cuts.

In spite of the fact that we had some rebounding in our FY 1988 budget and relatively good FY 1989 OMB marks, we still can't ignore those "basic forces" out there (trade deficit, budget deficit and Gramm-Rudman-Hollings) that will be shaping future budgets for a long time.

I'm convinced that the Federal government has got to and will make steady progress in reducing the \$150 - \$175 billion deficit, and that means some sacrifice on the part of many agencies over at least the next 5 years. All of this represents a budget future for natural resource agencies that kind of hurts!

Well, what can we do to limit the constraints caused by the Federal budget?

First of all, we've got to stay competitive in the budget process and make sure forestry gets a fair shake as adjustments are made in the Federal budget. A test of our leadership is how well we build public understanding and support for Forest Service policies and programs, backed up with good data analysis, and justifications.

The critical nature of this factor was so evident during the negotiations on our FY 1988 budget in Congress, when the environmental groups made a full-court press to reduce our road construction budget by 50 percent. Fortunately, we came out of this controversy with only a small reduction in the road budget, but a significant increase in fish and wildlife, recreation, and trails.

But I think there are some things we can do that are *new and different* to realize more of our potential without relying more on the Federal budget. I think we need to free up our thinking and aggressively go after the private sector, State and local government, user groups, and anyone else who is willing to help us get the job done! I think the time has passed when we



can sit back and view progress in terms of bigger budgets and the hiring of more people. That old approach will result, at best, in a lot of disappointment, bellyaching, and mediocre performance.

We need to think more in terms of how we can stretch the Federal dollars by leveraging outside help and contributions through innovative partnership arrangements. We have some success stories to build upon--an outstanding volunteer program, a growing number of interpretive associations, very successful Challenge Cost Share Projects in fish and wildlife, and increased outside contributions to help finance our research, with some Stations having as much as 25 percent of their total budget coming from outside sources.

We need to do a lot more of this in order to get around the natural limitations of the Federal budget. I believe, it represents our best opportunity to make major gains in better reaching the potential of the Forest Service. When you think about it, we really don't have a lot of viable options if we want to make progress.

This leads up to the third weak spot of the Forest Service, which is also an inherent weakness of the Federal bureaucracy. That is, we're too tied up in bureaucratic procedures, paperwork, and cumbersome planning processes which tend to stifle innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, and just good common sense.

Loosening up the system and capitalizing on the strength of our people and public support has been, and still is, at the top of my agenda as Chief--and you're going to continue seeing a lot of my personal energy going into it, because I've never been more dead serious about anything in my career with the Forest Service.

I'm reasonably pleased with our progress, but I believe we have a long way to go. I believe that the need for the Forest Service to better capitalize on our strong public support and to aggressively pursue outside funding and in-kind contributions go hand in hand with the need to "loosen up the system."

When you hook these three ideas together, it means a significant and powerful change in the incentive system for Forest Service managers. It means putting more of our dollars and resources on those units which are best able to leverage outside funds or in-kind contributions in order to get the biggest bang out of the Federal dollar. It means some shifting of internal priorities to reflect the priorities of external people who are willing to "put their money or labor where their mouth is." In fact, I like the idea of responding to our critics by asking them "what are you willing to do to help out?"

I think when people are willing to support projects with more than just words and feelings, it's a good test of our internal priority-setting system. It means that we can't always do things 100 percent our way, if someone else is helping to finance the project. It calls for negotiation and mutual agreement on how the job gets done.

In my view, this all adds up to providing more flexibility within legal and broad policy bounds, to our local managers--Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, State and Private Forestry Program Managers, and Research Project Leaders. It means that the rest of us ought to be encouraging and supporting them to be more innovative, more creative, in working things out with our partners to better reach our full potential. It means having local managers who are entrepreneurs and who excel at capitalizing on local support for their programs and putting projects together in new and different ways. It means that we reward successful effort by re-directing the flow of Forest Service dollars and resources to carry out our end of the bargain. It means we're going to have some race horses in this outfit, some plodders, and everything in between.



But, that's okay. We don't want to hold back any unit from being all it can be in working with its local publics. In fact, if you recall our summer regional Foresters and Directors meeting in 1986, we visited one of these race horse units--the Pisgah Ranger District on the National Forests in North Carolina.

Remember Ranger Art Rowe telling us about all the great things he was doing? He had more than 500 people working for him. But only about 15 or so were on the Forest Service payroll.

I think many of us older Forest Service managers, who were Rangers many years ago, realized on that trip that things are no longer the way they used to be in the "good old days." If we had been faced with Art's situation, we probably would have thought we had lost control and had an impossible management situation. Yet, Art seems to be thriving on it and doing a great job!

Now, I want to issue a challenge to Regional Foresters and Directors:

Chief and Staff, after talking it over with Washington Office Staff Directors, just decided to officially designate the entire Washington Office as a part of the National Pilot Test Experiment.

That means change!

I think that may create a few problems for some of you and your staffs at the Region and Station level. I think you may have a little difficulty keeping up with the Washington Office. Instead of hearing comments like "the WO is too cautious, too conservative, and too status-quo-oriented," I think you'll start hearing comments that the Washington Office is "moving too fast for you, too progressive, and that something needs to be done to slow us down."

All I can say is that, if you have a problem like that, we'll look at it to see if we ought to slow down or whether you and your RO or Station staff ought to step up the pace to catch us.

How's that for a challenge? Anyway, look at it as a challenge and let's see how it works out.

The Fourth area that needs strengthening in the Forest Service is Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity.

I recently met with the Civil Rights Committee and your Civil Rights Staff Directors in Albuquerque. I expressed my commitment and expectations on CR and EEO. Since a copy of my speech is available, as well as a video of it, I'm not going to take time to repeat it here. But I do want to emphasize just three points that I hope stick in our mind and don't fade out:

1. USDA is near the bottom of the Federal government in having a diversified work force, and it continues to get a lot of public criticism for that. With the Forest Service representing about 35 percent of the employees in the Department, we own much of that problem.
2. Secretary Lyng and Deputy Secretary Myers are very concerned and have made the strongest statements that I've ever heard from top government officials about their commitment and expectations on Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity.
3. We in the Forest Service have responded by setting an ambitious goal for ourselves of having a work force in 1995 that is reasonably representative of the diversity of the national work force. In order to meet that goal, we've simply got to step up the pace in CR and EEO.

There is no "slack time," or place for "lagging units" if we are to meet the 1995 goal, which I'm committed to do. I hope you share that commitment, too!



## CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to summarize the key points, because I think they are important:

1. 1987 was a very good year. We ought to feel proud of our accomplishments, and we ought to tell our employees how much we appreciate the great job they're doing under some difficult circumstances.

2. Though we are doing a good job, I don't believe the Forest Service has yet reached its full potential. If the right things come together, were capable of miracles!

3. We need to objectively--without looking through loving eyes--size up our strengths and weaknesses. In my size-up, we need to capitalize on our strengths of having an important mission in life; a great group of Forest Service people; tremendous capability, knowledge, and knowhow; a strong organization with a rich culture and good solid core values; and of being rich in land and resources--A set of strengths that few, if any, other large organizations can match.

4. But, we have some weak spots or barriers that tend to hold us down or keep us from realizing our full potential:

Our public support is pulling in different directions.

We're caught up in a Federal budget squeeze caused by factors beyond the control of the Forest Service.

We're suffering from the Federal bureaucracy and a rather "tight" system that we've built around ourselves over time. That system tends to stifle the innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship that are so important to success in today's world.

Our work force is not as diversified as it should be.

5. Yet, there are some things we can do about these weak spots to turn them into strengths, or at least minimize their adverse impacts.

6. I've talked about some steps that I felt the Forest Service could take to better reach our potential. Some of the ideas may sound a bit revolutionary to some people because they depart from past policies and practices, but I really don't view it that way.

7. I know we've already got some really outstanding, progressive people and units out there in the Forest Service--like Art Rowe and the Pisgah Ranger District, Dave Rittersbacher and the Ochoco National Forest, Eric Morse and the Mark Twain National Forest, and many others--who are already practicing most of the things I've been talking about.

I just want the rest of the Forest Service, including us in this room, to catch up with them and help provide the philosophical and conceptual, supporting framework for what they are already doing. And I want to let it be known that, as Chief, I think that way of thinking and that way of management represents the future of the Forest Service.

It's what we've got to do to fully reach our potential, and as Chief, what would hurt me most is to know that I stood in someones way and kept him or her from making progress and reaching that full potential. I hope you feel as deeply about that as I do.



### A Federal Agency Looks Ahead

Remarks of F. Dale Robertson, Chief of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, to the "Scenic Byways '88" conference, Dulles Marriott Hotel, Washington, D.C., May 3, 1988.

In thinking about the National Forests and scenic byways, I'm reminded of the old-timer who liked his liquor straight. He ordered a shot of straight whiskey and asked the bartender to blindfold him and hold his nose, because, he said, "if I see it or smell it, my mouth will water and dilute it."

I believe the mouths of the 43 percent of Americans who drive for pleasure as their primary recreational activity will water when they think about the scenic beauty of the National Forests.

Just think about those scenic landscapes that best represent the scenic beauty of this country, and that are captured by pictures that we Americans so proudly display. In most cases, there's a National Forest nearby with some of the best of that beauty.

For example, just think about the Fall foliage in New England, where there's the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont, and the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire.

Just think about the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains, and there are the Pisgah, Jefferson, George Washington, Monongahela, Cherokee, and Daniel Boone National Forests, among others.

Just think about the North woods of the Lake States, and there are the Superior, Chippewa, Hiawatha, and Chequamegon National Forests.

Just think about the Rocky Mountains, where there are the Bitterroot, Bridger-Teton, and Beaverhead National Forests, and the Arapaho, Roosevelt, White River, and San Juan National Forests, plus many others.

Just think about the California Sierra-Nevada mountains. We have the Inyo, Sierra, Tahoe, Eldorado, and many other National Forests there.

Just think about the great old-growth forests and snow-capped mountains of the Pacific Northwest. The Wenatchee, Willamette, Deschutes, and Gifford Pinchot National Forests are there, and the Mount Hood, Mount Baker, Olympic, and other National Forests, as well.



They all add up to 156 National Forests in 43 states, covering 8 1/2% of the United States. And these are within a one-day drive of almost all Americans. It also results in the National Forests being the Number 1 provider of outdoor recreation to the American people; recreational use of the National Forests is more than twice that of the National Parks. Recreation use on the National Forests is already the equivalent of each American spending 12 hours each year enjoying the great outdoors, yet there is so much more potential.

### Roads

All of these National Forests are readily accessible by roads. There are 344,200 miles of road on the National Forests, with about 105,000 miles designed and maintained for passenger car travel. You could wear a new car out just driving those 105,000 miles of roads, with each mile being an adventure in backcountry USA. Scenic driving on these roads is the single most popular form of outdoor recreation on the National Forests.

Let me give you some examples: There's a road on the Custer National Forest in Montana--the Beartooth Highway, from Red Lodge into Yellowstone National Park--that CBS Special Correspondent Charles Kuralt says is America's most beautiful highway. He calls it the Number 1 road in America.

And there's the Carson Pass Forest Highway, on the Eldorado National Forest in California, that covers 25 miles of spectacular country in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

On the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas and Oklahoma, we have the Talimena Scenic Drive that follows the top of Winding Stair Mountain, with spectacular views.

And on the Mount Hood National Forest in Oregon, we have the Mount Hood Scenic Loop that goes from Portland, around Mount Hood, and down the Columbia River Gorge.

### National Forest Scenic Byways

Congressman Oberstar suggested that this Conference be the first step toward establishing a national system of scenic byways. I'm going to help that idea along by announcing, today, that the Forest Service will officially establish a system of National Forest Scenic Byways. We're doing this to better meet the growing needs of the Number 1 outdoor recreation customer in the National Forests--the people out driving for the pleasure of it, enjoying scenery and the great outdoors.



These byways will be officially designated by the Chief of the Forest Service. They will meet at least four basic criteria:

1. They will be located in scenic or historic country that people will enjoy and remember.
2. There will be programs on the byways to interpret the surrounding country, history, and forest management activities for the people who drive them. They may see some timber harvesting, tree planting, cattle grazing, and wildlife habitat work blended in with scenic beauty.
3. The byways will be designated on maps, and will be properly signed.
4. Finally, these byways will be safe for passenger car travel.

There may be other criteria or considerations that ought to be taken into account. We would welcome your thoughts and suggestions. We plan to have details of the scenic byways system worked out and the first National Forest Scenic Byways designated by the end of the year. As Chief of the Forest Service, I will officially designate scenic byways based upon these criteria, and from nominations received from Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors.

I see a National Forest Scenic Byway as something prestigious for a National Forest to have. By having a scenic byway, a Forest Supervisor or District Ranger will be saying, "We have some outstanding scenery to show off. We want to share it with you, and we've made a special effort to help you enjoy it."

Although most roads that will be officially designated as National Forest Scenic Byways already exist, it may take some time and money to bring them up to scenic byway standards, with interpretive signs and programs, with proper maintenance, pullouts and parking areas in some cases, and other facilities such as rest areas and short-loop walking trails.

### Partnerships

In line with our new National Recreation Strategy, which we've handed out at this meeting, we want to do this in a way that will get people involved with more than just words. We're going to take a partnership approach with groups like the ones represented at this meeting. We want your help in identifying the most scenic parts of the National Forests that have roads suitable for designation as a scenic byway.



We're going to look to you for help in putting signs on these byways, so that people can find their way. We're going to look to you for help in interpreting the history, landscapes, and land management activities, so that the public can know and appreciate what they see. We're going to look to you for help in providing visitor overlooks, restrooms, parking areas, short-loop walking trails, and whatever else needs to be done to make these National Forest Scenic Byways an enjoyable and memorable experience to those 43% of Americans who drive for pleasure as their primary recreational activity.

We really want to showcase America's beauty with these byways, and to make America's great outdoors truly great. To do that, we can't just depend on Federal dollars alone to get the job done, or else we won't have very much of a scenic byway system. We need your help and support.

#### Close

In closing, let me tell you an old fishing story from Arkansas, where I grew up. Down in Arkansas, there was this old fisherman who got his limit of big fish every day that he went fishing, even when others got skunked.

So the local game warden asked if he could go along to see why he was so successful. The old fisherman agreed, and told him to be at his boat at sunrise the next morning, and he could go fishing with him.

Once they got out on the lake and settled, the old-timer pulled out a stick of dynamite, lit it, and threw it in the water. A few seconds later, big fish rose to the top of the water, on their side.

At that, the game warden went into a rage, and said "You can't do that. It's illegal, and I'll throw you in jail if you ever do that again."

After thinking about the situation, the old fisherman reached down and got another stick of dynamite. He lit it, handed it to the game warden, and said, "Are you going to talk or fish?"

Well, that story is the best way I know to explain the Forest Service recreation strategy in dealing with scenic byways. We've just lit two sticks of dynamite. We've handed one to our Forest Supervisors and District Rangers. The other we're handing to the outdoor recreation community. The question is whether our field people and the outdoor recreation community are going to talk, or fish.

I want to land some whoppers! I hope you will join us in making the scenic byways a big success on the National Forests and, at the next "scenic byways conference," we can have a big celebration to share our success stories about what we've done by working together.