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Confidential Memorandum

August 21, 1996

To: Secretary Glickman
through Greg Frazier

From: [REDACTED]

Subj: Selecting a New Forest Service Chief

I would like to offer the following recommendation for selecting the Chief's successor if you are faced with such a decision.

In essence I recommend that the Forest Service be allowed to help select who their leader will be. Allowing the Forest Service to do so could significantly improve our relationship with the agency. Failure to do so may render the Chief ineffective if he or she has no support, further demoralizing the agency and undermining the Administration's policy goals.

This memo also provides you with some background on why such an approach is needed at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Develop a list of qualities and qualifications that you want in a Chief
2. Organize a small group of former Chiefs and agency professionals to develop a similar list of qualities and qualifications that they want in a Chief.
3. Integrate the two lists to assure that the administration's and agency's leadership goals are mutually understood and agreed upon.
4. Require the group to speak with people both inside and outside the agency.
5. Have the Forest Service provide you with an unranked list of 5 individuals that they would like to see become their Chief. Leave it up to them whether they want to go outside the agency or not.
6. Interview nominees and make a decision based on their list.

ADVANTAGES:

- Empowers the agency while assuring that the Administration's needs are addressed.
- Improves trust in the Administration by showing the agency that you trust them.

- Creates an open and visible process for an orderly transition that minimizes partisan politics.
- Answers some critics who accuse the Administration of micro-managing the agency.
- Restores employee confidence by assuring them that one of their own is in charge.
- Will create a more effective chain of command between the Chief and Administration and Chief and career professionals because of the mutually agreed upon qualifications.

DISADVANTAGES:

- Cannot completely control selection process.
- May increase concerns by some that broader public values are not recognized.
- Promotion from within limits talent pool.
- Accountability to the Administration associated with a political appointment will be limited.
- Qualified people outside the agency will likely be overlooked.

RATIONALE:

The process outlined above provides for an orderly transition, minimizes the political fallout, and eventually gives the Administration a more effective chain of command. The process also assures that the qualities you will look for in a Chief are considered and that you will have a final say on who is selected.

While the disadvantages are important, you will get a more responsive agency when they have a sense of ownership in their Chief. I believe the Forest Service would rise to the challenge of providing you a slate of people who would meet both your and their goals.

BACKGROUND:

The Forest Service management issues you are facing are rooted in the agency's institutional history and the actions of the Clinton Administration itself.

Institutional

The Forest Service's first Chief requested that the agency be transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture in 1905. The agency's agrarian philosophy was the stated reason for doing so, but equally if not more important was the chief's desire to keep the agency relatively free of political interference. This action was highly effective in meeting his

goals. The agency, until recently, operated in a highly decentralized mode with little political "interference" from any administration. Yet, the agency is keenly tuned into politics, the politics of Congress. This should not be surprising. Until recently, the Forest Service operated independently from other USDA programs and few of USDA's political appointees had any forestry experience or interest in the agency. Moreover, Forest Service employees lived and worked in rural communities primarily in the west. With minimal oversight at the Secretarial level, they naturally focused on those elected officials who had the most interest and biggest impact on their programs.

From a professional standpoint, such independence created a proud, traditional, management oriented organization that got the job done based on their own professional opinions. The pinnacle of the forestry profession was not to become CEO of a timber company, but, being named Chief of the Forest Service. And, if you were a professional forester and worked for the Forest Service you knew that this could be you.

The Forest Service controlled its own destiny through the 1960's, though, there has always been debate among the forestry community about how much land should be managed and how much should be protected. As environmental concerns rose in prominence, the Forest Service asked that their mission be clarified. The resulting Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, broadened their mandate and at the same time strengthened their ability to call the shots because it left complete discretion with the agency about how much of what use should be emphasized.

The Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan administration's had the luxury--if you will--of supporting legislation that authorized environmental protection and mandating timber harvest levels along parallel tracks. It wasn't until the mid- to late- 1980s that the agency really had to bring those legislative mandates in tune with each other on the ground. Unfortunately, this task meant that difficult tradeoffs would eventually have to be made. When they weren't, train wrecks such as those in the Pacific Northwest resulted.

In 1987, the Reagan Administration attempted to install their Deputy Assistant Secretary as Chief. Professional forestry organizations, environmentalists, and to a lesser extent the industry opposed such a move citing the agency's independent history. Congressional Democrats successfully lead the charge to short-circuit the appointment and a career professional was selected.

The pressure to bring environmental and harvest goals in line with each other on the ground increased in the Bush Administration. Most of the Forest Plans had been completed and environmentalists' lawsuits forced the Forest Service's hand. The Administration basically ignored the warnings allowing the Forest Service to continue calling most of the shots. Only problem was that other agencies were calling their own shots as well. In the end agency's were taking action in direct conflict with each other.

By 1992 when the Clinton Administration took office, the Pacific Northwest had been shut down for two years, and environmentalists were threatening similar challenges in other regions. Instead

of seeking out new legislation, the Clinton Administration has tried to take existing laws and apply them on the ground. This meant making difficult tradeoffs that have:

- Reduced commodity outputs,
- Required regulatory agencies to formally and informally co-manage national forests,
- Necessitated policy and political oversight by the administration unlike any time in the agency's history, and,
- Lead to staff and funding reductions with more work to be accomplished.

For these and many other reasons, an inordinate amount of pressure has been placed on the agency and its traditions.

Administration

Institutional and professional support for the agency has slowly eroded in the last 20 years for a variety of reasons--public values have become polarized, urban America is overwhelming rural America, distrust in professional opinions is common and demand for conflicting uses is rising on a finite land base.

In this context, many Forest Service employees actually welcomed what they thought would be a sympathetic Clinton Administration. After 12 years of being asked to meet historic harvest levels and implement the nation's environmental laws, many in the agency felt that the new administration would provide **them** with more cover for being able to work through their problems. Hindsight is 20/20, but, many of the problems you face today are rooted in **our** attempt to work through their problems for them. We also have failed to adequately understand what motivates 35,000 employees who are so dedicated to their profession and organizational traditions. The following does not reflect my thoughts about whether our actions were right or wrong, but, how many inside the agency see our actions.

For starters, the Administration put a spotlight on forestry unlike any time since President Theodore Roosevelt created the agency. More importantly, we did it in a critical way--blaming the Forest Service for the problems of the past--instead of supporting their attempts to manage forests differently in the future. We "fired" the Chief and Associate Chief who had been installed in lieu of the Reagan appointee shortly after taking office. We replaced the Chief with Jack Thomas whose philosophy many supported, but who became viewed as a "political appointment." For the first couple years, we then were perceived to "micro-manage" the agency.

Adding to the agency's deepening morale problems, was our sincere attempt to integrate the nation's environmental laws that recognized other agencies' authorizing legislation and professional perspective. Suddenly, the regulatory agencies were perceived as being able to

dictate management decisions on Forest Service lands.

While many could support our efforts to integrate laws and apply new ecosystem management principles, budget and staff reductions has made it very difficult to do so. Just when some progress was being made, the new Congress sends a message that timber, grazing, and mining should be a dominant use if national forests should exist at all!

The actions of the last four years in the context of the agency's history has demoralized many employees. As I understand it, **is not**, the Clinton Administration's policies but how we have gone about implementing them that has created our current situation. A second term provides an opportunity to start anew and try and further repair the relationship between the Administration that you have begun.

15 May 1997
DRAFT**MEMORANDUM FOR MIKE DOMBECK, CHIEF**

FROM: James R. Lyons
Under Secretary
Natural Resources and Environment

SUBJ: Accountability

ISSUE:

You and I have have been confronted with a significant number policy misjudgements and communication mistakes which have proven to be misleading to the public and damaging to the agency. The most recent in the series of mishaps was the premature release of a letter to Ms. Peggy Hennessey regarding the Forest Service policy position on timber sale bids from non-harvesting organizations. I recognize that mistakes occur, but the repeated pattern of problems suggests that corrective actions should be taken to ensure accountability to you and me.

BACKGROUND:

A number of incidents associated with timber sales, timber sales policy, and conflicts with Administration positions have arisen over the past year. Some examples include:

1) Timber Sale Bidding Procedures

At the same time the timber staff was preparing a decision memorandum for you to establish policy on timber bids, they also prepared and forwarded a letter for signature which took a clear position on this issue. The personal view presented in the letter was published yesterday in newspapers across the country as the Clinton Administration position, even though the you were still awaiting a final copy of the decision memo.

2) Buffalo River Timber Sales

In early 1997, at the same time timber staff ^{was} working on a final policy decision regarding the disposition of some highly controversial timber sales on the Ouchita National Forest, the same staff prepared and signed a letter which stated a position on the issue. Again, the sequence of events undermined the policy process of the Forest Service and compromised the integrity of the agency.

3) Letter to Congress on Timber Sale Liability

The timber staff wrote and forwarded a letter for signature by the Acting Chief which included an important policy position regarding federal liability for contract cancellation. This letter did not receive the normal review by the Office of General Counsel, among other offices, and significantly misrepresented our position.

DRAFT

4) Briefing Memorandum on the Effect of FY 1998 Roads Policy on the Timber Program

In April 1997 a memorandum from the Forest Service was circulated through Congress with factually incorrect information which appeared to undermine the President's budget. The Forest Service has since been forced to respond to this misinformation with a formal correction.

5) Timber Roads Brochure

In March 1997, a brochure was printed which extolled the benefits of timber-funded roads, despite the fact that the President's February 1997 budget eliminated timber funded roads. Furthermore, the brochure chose as its flagship example a highly controversial timber sale which had been criticized by many people inside and outside the Administration.

6) Offer vs. Sold Accomplishment Policy Change

In April 1997, I learned accidentally through one of 600 appropriations questions about a significant change in national policy regarding how we measure the timber sale program on national forests. The apparent shift from measuring timber offered to timber sold was initiated spontaneously without upper level review or involvement.

7) Data on the Impact of the Secretary's Salvage Directive

On August 1, 1996, Secretary Glickman appeared before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to deliver sensitive information about the effect of his directive on the timber program. However, when he arrived, he found that the Committee had somehow already been received nationwide information about the timber program that was almost exactly the same information which had been prepared by the Forest Service for his testimony.

8) Analysis of Senator Craig's Forest Legislation

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management engaged in a joint effort to analyze the legislation and prepare a inter-Departmental letter to be signed by Secretaries Glickman and Babbitt. Somehow, Senator Craig's staff person was briefed on the contents of the letter during the week of January 27, 1997, and used this information to lobby against the Administration's position.

I have to assume that these mistakes are simply associated with errors in judgement and administrative procedures, because I do not have time to investigate them further. Nevertheless, the number of mistakes occurring during this brief period of time creates what I believe is an intolerable situation. I should note that we have not had similar experiences with other program areas. I realize that no one is perfect. To the extent that my office is in any way responsible for any of these gaffs, I will take remedial action. However, some oversight in the operations of the timber program is immediately required. *part of*

In order to avoid similar mishaps in the future, I have asked Brian Burke to head up a review of these incidents and to recommend changes in process to improve the situation. In addition, I have asked Brian to work with the appropriate people on your staff to determine which Forest Service

DRAFT

officials are accountable for the most recent problem that arose affecting timber sales policy and non-harvest bidders. Please have the appropriate individual(s) on your staff work directly with Brian on this matter.

SUMMARY:

Thousands of Forest Service employees are working long hours to serve the public, fill the gaps left by budget cuts and downsizing, restore the credibility of the agency, and protect the resource. The recurring mistakes made by a few careless employees are a disservice to the agency and an affront to the hard working employees that are proud of the work we do. The mistakes have collectively undermined your leadership of the agency and the policies of the Administration. I think it would be a mistake to turn a blind eye and accept that this kind of job performance is tolerable on a sustained basis. I believe the agency deserves better service than this. Please report back to me with the specific actions you intend to take by the close of business, Thursday, May 22, 1997.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D.C. 20240



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Washington, D.C. 20090

JAN - 7 1998

Subject: Bureau of Land Management--Forest Service Partnership for Land Management and Customer Services

To: Forest Service: Deputy Chiefs and Regional Foresters and Directors

Bureau of Land Management: Assistant Directors and State and Center Directors

On August 4, Vice President Gore met with us to share his expectations of a select group of 30 federal agencies encompassing 90 percent of the frontline contact with the American people. The Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service are expected to increase collaboration to achieve dramatic increases in customer service, operational efficiency, and ultimately, quality of resource stewardship. We are committed to this goal, and by the way of this letter, we are starting agency-wide efforts to expand our partnership.

Since 1996, pilot units in Colorado and Oregon have been carrying the idea of interagency partnership as far as possible in their day-to-day activities--testing how far we can go in sharing people and resources, harmonizing our processes, and delivering one-stop customer service. To date, results from the pilots have shown a strong and favorable public response and as much as \$1 million annually in cost avoidance and savings. Now it is time to expand our efforts by drawing from what we have already learned.

We expect all our managers, both in the field and in Washington, to move quickly in the endeavor; to guide us, we are forming an Interagency Steering Team of Deputy Regional Foresters, Associate State Directors; and one member from each National Headquarters office. The Team will develop and oversee a framework for expanding our collaboration, everywhere. The Steering Team is authorized to remove any internal barriers to achieving our mutual objective of increasing effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service through collaboration. The Team will report its plans to our leadership teams by the end of February 1998.

Michael Dombeck
Chief, Forest Service

Pat Shea
Director, Bureau of Land Management



File Code: 6270
Route To:

Date: JAN 16 1998

Subject: State of Idaho vs. United States Forest Service, Appeal Recommendation

To: Bonnie Luken, Acting General Counsel

I have reviewed the Idaho district court's opinion in State of Idaho vs. United States Forest Service, Civ. No. 97-0230, concerning whether or not the Forest Service should provide the "name and city of residence of each individual holding a permit, license, or lease on Forest Service lands." The Forest Service strongly recommends against an appeal of this decision.

We urge the Department to recommend against an appeal in this case for the following reasons. First, the Forest Service has a long history of open discussions and free exchange of information between agency employees and the public. We believe this decision corrects a recent and very narrow interpretation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) thus restoring the Forest Service to its long held position of open Government. Second, we agree with the court's finding that "the Forest Service cannot issue a permit in secret based on the power and influence of the applicant***[and that the]***Forest Service's overarching duty is to issue permits in an [sic] manner that will not 'preclude the general public from full enjoyment of the natural, scenic, recreational, and other aspects of the national forest.'" Third, we believe the court correctly determined that the disclosure of names and addresses of permit holders will "aid in determining whether improper influence is used to obtain permits or whether permits are granted to those with a past history of environmental abuses."

We would like to comply as soon as possible with the court's direction and release the requested names and addresses of permittees to the State of Idaho and any other person as defined by the FOIA. Since Ken Cohen and his staff in the General Litigation Division have been working with us on this case, we would like them to work with our FOIA office so that the letter and spirit of the FOIA are met when responding to the public's request for information about activities permitted on National Forest System land.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Mike Gippert, NRE, OGC
cc: Ken Cohen, OGC
cc: Naomi Charboneau, FOIA, FS
cc: Susan Yonts-Shepard, NFS, FS





File Code: 7700

Date: January 22, 1998

Subject: Roads Policy

To: All Employees

Throughout my first year as Chief, and over the past several years, our agency has frequently been on the defensive over conservation issues. Many of us have become frustrated as our efforts to advance a positive natural resource agenda became focused on a few problem areas, at the expense of our many success stories. In 1998, I am committed to a different approach that will assist us to redeem our role as conservation leaders.

Our first step in this process is a proposal for changing the way we manage roads and roadless areas. Earlier today I announced that the Forest Service was developing a new road policy. My expectation is that this policy will lead to making better decisions about:

- Where and when to build new roads
- How to decommission roads that are not needed, not used or cause unacceptable environmental degradation
- Selectively upgrading certain roads to meet changing public use and rural access needs in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Finding sustainable funding for future road management

This proposal has been in development for some time by teams led by Tom Mills, Director of the Pacific Northwest Station, and Bob Joslin, Deputy Chief for the National Forest System. The proposal would temporarily limit roadbuilding activity in most roadless and some adjacent areas, allow enough time for public comment and scientific analysis, and result in a revised policy on the future management of those areas. I anticipate a vigorous debate will accompany this process.

Our objective is to work with people and use the best available science to develop a transportation system for National Forest System lands with fewer miles of roads, but roads of higher quality than are presently in the system. Such an outcome would link closely with my focus areas of clean water, healthy landscapes and restoring watersheds. We can and should have a road system that provides safe public access and efficient recreation use. But that system also needs to be one with reduced risks from erosion and flooding in headwaters and other sensitive areas, and does not adversely impact watersheds and wildlife habitat.



As with any new initiative there will be supporters and critics. We will have to find common ground between competing interests while doing what is best out on the land. Critical to this effort will be a thorough understanding by line and staff officers of what we are doing, and why we are doing it. Many of you have seen reports and analysis of this proposal in the national media, and we have heard from Congress, interest groups and hundreds of citizens as well. You will be hearing more about it as I deliver a "State of the Forest" speech in the near future. And this year's budget discussions will touch on issues tied directly to roads, such as increased recreational use, repair backlogs, safety, public access and inadequate funding for operations and maintenance.

The team leaders for this effort and I cannot do all the outreach and coordination that will ensure success for an effort of this magnitude. Senior leaders at the national and regional levels, along with Forest Supervisors and all other Forest Service employees need to be informed and involved as a comprehensive policy for a National Forest transportation system is developed. I know that your efforts will help us accomplish this objective.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'M' and 'D'.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

January 22, 1998

Dear

The Forest Service is in the process of developing a new national forest transportation system policy. Earlier today I announced the details of this policy which I expect will lead us to make better decisions about:

- Where and when to build new roads
- How to decommission roads that are not needed, not used or cause unacceptable environmental degradation
- Selectively upgrading certain roads to meet changing public use and rural access needs in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Finding sustainable funding for future road management

This proposal would also temporarily limit roadbuilding activity in most roadless and some adjacent areas, allow enough time for public comment and scientific analysis, and result in a revised policy on the future management of those areas. I anticipate that a vigorous debate will accompany this process, and I invite your participation in helping us to develop a scientifically-based and long-term forest road policy.

Our objective is to have a transportation system for National Forest System lands with fewer miles of higher quality roads than are presently in the system. We can and should have a road system that provides safe public access and efficient recreation use. But that system also needs to be one with reduced risks from erosion and flooding in headwaters and other sensitive areas, and does not adversely impact watersheds and wildlife habitat.

These proposals are sure to cause a great deal of debate, but prudence and sound stewardship require us to take a cautious approach to road construction and management. Our objective is to make scientifically-based, publicly supported decisions that best meet the changing needs of the American people while protecting our rich forest legacy. We have already heard from Congress, interest groups and hundreds of citizens as well. And in Congress this year, we expect the budget discussions to touch on issues tied directly to roads, such as increased recreational use, our significant repair backlogs, public access and safety, and inadequate funding for operations and maintenance.



I appreciate your interest in this issue, and I hope to hear your viewpoints on it. If you have comments, please send them to Rhey Solomon with the Washington Office Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, (202-205-0939), USDA Forest Service, 14th and Independence, Washington, D.C. 20090, or email: roads/wo@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Dombek" clearly distinguishable.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures:

- Press Release
- Facts about the National Forest Road System
- Questions and Answers



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Conrad Burns
United States Senate
187 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2603

Dear Senator Burns:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letter of January 7, 1998, regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

As we discussed over the telephone several weeks ago, I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed.* This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.
- *The Forest Service will aggressively decommission old, unneeded, and unused roads, as well as unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads."* In addition to the 373,000 miles of authorized forest roads, we estimate that there are at least 60,000 miles of unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads" on National Forests. These uninventoried roads, and many of the old and unused roads, are primary sources of environmental damage from erosion, landslides, and degradation of western drinking water supplies.



- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.* Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.
- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Your letter raised many excellent suggestions and valid concerns regarding our proposed interim regulation regarding roadless areas. Regarding your suggestion that roadless area entry require development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the vast majority of road construction projects within roadless areas are already accompanied by an EIS.

I agree, and will work to ensure, that any final policy relative to roadless area management is integrated with the forthcoming recommendations of the recently convened committee of scientists.

I also support the idea of conducting a thorough forest road inventory to determine 1) which roads are needed, 2) which should be relocated or upgraded, and 3) which roads should be decommissioned because they are no longer needed or cause unacceptable environmental damage.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

- "The existence of unroaded areas is by far the most valuable output from Forest Service and BLM administered lands in the Basin" (47 percent of value outputs today; 41 percent in the year 2045).
- Over 70 percent of the 94 key species ("species of focus") studied within the basin are negatively affected by one or more factors associated with road construction.

- Over 60 percent of the best remaining aquatic habitats ("aquatic strongholds") within the basin are found within roadless areas.

We are simply proposing a "time out" on new entries into roadless areas until we can provide our field managers with the tools they need to make more informed decisions about when, or whether, to construct roads within roadless areas. I assure you that the final Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan will be based on ongoing public review and scientific analysis within the region. However, we are proposing to exempt national forests under the Pacific Northwest Plan and three other forests whose plans have recently been revised. Also, forests whose plans are under appeal, such as the Tongass, are exempt because we know how important it is to maintain the integrity of the process.

Third, let me assure you that all of our actions will fully comply with all existing environmental laws including the public involvement and environmental analysis procedures required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act. We are issuing the proposed interim strategy in draft form with a 30-day public comment period. Public comment will be analyzed and incorporated into final policy through an appropriate environmental analysis.

Fourth, our final interim policy will not violate the "release" language agreements that were forged in a bipartisan fashion for the western states that have passed wilderness bills. Nor do we intend to adjust land-use categories as they are defined within forest plans. We only propose to temporarily suspend the discretionary action of building roads within roadless areas. All other management activities such as thinning, helicopter logging, and prescribed fire can continue.

Fifth, the proposed interim policy will allow for the continuation of timber sales, and associated road construction, that are already under contract.

Finally, we are proposing that the interim policy only remain in effect for 18 months, or until we develop improved analytical tools to make more informed decisions about building future roads in roadless areas, whichever is sooner. To ensure that people's views are heard, the Forest Service will facilitate several public meetings across the country to discuss how both the interim roadless and the long-term road management policies are resolved.

I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

[JAN 22 1998
14th & Independence SW
P. O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1010-2

Date:

Honorable Christopher B. Cannon
United States House of Representatives
118 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4403

Dear Congressman Cannon:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

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- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.*



Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.

- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

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Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

- "The existence of unroaded areas is by far the most valuable output from Forest Service and BLM administered lands in the Basin" (47 percent of value outputs today; 41 percent in the year 2045).
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I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



, File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Helen P. Chenoweth
United States House of Representatives
1727 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1201

Dear Congresswoman Chenoweth:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Larry Craig
Chairman, Subcommittee on Forests
and Public Land Management
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1201

Dear Senator Craig:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letter of January 7, 1998, regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

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As we discussed over the telephone several weeks ago, I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed.* This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.
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Your letter raised many excellent suggestions and valid concerns regarding our proposed interim regulation regarding roadless areas. Regarding your suggestion that roadless area entry require development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the vast majority of road construction projects within roadless areas are already accompanied by an EIS.

I agree, and will work to ensure, that any final policy relative to roadless area management is integrated with the forthcoming recommendations of the recently convened committee of scientists.

I also support the idea of conducting a thorough forest road inventory to determine 1) which roads are needed, 2) which should be relocated or upgraded, and 3) which roads should be decommissioned because they are no longer needed or cause unacceptable environmental damage.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable John T. Doolittle
United States House of Representatives
1526 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0504

Dear Congressman Doolittle:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date:

JAN 22 1998

Honorable Jo Ann H. Emerson
United States House of Representatives
132 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 0515-2508

Dear Congresswoman Emerson:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Slade Gorton
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4701

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letter of January 7, 1998, regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Third, let me assure you that all of our actions will fully comply with all existing environmental laws including the public involvement and environmental analysis procedures required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act. We are issuing the proposed interim strategy in draft form with a 30-day public comment period. Public comment will be analyzed and incorporated into final policy through an appropriate environmental analysis.

Fourth, our final interim policy will not violate the "release" language agreements that were forged in a bipartisan fashion for the western states that have passed wilderness bills. Nor do we intend to adjust land-use categories as they are defined within forest plans. We only propose to temporarily suspend the discretionary action of building roads within roadless areas. All other management activities such as thinning, helicopter logging, and prescribed fire can continue.

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I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Richard Hastings
United States House of Representatives
1323 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4704

Dear Congressman Hastings:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed.* This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.
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- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.*



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- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable John David Hayworth
United States House of Representatives
1023 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0306

Dear Congressman Hayworth:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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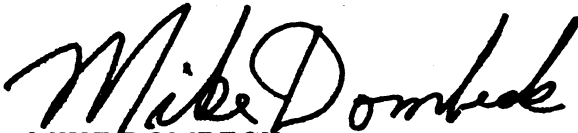
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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Wally Herger
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0502

Dear Congressman Herger:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Rick Hill
United States House of Representatives
1037 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-2601

Dear Congressman Hill:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombeck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Jerry Lewis
United States House of Representatives
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0540

Dear Congressman Lewis:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Scott McInnis
United States House of Representatives
215 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0603

Dear Congressman McInnis:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed.* This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.
- *The Forest Service will aggressively decommission old, unneeded, and unused roads, as well as unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads."* In addition to the 373,000 miles of authorized forest roads, we estimate that there are at least 60,000 miles of unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads" on National Forests. These uninventoried roads, and many of the old and unused roads, are primary sources of environmental damage from erosion, landslides, and degradation of western drinking water supplies.
- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.*



Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.

- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

- "The existence of unroaded areas is by far the most valuable output from Forest Service and BLM administered lands in the Basin" (47 percent of value outputs today; 41 percent in the year 2045).
- Over 70 percent of the 94 key species ("species of focus") studied within the basin are negatively affected by one or more factors associated with road construction.
- Over 60 percent of the best remaining aquatic habitats ("aquatic strongholds") within the basin are found within roadless areas.

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Third, let me assure you that all of our actions will fully comply with all existing environmental laws including the public involvement and environmental analysis procedures required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act. We are issuing the proposed interim strategy in draft form with a 30-day public comment period. Public comment will be analyzed and incorporated into final policy through an appropriate environmental analysis.

Fourth, our final interim policy will not violate the "release" language agreements that were forged in a bipartisan fashion for the western states that have passed wilderness bills. Nor do we intend to adjust land-use categories as they are defined within forest plans. We only propose to temporarily suspend the discretionary action of building roads within roadless areas. All other management activities such as thinning, helicopter logging, and prescribed fire can continue.

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I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombek". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "M" and "D".

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Frank H. Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0202

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letter of January 7, 1998, regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

As we discussed over the telephone several weeks ago, I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed. This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.*
- *The Forest Service will aggressively decommission old, unneeded, and unused roads, as well as unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads." In addition to the 373,000 miles of authorized forest roads, we estimate that there are at least 60,000 miles of unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads" on National Forests. These uninventoried roads, and many of the old and unused roads, are primary sources of environmental damage from erosion, landslides, and degradation of western drinking water supplies.*



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- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Your letter raised many excellent suggestions and valid concerns regarding our proposed interim regulation regarding roadless areas. Regarding your suggestion that roadless area entry require development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the vast majority of road construction projects within roadless areas are already accompanied by an EIS.

I agree, and will work to ensure, that any final policy relative to roadless area management is integrated with the forthcoming recommendations of the recently convened committee of scientists.

I also support the idea of conducting a thorough forest road inventory to determine 1) which roads are needed, 2) which should be relocated or upgraded, and 3) which roads should be decommissioned because they are no longer needed or cause unacceptable environmental damage.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

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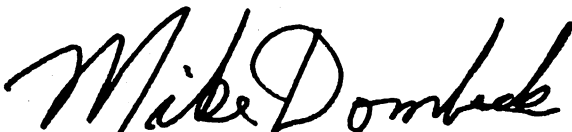
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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable George R. Nethercutt
United States House of Representatives
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4705

Dear Congressman Nethercutt:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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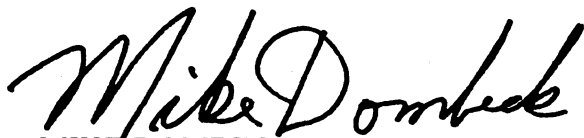
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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable John E. Peterson
United States House of Representatives
1020 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3805

Dear Congressman Peterson:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Frank Riggs
United States House of Representative
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0501

Dear Congressman Riggs:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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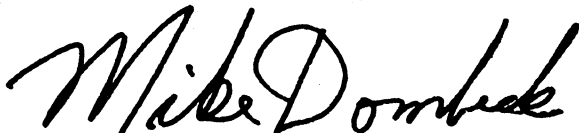
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MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Bob Schaffer
United States House of Representative
212 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0604

Dear Congressman Schaffer:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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- *The Forest Service will aggressively decommission old, unneeded, and unused roads, as well as unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads."* In addition to the 373,000 miles of authorized forest roads, we estimate that there are at least 60,000 miles of unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads" on National Forests. These uninventoried roads, and many of the old and unused roads, are primary sources of environmental damage from erosion, landslides, and degradation of western drinking water supplies.
- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.*



Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.

- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

- "The existence of unroaded areas is by far the most valuable output from Forest Service and BLM administered lands in the Basin" (47 percent of value outputs today; 41 percent in the year 2045).
- Over 70 percent of the 94 key species ("species of focus") studied within the basin are negatively affected by one or more factors associated with road construction.
- Over 60 percent of the best remaining aquatic habitats ("aquatic strongholds") within the basin are found within roadless areas.

We are simply proposing a "time out" on new entries into roadless areas until we can provide our field managers with the tools they need to make more informed decisions about when, or whether, to construct roads within roadless areas. I assure you that the final Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan will be based on ongoing public review and scientific analysis within the region. However, we are proposing to exempt national forests under the Pacific Northwest Plan and three other forests whose plans have recently been revised. Also, forests whose plans are under appeal, such as the Tongass, are exempt because we know how important it is to maintain the integrity of the process.

Third, let me assure you that all of our actions will fully comply with all existing environmental laws including the public involvement and environmental analysis procedures required under the National

Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act. We are issuing the proposed interim strategy in draft form with a 30-day public comment period. Public comment will be analyzed and incorporated into final policy through an appropriate environmental analysis.

Fourth, our final interim policy will not violate the "release" language agreements that were forged in a bipartisan fashion for the western states that have passed wilderness bills. Nor do we intend to adjust land-use categories as they are defined within forest plans. We only propose to temporarily suspend the discretionary action of building roads within roadless areas. All other management activities such as thinning, helicopter logging, and prescribed fire can continue.

Fifth, the proposed interim policy will allow for the continuation of timber sales, and associated road construction, that are already under contract.

Finally, we are proposing that the interim policy only remain in effect for 18 months, or until we develop improved analytical tools to make more informed decisions about building future roads in roadless areas, whichever is sooner. To ensure that people's views are heard, the Forest Service will facilitate several public meetings across the country to discuss how both the interim roadless and long-term road management policies are resolved.

I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Gordon Smith
United States Senate
367 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letter of January 7, 1998, regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

As we discussed over the telephone several weeks ago, I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed.* This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.
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Your letter raised many excellent suggestions and valid concerns regarding our proposed interim regulation regarding roadless areas. Regarding your suggestion that roadless area entry require development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the vast majority of road construction projects within roadless areas are already accompanied by an EIS.

I agree, and will work to ensure, that any final policy relative to roadless area management is integrated with the forthcoming recommendations of the recently convened committee of scientists.

I also support the idea of conducting a thorough forest road inventory to determine 1) which roads are needed, 2) which should be relocated or upgraded, and 3) which roads should be decommissioned because they are no longer needed or cause unacceptable environmental damage.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

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Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date:

JAN 22 1998

Honorable Linda Smith
United States House of Representatives
1317 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4703

Dear Congresswoman Smith:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Robert F. Smith
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose -- timber production-- that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to fully engage Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

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- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.* Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.
- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Our draft interim policy proposed to temporarily suspend road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

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We are simply proposing a "time out" on new entries into roadless areas until we can provide our field managers with the tools they need to make more informed decisions about when, or whether, to construct roads within roadless areas. I assure you that the final Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan will be based on ongoing public review and scientific analysis within the region. However, we are proposing to exempt national forests under the Pacific Northwest Plan and three other forests whose plans have recently been revised. Also, forests whose plans are under appeal, such as the Tongass, are exempt because we know how important it is to maintain the integrity of the process.

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Fifth, the proposed interim policy will allow for the continuation of timber sales, and associated road construction already under contract.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Charles H. Taylor
United States House of Representatives
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3311

Dear Congressman Taylor:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Craig Thomas
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-5001

Dear Senator Thomas:

Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letter of January 7, 1998, regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

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Your letter raised many excellent suggestions and valid concerns regarding our proposed interim regulation regarding roadless areas. Regarding your suggestion that roadless area entry require development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the vast majority of road construction projects within roadless areas are already accompanied by an EIS.

I agree, and will work to ensure, that any final policy relative to roadless area management is integrated with the forthcoming recommendations of the recently convened committee of scientists.

I also support the idea of conducting a thorough forest road inventory to determine 1) which roads are needed, 2) which should be relocated or upgraded, and 3) which roads should be decommissioned because they are no longer needed or cause unacceptable environmental damage.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

- "The existence of unroaded areas is by far the most valuable output from Forest Service and BLM administered lands in the Basin" (47 percent of value outputs today; 41 percent in the year 2045).
- Over 70 percent of the 94 key species ("species of focus") studied within the basin are negatively affected by one or more factors associated with road construction.

- Over 60 percent of the best remaining aquatic habitats ("aquatic strongholds") within the basin are found within roadless areas.

We are simply proposing a "time out" on new entries into roadless areas until we can provide our field managers with the tools they need to make more informed decisions about when, or whether, to construct roads within roadless areas. I assure you that the final Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan will be based on ongoing public review and scientific analysis within the region. However, we are proposing to exempt national forests under the Pacific Northwest Plan and three other forests whose plans have recently been revised. Also, forests whose plans are under appeal, such as the Tongass, are exempt because we know how important it is to maintain the integrity of the process.

Third, let me assure you that all of our actions will fully comply with all existing environmental laws including the public involvement and environmental analysis procedures required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act. We are issuing the proposed interim strategy in draft form with a 30-day public comment period. Public comment will be analyzed and incorporated into final policy through an appropriate environmental analysis.

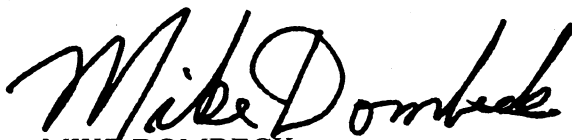
Fourth, our final interim policy will not violate the "release" language agreements that were forged in a bipartisan fashion for the western states that have passed wilderness bills. Nor do we intend to adjust land-use categories as they are defined within forest plans. We only propose to temporarily suspend the discretionary action of building roads within roadless areas. All other management activities such as thinning, helicopter logging, and prescribed fire can continue.

Fifth, the proposed interim policy will allow for the continuation of timber sales, and associated road construction, that are already under contract.

Finally, we are proposing that the interim policy only remain in effect for 18 months, or until we develop improved analytical tools to make more informed decisions about building future roads in roadless areas, whichever is sooner. To ensure that people's views are heard, the Forest Service will facilitate several public meetings across the country to discuss how both the interim roadless and the long-term road management policies are resolved.

I appreciate your offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2602

Dear Senator Baucus:

Thank you for your letter of support for my review of Forest Service road policies. Like you, I am extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share your hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

Please allow me to share with you an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

As we discussed over the telephone several weeks ago, I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed. This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.*
- *The Forest Service will aggressively decommission old, unneeded, and unused roads, as well as unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads." In addition to the 373,000 miles of authorized forest roads, we estimate that there are at least 60,000 miles of unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads" on National Forests. These uninventoried roads, and many of the old and unused roads, are primary sources of environmental damage from erosion, landslides, and degradation of western drinking water supplies.*
- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.*



Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.

- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Thomas A. Daschle
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4103

Dear Senator Daschle:

Thank you for your letter of support for my review of Forest Service road policies. Like you, I am extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share your hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

Please allow me to share with you an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

As we discussed over the telephone several weeks ago, I am committed to using the best available science and working in a collaborative manner to develop a long-term forest road management policy that accomplishes at least four objectives:

- *The Forest Service will develop and provide managers with the tools to make better, more informed decisions about if, where, and when new roads should be constructed. This applies to roadless areas as well as already roaded areas.*
- *The Forest Service will aggressively decommission old, unneeded, and unused roads, as well as unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads." In addition to the 373,000 miles of authorized forest roads, we estimate that there are at least 60,000 miles of unplanned and unauthorized "ghost roads" on National Forests. These uninventoried roads, and many of the old and unused roads, are primary sources of environmental damage from erosion, landslides, and degradation of western drinking water supplies.*
- *The Forest Service will upgrade forest roads as appropriate to meet changing uses, local communities' access needs, and growing recreation demand on the National Forest System.*



Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.

- *The Forest Service and Congress should fund sustainable funding sources for maintaining the forest road system in an environmentally sensitive manner that best meets the needs of local communities and other users and visitors of the National Forest System.* We presently estimate an over \$10 billion backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction on National Forest roads. Additionally, only 40 percent of the existing forest roads are maintained to the safety and environmental standards to which they were designed.

These are some of the issues we intend to address through our long-term transportation strategy, as the enclosed Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking states. We fully intend to comply with all existing environmental laws, to employ the best science, and to work with Congress and the American people as we develop the new forest road policy.

Our draft interim policy proposed to suspend temporarily road construction in certain roadless areas. We are proposing this action for several reasons. First, common sense tells us that we should proceed cautiously with any new road construction--particularly in roadless areas--when we cannot afford to maintain the existing road system.

Second, new scientific information points to the ecological and social importance of roadless areas on National Forests. For example, the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Plan found that:

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I appreciate your support and offer to help us develop a scientifically based, environmentally balanced, and popularly supported approach to managing forest roads. I welcome your comments to our proposal and look forward to working with you. We cannot allow this issue to continue to distract from the need to manage this Nation's great forest legacy.

Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



File Code: 1010-2

Date:

JAN 22 1994

Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4704

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter of support for my review of Forest Service road policies. Like you, I am extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share your hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

Please allow me to share with you an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

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Most forest roads were constructed by timber support dollars and designed to accomplish timber-related objectives. But, today, these same roads are used regularly by local communities and hundreds of thousands of recreation users. We need to ensure they are upgraded to ensure safe public passage with a minimal amount of environmental degradation.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 22 1998

Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0201

Dear Congressman Young:

President Clinton and Secretary Glickman asked that I respond to your letters regarding forest roads and roadless areas. Like you, we are extremely concerned about management of the Forest Service's extensive road network. I also share the hope that by exerting decisive leadership on an issue that has long bedeviled us, and by working in a collaborative manner with Congress and the public, we can obviate the need for future divisive forest road debates.

While much of the content of your letter addressed the treatment of roadless areas, I want to provide you with an outline of our proposed long-term approach to forest road management. Although the proposed interim roadless policy has generated most of the media coverage and congressional interest, I believe that the issue of how we manage the existing forest road network is of far more social, ecological, and economic importance.

Presently, we manage a road system that was designed primarily for one purpose--timber production--that now serves many other purposes, such as meeting the access needs of many western communities and rapidly growing recreation use. Our objective is to engage fully Congress and the American people in developing a science-based transportation strategy for forest roads that meets multiple objectives and minimizes, and reverses, environmental damage.

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Sincerely,


MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1550

Date: JAN 23 1998

Mr. Hosny El-Lakany
Assistant Director-General
Forestry Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome
ITALY

Dear Mr. El-Lakany:

Congratulations on your appointment as Assistant Director-General for forestry at FAO.

The Forest Service has a long history of collaboration with FAO. As you are aware, we are currently working together on the global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2000), as well as a number of other important programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Forest Service is an active participant in the FAO Committee on Forestry and in three regional forestry commissions: Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America.

I consider our international programs to be among the highest priorities for our agency, and FAO is one of our most important partners. I was privileged to lead the U.S. delegation to the World Forestry Congress in Turkey, where I was impressed by FAO's efforts to organize the substantive work of the Congress.

I look forward to continuing our cooperation. Please feel free to contact me regarding collaboration between our respective organizations.

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: JAN 23 1998

Dr. David A. Harcharik
Deputy Director-General
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome
ITALY

Dear Dave:

Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Director-General of FAO. I understand that this is the first time a natural resource professional has been appointed to such a high post in FAO. When you are involved in high-level discussions, I am sure you will remember all those years when you urged FAO to allocate a higher proportion of its budget to forestry!

It was good to see you in Turkey. I was impressed by FAO's efforts to organize the substantive program of the World Forestry Congress despite sometimes difficult working conditions. Although it was my first Congress, I am told by veteran observers that it was one of the best.

I am very interested in continuing the long history of collaboration between the Forest Service and FAO. We plan to continue to actively participate in the FAO Committee on Forestry and the regional forestry commissions, as well as to collaborate on priority programs such as criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and the global forest resources assessment. I consider global conservation to be a high priority for the Forest Service, and FAO is one of our major partners.

My door is open when you visit Washington. Please stay in touch, and call if there is anything I can do to help support FAO's forestry program.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Dave: It was great visiting with you in Turkey!
M.





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010-2

Date: JAN 27 1998

Mr. Patrick A. Shea
Director
Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Pat:

As the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) you have raised a question regarding the impact of the recently announced Forest Service proposed interim rule addressing the construction of roads in roadless areas. I want to assure you that we look forward to briefing you and your staff more completely on this proposal and its implications for BLM administered areas.

Specifically, you asked me about the impact on the proposed rule on the Columbia River Basin project. As you know, the successful completion of the Columbia River Basin project is one of the Forest Service's highest priorities. I remain firmly committed to the partnerships we have formed there. While the proposed interim rule may affect road construction in National Forests within the Columbia River Basin, the proposed rule should not have an impact on the final project. In fact, the interim rule should expire prior to the completion of any final decision on the project. Moreover, much of the science upon which we have based the proposed rule was generated as part of the Columbia River Basin project.

I look forward to working with our partners at the county and state level in developing a long-term road policy that will complement the goals of the Columbia River Basin project. This will be an ongoing process, and I look forward to your full input and cooperation.

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: 1310
Route To:

Date: January 27, 1998

Subject: Chief's Overview

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

We have completed the first two of the Chief's Overviews: one for Programs and Legislation and the other for Operations. I was pleased with how both sessions were conducted and want to give you a brief report on the main items we covered at each Overview. Those notes are enclosed.

You are aware that we plan to conduct an Overview on each major operating unit this year. Let me remind you again of the purposes of these Overviews:

There is a new senior management team in place now in the Forest Service (FS); and this group know as the Executive Committee, must learn to work together as a cohesive unit and deal with the same facts when analyzing decisions which affect our nation's most valuable natural resources, the lives of thousands of employees and millions of dollars.

Only through a process where all major organizational units of the FS are compared on a similar basis in a compressed timeframe can we prioritize the most important issues facing the agency and then direct the necessary resources to their solution. If we do not do this, we run the risk of making decisions on an *ad hoc* basis without consideration of the entire picture and of inadequately defining accountability for results.

We need to all be speaking in the same language and these reviews will help us to do that. When senior managers gather information independently in a very large organization, they inevitably hear things differently and reach differing conclusions. That makes priorities difficult to set.

Ultimately, what we hear in these Chief's Overviews will enable us to set policy and create budgets to direct resources correctly.

We plan on making very few decisions at the Chief's Overviews. The important decisions will be made after the Executive Committee has gained a broad overview of activities throughout the agency and are likely to be felt first in policies impacting the year 2000 budget.

If you have any questions about this memo or the enclosures, please call me or Francis Pandolfi.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



Chief's Overview
PROGRAMS AND LEGISLATION DEPUTY AREA
January 20, 1998
MEETING NOTES

A Chief's Overview of the Programs and Legislation Deputy Area (P&L) occurred on January 20, 1998. These notes provide documentation of that meeting in the following format:

- (1) Common Themes
- (2) Discussion of Significant Issues
- (3) Discussion of Other Issues and Concerns

1. Common Themes: At the close of the review, Francis Pandolfi summarized the common themes that emerged during discussion. It is anticipated that these themes will likely be raised in other reviews and, as we move forward, we will begin to make decisions on how to deal with them in terms of priority and accountability. The themes are:

Role Definition: Roles of the P&L Deputy Area and individual staffs need to be better defined and communicated. It is likely that the staff clearly understand their roles; but there is limited common understanding and support outside the Deputy Area. This is especially true for the Legislative Affairs and Policy Analysis Staffs. Without well understood and well communicated roles, proactive agendas cannot be advanced.

Communication and Salesmanship: Communication with the field must be improved. Effective issue and role communication cannot occur without good salesmanship. It is essential that the Washington Office get into the field to "sell" its vision, roles, and program needs.

Making Important Things Happen: The organization of the Forest Service as a whole is good at identifying issues, problems and opportunities. It is poor at making the important items happen agency-wide. As we examine major issues on other units, it is important to concentrate on possible solutions when identifying problems. Attention needs to focus on reengineering and implementing change. There is little willingness in the Forest Service to change despite talk to the contrary. This is due to an absence of consequences for not changing, as well as an absence of incentives for doing the right thing.

Centralization vs. Decentralization: It is important to preserve decentralization wherever it is appropriate; but it also needs to be eliminated where it is inappropriate. Decentralization is in many ways the greatest threat to the agency's survival as we know it, and is at the heart of many problems raised by GAO and Congress. A thorough examination needs to be made of how to maintain the decentralized decisionmaking where appropriate, while implementing centralized management of resource and financial information.

2. Discussion of Significant Issues:

During the Overview, P&L presented a detailed discussion of two major issues that, if incorporated as major corporate initiatives, could have a significant long-term strategic benefit to the Forest Service. The issues are:

A. Developing and refining processes, systems and information to effectively integrate The Results Act (GPRA) into the agency's Corporate Management Framework. In summary, this initiative would involve an effort to develop process and information linkages that would facilitate a uniform and consistent implementation of the requirements of GPRA in all other Forest Service processes. As they currently exist, resource and financial information systems are not integrated in a way that provides timely, accurate and useful information. The following key points were made during the discussion of this issue:

- The importance of GPRA must be recognized by all employees. It is here to stay. GPRA must show what our desired future is and how we intend to get there.

- It is critical to fully integrate all major national systems and key information to support management processes. There must be clear linkages to the forest plans, corporate decisionmaking, the national agenda and the budget. Currently, there is inconsistent monitoring of plans, reports don't reflect the decisions we need to make, and accountability (where it exists) is not based on accomplishment of strategic goals and objectives.

- Current efforts do not support "data economy." In other words, there is significantly more data being collected and managed than is needed, and that which is collected is often of poor quality. There needs to be an evaluation of existing systems and information requirements when implementing any new integrated systems. Elimination of redundant or "unnecessary" information systems must be mandated or staffs will continue use of the systems and collection of data.

- The ability to integrate systems is significantly affected by the decentralized nature of the organization.

- There needs to be a clear identification of the need for change, and the changes that need to occur. Field level understanding and support is essential.

B. Develop a proactive legislative and policy agenda for the Forest Service. In summary, this initiative would involve development of a proactive program with the Administration and Congress in delivering the Agency's legislative and policy agenda and effectively communicate the Forest Service programs to a wider audience than traditional key contacts. Key elements of this effort in addition to what is discussed in the enclosed briefing paper include:

- There is a need to identify a corporate agenda that Congress and the Administration "can't afford not to listen to." This effort will result in focusing attention on the Forest Service agenda as opposed to the present situation, where agency attention is focused more on externally

developed agendas. In doing so, it is essential that the agenda articulate a fully integrated message combining national strategy, resource management information, budget, and financial information.

-A training program encompassing all aspects of Congressional contact and liaison is essential to success. This would include such subjects as the "right way" to present the agency agenda, developing consistency in the messages delivered by all levels of the organization, and the role of local officials, Congress, and the Administration.

- It is important to identify those employees who have professional relationships with Congressional, state, county, and other officials and interest groups and utilize these employees in communicating the agenda and issues.

3. Discussion of Other Issues and Concerns:

In addition to the two significant issues, each director provided an overview of activities and challenges within the staff groups. While many issues were discussed the following is notable:

P&L Recruitment and Outplacement: As little as 10 years ago, P&L was viewed as the place to get "your ticket punched" on the road to career advancement. The staff was considered the primary place for the organization's up and coming professionals to move into future executive positions. Presently, there is strong sentiment that P&L is a place "to get stuck," with little if any opportunity for assuming leadership positions in the field. Several factors contribute to this problem:

- field career ladders exist to the GS-15 level, thus reducing incentives to seek P&L positions
- a change in culture which no longer "requires" WO duty
- a lack of management emphasis on the importance of placing P&L employees
- a significant reduction in top quality applicants for P&L positions

Compiled by Hank Kashdan

Chief's Overview
OPERATIONS DEPUTY AREA
January 21, 1998
Meeting Notes

A Chief's Overview of the Operations Deputy area was held on January 21, 1998. These notes summarize the important issues discussed at that meeting.

1. **Common Themes:** At the conclusion of presentations, Francis Pandolfi summarized important themes, some of which were also discussed at the Programs and Legislation Chief's Overview held on January 20, 1998:

The role of each WO staff must be clearly and simply defined if we are to have accountability and support across the organization.

Communication of staff missions and accountability across the Forest Service (FS) is poor. In addition to occasional poor definition of roles, mentioned above, this lack of understanding also exists because staffs/Staff Directors do not "sell" their missions in the field.

It is difficult to make important things happen across the full spectrum of the Forest Service. We are excellent at making lists and discussing issues. We are poor at implementing when the entire FS is affected.

The topics of centralization and decentralization continue to be debated concerning which is appropriate in what circumstances. Certain types of inappropriate decentralization contribute to the difficulty in making important things happen, as mentioned above.

2. **Staff Department Concerns:** Several important issues were discussed where the Operations staffs and the Executive Committee have concerns. As the Chief's Overviews continue, the Executive Committee will be anxious to hear how other operating units feel about these issues so that they can be assigned proper priorities and accountability and their solutions can be clearly defined:

- We need to do all in our power to make the new FFIS general ledger system a success. The attitude around the FS that contributed to the current mess in the financial area must be altered if FFIS is to succeed. Penalties for retaining the old attitude must be severe.
- We need to recognize the fact that Operations will be assigning responsibilities for important tasks to staffs and that this poses the problem of creating risk where none exists today. People need to be particularly sensitive to this fact.
- We need to set better priorities for Information Management based on what the FS as a whole needs to have accomplished. We are trying to do too many things.
- Critical vacancies go unfilled for unacceptably long periods. We need to create a way to eliminate this problem. There is a feeling that other USDA agencies are more aggressive than we are in this area.

The need to integrate data bases, both natural resources and financial, is clear. The FS strategic plan cannot be implemented if this does not occur.

The ability of managers and employees to ignore clear directives or to assign them lower priorities that have been agreed to must be eliminated. It was agreed that the fact that the Chief's direct reports have been drastically reduced is a significant help in this matter in that managers must deal with their direct supervisors on matters of accountability rather than appealing things to the Chief.

Operations staffs are very concerned that downsizing hit them particularly hard (relative to other departments) and they are now understaffed to fulfill their missions.

Compiled by Francis Pandolfi



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Forest
Service

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File Code: 4000

Date: January 28, 1998

Route To:

Subject: Forest Road Policy Reform

To: Robert Joslin, Deputy Chief for NFS
Thomas Mills, PNW Station Director

You are aware that the key features of my natural resources agenda for the Forest Service include watershed health and restoration, sustainable forest management, recreation, and a new forest roads policy. The forest roads issue is one of the most important issues the agency is currently facing, and one that needs immediate attention.

My general objectives for a new policy are to provide a forest road system that takes into account changing public use and demand patterns, is safe for the public, provides for economical and efficient land management, and minimizes ecological impacts to the landscape. The new policy should address both roaded and unroaded components of the National Forest System and consider new construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and decommissioning of roads. The policy must be grounded on and be formulated in the context of the best available scientific information.

I am assigning the two of you the leadership responsibility for developing a new National long-term roads policy for National Forest System lands as quickly as technical and logistical constraints allow. Please use your own initiative to decide the best way to develop the policy in a collaborative manner. Keep me informed at key points in the development of the policy. I appreciate your willingness in taking on this very important and challenging assignment.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

