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FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL FORESTS AND THE USDA FOREST SERVICE

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For many years there has been discussion—many times heated—about the fate of the national forests and the USDA Forest Service, the agency that manages the 192 million acres of national forest system lands. Early arguments were concerned with keeping portions of the public domain versus land grants and sales to homesteaders and corporations, federal versus states rights, with the establishment process—presidential proclamation or by Congress—and which agency or agencies should manage the national forests. For almost a century, the arguments have for the most part been silenced by court decisions and congressional actions. There was, of course, an occasional bubbling of opposition to any federal control of lands, as well as notions about putting the national forests on a sound economic (i.e. profitable) base. Yet today, there is consensus that national forests established by proclamation from the public domain are legal; Congress only, after 1907, would have the approval to establish new national forests; after 1905, management would continue by the USDA Forest Service; and that purchase of lands in the East for national forest purposes, after 1911, is a legitimate function under law.

Since that time, there have been many proposals—some serious, others frivolous—about the need to change the Forest Service and the National Forest System. In recent years, there were attempts internally to reorganize the agency and externally there were proposals put forth to combine the Forest Service with other federal land management agencies. The most striking proposals—in terms of the media covering the stories—have come from those groups and individuals who would like to see the national forests sold to the private sector. Here at the beginning of the 21st century—and the 2nd century of the Forest Service—it is time to revisit and review the many different proposals for changing the management of the National Forest System and the managing agency.

PURPOSES OF THE NATIONAL FORESTS

There is a common misunderstanding of the purposes of having national forests. Simple wording in the original act from March 3, 1891, allowed the president to establish forest reserves:

SECTION 24—The president of the United States may, from time to time, set apart and reserve, in any state or territory having public land bearing forests, in any part of the public lands, wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations; and the president shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservations and the limits thereof. (26 Stat. 1095)

There is nothing in the above act, referred to as the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, that specifies any purposes, other than the reserves had to come from the forested land in the public domain. In fact, even the provision about forests is broadened to include “timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not.” Thus, the original forest reserves were not necessarily designed to protect water supplies or timber for cutting. The very first forest reserves (as they were first called) were proclaimed by the President for multiple purposes, including, but not limited to, scenery, recreation, watersheds for cities and towns, buffering national parks, and protection of the forest areas. For example, from 1891—when the first forest reserve was established at the southern edge of Yellowstone National Park—until 1897, 29 forest reserves had been established that covered some 37.9 million acres.

Generally, most people quote two ideas from the Forest Service's Organic Act of 1897—that the national forests can be established for only watershed protection and a continuous supply of timber. Yet a careful reading of the 1897 act shows that there is one important additional and overriding purpose: Improve and protect the forests. The wording of the act clearly shows the intent:

No public forest reservation shall be established, except to **improve and protect the forest within the reservation**, or for the purpose of **securing favorable conditions of water flows**, and to **furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States**; but it is not the purpose or intent of these provisions, or of the Act providing for such reservations, to authorize the inclusion therein of lands more valuable for the mineral therein, or for agricultural purposes, than for forest purposes. [Emphasis added.]

The first purpose, that of “securing favorable conditions of water flows,” is often blended with the overall purpose of “improving and protecting the forest.” An unstated assumption was that if an area was designated as a national forest, then both these conditions were achieved. Therefore, management for the “continuous supply of timber” should come next. However, this was never the case until after the end of World War II.

Alas, many writers simply assume that water and timber are the only reasons that the national forests were established. This is simply untrue. Only beginning in 1898 did any new forest reserves (changed to the national forest name in 1907) have to meet the three-pronged criteria of the 1897 act.

It should be added that the third purpose “to furnish a continuous supply of timber” was always considered to be a permitted and regulated activity, not the specific reason for creation of the national forests. The regulations promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior (that began to manage the forest reserves in the summer of 1897 under provisions of the Organic Act) contained the following phrase from section 22 regarding timber activities: “The following provision is made for the sale of timber within forest reservations in limited quantities...The sale of timber is optional, and the Secretary may exercise his discretion at all times as to the necessity or desirability of any sale.” For decades, the Forest Service and the public assumed that the latter two purposes were sufficient for the management of the national forests. And for 75 years they were until a lawsuit decision in 1973 against Forest Service timber harvesting under the wording of the Organic Act changed the way in which the agency manages the national forest system.

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE 20th CENTURY

Management of the national forests has undergone significant change over the last 100-plus years. Protecting forests through Presidential and congressional actions was essential in the early 1890s, as was trying to get congressional approval and funding to manage these entrusted lands. During the first part of the 20th century, protection of the newly created national forests from fire and abuse was of paramount importance.

From the late 1890s until 1945, the basic management concern was sheep grazing on the national forests. The agency hired many new personnel during this time. Graduates from the growing number of forestry schools were almost guaranteed employment in the Forest Service. A very important law was passed in 1911. It was called the Weeks Act. Basically, it allowed the federal government to purchase land in the eastern states for national forest purposes. Many of these lands were wasted—farmed out, cut over, and highly erosive. Previously, all the national forests came from carving up the remaining public domain lands. The first national forest established under the Weeks Act was the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina in 1916. Others quickly followed. New ideas were taking hold, including the start of the wilderness system in 1924 on the Gila National Forest and internal studies about which areas would be designated as wilderness or primitive areas.

The Great Depression (1933-1942) created opportunities for the national forests and the Forest Service to play a major role in helping people survive economically through conservation work programs and projects. In the depression era, the management concern was improving conditions in the forests—controlling erosion, planting trees, building roads, and building a forest infrastructure (e.g., construction lookout buildings, guard and ranger stations, trail shelters, trails, etc.) and developing the forest areas for recreation through the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The Sustained-Yield Forest Management Act of 1944 authorized the establishment of two classes of sustained-yield timber units. Cooperative sustained-yield units were to combine the management of Federal timber land with private land to stabilize communities. Federal units, the other category, reserved national forest timber only for one geographic area—usually one community and one mill. The act was first heralded as protecting mills and jobs in the communities, but it soon other companies and towns that were not included in the agreements thought them to be monopolistic, non-competitive, and exclusionary. The Shelton (Washington) Cooperative Sustained-Yield Unit agreement was signed in 1946—the only cooperative unit ever established—and still in operation today, although the company is attempting to pull out of the agreement. Five Federal sustained-yield units were established: Vallecitos, New Mexico (Carson National Forest); Grays Harbor, Washington (Olympic National Forest); Flagstaff, Arizona (Coconino National Forest); Lakeview, Oregon (Fremont National Forest); and Big Valley, California (Modoc National Forest). Only the Lakeview unit is actively operating today.

Following World War II, the national forests began playing an increasing role in the production of timber products. Funding by Congress allowed the Forest Service to build a cadre of timber experts who responded with great energy and skill to supply the wood for the rapidly expanding home market. But this rather quickly led to controversy about the "weight" of timber production in the mix of uses coming from the public forest lands.

The first of the environmental protection laws was the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act (MUSY) of 1960. The Act was the first important law to redirect the agency to consider all uses—not just timber. Its purpose was to ensure that all possible uses and benefits of the national forests and grasslands be treated equally. The "multiple uses" included outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish in such combinations that they would best meet and serve human needs. This act was necessary because many members of Congress and interest groups felt that the Forest Service was giving too much attention to timber harvesting on the national forests—just 15 years after the huge post-war development push to open the national forests for needed timber to be used in the national housing boom. Multiple-use forestry was in "full-swing," with an increasing emphasis placed on non-timber resources, while timber production increased to the maximum in the private sector and approached that in the national forests.

Quickly following was the Wilderness Act of 1964 that incorporated the existing wilderness into a National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Initially the agency believed that the act was unnecessary, as wilderness was one of the many multiple uses specified in the MUSY act. But Congress and the special interest groups overcame opposition and it was signed into law in 1964.

RECENT LEGISLATION AND ACTIONS

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), signed into law January 1, 1970, mandated the comprehensive analysis of environmental impacts of proposed Federal projects. An important part of the act made it mandatory for agencies to seek public participation on projects—from the planning stage to the review-of-documents stage. These requirements were quickly incorporated into the many projects already underway on the national forests.

Although intensive forestry and protection of the land had taken on even more importance with the adoption of many new forest practices and procedures, certain intensive forestry practices became a problem. A legal decision against the Forest Service for clearcutting on the Monongahela National Forest (*Izaak Walton v. Butz*) called the interpretation of the Organic Act of 1897 regarding timber sales into question. The results of this decision caused an extensive internal review of Forest Service

management. On the other side of the country, in the late 1960s, there was controversy over the management of Montana's Bitterroot National Forest, when residents became concerned about the scenic and reforestation problems being caused by clearcutting and terracing on steep slopes. In 1970, Montana's Senator Metcalf called on Arnold Bolle, Dean of the Forestry School at the University of Montana, to investigate the allegations and prepare a report. Bolle's committee report was critical of Forest Service operations. This was consistent with several internal Forest Service reports by the Regional Office in Missoula. Congressional hearings on clear cutting practices in 1972 would later set the stage for the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

The Wilderness Act directed the affected federal agencies to study existing roadless areas for possible wilderness designation. The draft Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) report was completed in 1972. The controversial wilderness review process evaluated some 55.9 million acres of land and 1,449 roadless areas for possible inclusion into the NWPS. The final report was published in 1973, with 274 of the roadless areas (12.3 million acres) selected for possible wilderness designation by Congress. The decision became immediately embroiled in controversy. A lawsuit in California over a roadless area that had not been selected, as well as an inconsistent public response assessment, resulted in the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service ordering a new study of all roadless areas—called RARE II—in 1977.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 provided for protection of rare, threatened, and endangered animal and plant species. It established Federal procedures for identifying and protecting endangered plants and animals in their native, critical habitats and declared broad prohibitions against taking, hunting, harming, or harassing the listed species. The intent of the act was to restore endangered species to a level where protection would no longer be needed. Implementing this Act would have drastic consequences on the management of national forest timber and road construction programs during the 1980s and 1990s.

The early to mid-1970s saw a continued major national forest planning effort under the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (MUSY). Unit plans (ranger district level), single resource plans (e.g. timber, recreation, road, grazing plans), and several forest plans were being developed under MUSY. Many national forests established planning teams to assist in the multiple-use planning of their many resources. New Forest Service specialists were hired because of the planning needs—wildlife biologists, soil scientists, landscape architects, and hydrologists.

Controversy was only beginning as battles over clearcutting and roadless areas have plagued the agency for more than half a century. A series of new laws including the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA), and various environmental protection acts, such as the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts, have changed how the Forest Service operates.

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) repealed major portions of the Organic Act of 1897. Importantly, NFMA mandated intensive long-range planning for the national forests—the most comprehensive planning effort in the western world. NFMA specifically incorporated public involvement and advisory boards, various natural resources, transportation systems, timber sales, reforestation, payments to States for schools and roads, and reporting on the incidence of Dutch elm disease.

A committee of scientists crafted the implementation regulations for NFMA, which became final in 1979, and an intensive new forest planning effort began. The Forest Service employed new specialists, many of them women, to address the various provisions of NFMA—including public affairs/relations, economists, archeologists, sociologists, geologists, ecologists, biologists, and operations research analysts. The Forest Service began an extensive public involvement effort to prepare the new plans. In 1997 and 1998, a new Committee of Scientists met to evaluate and recommend changes to NFMA and the revised forest planning regulations.

In the late 1970s, RARE II once again launched the Forest Service into the controversial public arena. The draft RARE II report, published in 1978, led to many public demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns. The final RARE II report, published in January 1979, recommended that Congress add 15

million acres (only 12.3 million acres were recommended in the original RARE) to the NWPS. However, the final roadless decisions and wilderness legislation would have to wait until Congress acted. Today, after a series of congressional acts that established many new wildernesses, the Forest Service manages over 35 million acres of wilderness. This is approximately 18.4 percent of the entire National Forest System.

The Forest Service has incorporated these new laws and promulgated regulations into the administration of the national forests—the most recent change has been the embracing of ecosystem management and collaborative stewardship. It has been a process of gradual change, but not without controversy, that has made the Forest Service the leader in multiple-use forest management.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL FORESTS

Yet, with the dawning of the new 21st century, arguments have again surfaced about the role and importance of the national forests and the Forest Service as the managing agency. There are at least eight different proposals on the table to “solve” the current issues. The *first*, is simply to keep everything as it is; *second*, is to do no active management, especially timber harvesting and road building, to the national forests; *third*, change the laws and regulations that hamper good management of the national forests; *fourth*, to transfer management of the national forests to another federal agency; *fifth*, to transfer the best lands to the National Park Service or private industry; *sixth*, to set up long-term leases of public land; *seventh*, establish land trusts; *eight*, transfer the federal lands to the various states where the lands are located; and *ninth*, to sell the public lands. Several of these options have sub-proposals worth considering. Each of the options are discussed below in varying detail.

Option 1- Keep Everything the Same

This refers to continuation of current management of the national forest system, or what some might call the “no change alternative.” Here everything remains the same—the national forests remain in federal ownership and the USDA Forest Service continues to manage the 192 million acres. There are incremental changes in the form of management priorities from the Chief, President, Secretary, and new laws from the Congress. New terms are invented (such as ecosystem management or the natural resources agenda) to discuss the new priorities for the agency to both the employees and the public. John Fedkiw calls this notion the “pathway hypothesis” where new knowledge is impressed on the management of the national forests to make the forests better. This involves a gradual shifting of management over time, taking into account new laws, changing emphasis by top agency leaders, and incorporates new scientific information.

Currently, after a century of relying heavily on the scientific model, the Forest Service seems to be gradually moving into the realm of collaboration with the public on management of the national forests and grasslands. Public relations and public involvement, both are forms of collaboration, take on a new role of better and more efforts to work with the public to come to a common understanding of issues and concerns and propose new ways of future management of the federal forest lands. In the future, the Forest Service would need fewer specialists and more need for generalists.

Overall efficiency, in terms of economics (dollar return to the U.S. Treasury), remain low. Probable number of employees will be reduced over the years, but workload remains high. Profit to be derived from the lands remains a low priority. Public benefits, especially through increasing recreational demands, rules management.

Option 2—Return the Forests to No Management

As opposed to the no change option, this could be called the “no action alternative.” In this scenario, active management is returned to no management of the late 1880s. Letting natural processes evolve would be the major priority.

The national forests become essentially national parks. The Forest Service is done away with. Only management for fires that threaten lives or private property would be fought. Since there would be no priority for management, other than wilderness, most multiple use management would be forbidden. This option would be even more restrictive than national park status.

Centuries old fire-dependent ecosystems would change, with more deadly, catastrophic fires. Some animal and plant species would thrive, while others would have to adapt to the changing conditions or die. Economic efficiency would be low, but expenditures for management would be very small. Profit is not important, while some public benefits would be high. This option is strongly supported by a number of environmental organizations through the “zero-cut” proposals.

Option 3 - Change the Laws and Regulations Affecting Forest Service Management

Currently, the Forest Service is trying to get the agency “back to operating,” as it once did in previous decades, by identifying laws and regulations that impose unnecessary and burdensome rules on local decision makers. Recently, Jack Ward Thomas, former Chief of the Forest Service, noted the problems in the many laws that govern land management activities:

consider that the various laws are applied by an array of departments and agencies...each with their own cadre of skilled and accomplished bureaucrats dedicated to the achievement of their mission...If that were not bad enough, the situation is further exacerbated by the structure of committees and sub-committees in the Senate and House. The departments and agencies get their budgets through different committees who, likewise, fiercely guard “their” agencies and programs—for therein lies maximization of their individual and collective power...This all adds up for a disaster waiting for a time and place to happen...significant land management actions on the federal estate are grinding to a halt. Some consider that outcome desirable and some object vehemently...It seems likely that if the process [set into law, agency regulations, procedural guides, and differing interpretations of what is required] is everything and the outcome of little consequence you get “analysis paralysis” wherein there is furious and ongoing activity that leads to little or no management action. Again, some consider that outcome desirable and others object vehemently (Thomas 2001: 2).

Randal O'Toole, in a 1988 book entitled *Reforming the Forest Service*, came up with a similar way to reform the agency. His approach was to change the way Congress has prescribed, over the last 80 years, the way the Forest Service does business. Essentially, O'Toole suggested that the real need for change comes from inappropriate laws that were made decades ago and the creative ways in which the agency has carried out the intent of the law through regulatory means. Reform would come from Congress, not the administration, but the process could be helped by an analysis of what really needs changing and why.

Congress has passed several very important laws that changed the management of the national forest system, for example, the Organic Act of 1897, the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the National Forest Management Act of 1976. Congress has been actively involved with the agency through politically appointed Chiefs (e.g. especially Jack Ward Thomas and Mike Dombeck, although every chief has been appointed or approved by the President, with the exception of Earle Clapp who was only acting chief 1939-1943), testimony from top officials, hearings on the many bills in Congress each session, and requesting reports and analyses.

As with every past effort, the Congress is a very important "player" in any attempt at reconfiguring the laws under which the agencies manage the federal land, and the concerns of members of Congress should not be taken lightly. Congressional committees and sub-committees often call for agency, interest groups, and concerned citizen testimony in these situations. Inevitably, it is easier to do nothing than to uproot the agency, embroil the interested public, and impact local communities. There are three important ways that Congress can change the agency: 1) change the laws under which the Forest Service operates, 2) approve the restructuring submitted by the Executive branch, including approval of politically appointees to leadership, and 3) write legislation to accomplish a reorganization.

The Thoreau Institute, led by Randal O'Toole, drafted a bill in 1996 for consideration by Congress (Thoreau Institute c1996). There was little consideration by Congress for such an act. Jack Ward Thomas suggested several ways to achieve a reform of the laws:

First, the idea of a Public Land Law Review Commission could be brought out and dusted off. The last effort, in 1969, was directed by a collection of big names that, basically, came up with nothing except that things were badly screwed up. And, that, I remind you, was before the onslaught of environmental legislation of the 1970's. But, now that things are even more seriously convoluted and dysfunctional, it may be time to try again. But, this time, the Commission should be composed of top level experienced natural resources professional and legal assistants with the mission of not "moaning and groaning" but of producing a legislative package to present to Congress.

But, I don't think that Congress nor the Administration has the stomach for that. Why? I challenge you to examine the purpose of each of the laws in question. Who could disagree with the purpose of any one of the laws in question? I certainly can't. And, each of those laws has champions in the folks that know how to use those laws to achieve their objectives and in the Agencies that derive their powers and, even, reasons for their existence therefrom.

However, the administration in power has the authority and ability to revise regulations. The administration could establish a "czar of regulations" related to public land management and task that person, and the heads of involved agencies, to simultaneously revise pertinent regulations with the aim of coordination, simplification, and efficiency. This could be ordered achieved within a time certain with only the czar would have authority to grant any extension of time lines (Thomas 2001: 5).

There will certainly be further efforts in Congress and the Executive Branch to attempt changing the laws under which the major land management agencies operate. Past efforts have shown that such efforts have been mostly in vain, but perhaps a radically new perspective will change the nature of the debate that has been affecting the federal land management agencies for over 100 years.

Option 4 - Transfer Management into One Agency

Gifford Pinchot's successful effort to take over the administration of the forest reserves from the USDI General Land Office culminated on February 1, 1905. The Forest Service with its huge land base has always been near the center of government reorganization efforts in the natural resources arena (O'Callaghan 1983). Almost every administration has at least put some thought and effort into putting the national forests into one large federal land management agency that includes the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service, and Corps of Engineers administered federal lands, as well as the programs of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. About every decade and/or presidential administration, there has been an attempt to reorganize the Forest Service, take away the national forests, combine the agency with the Department of the Interior, or make a new department (Appendix A lists a brief exposition of the major attempts at reorganization). Some have come very close to moving the Forest Service or the national forests to a different or new agency. Also, there were a few attempts by the Forest Service to take on the responsibility of managing the lands of other agencies.

As mentioned above, one of the most popular past efforts has been recombining the USDA Forest Service with the Department of the Interior or as part of a new Department of Natural Resources. On the surface, merger of the USDA Forest Service with the other land management agencies in the Department of the Interior make logical sense and would create "administrative tidiness" out of the administrative situation the land management agencies now face. Managing the federal lands under one set of rules and regulations, with one top administrator and set of managers, is also logical and probably cost effective (Clawson 1965). Such an overall environmental agency would eliminate overlap of top officials, research staffs and experts, as well as people on-the-ground doing similar work on adjacent areas, with fewer offices and administrative costs, etc.

However, there are also drawbacks, such as which agency or agencies would take the lead, which rules would continue/or be dropped, which administrators would stay or go, managers and staffs would have higher workloads with fewer personnel, consolidation would take time and money, special interest groups would be often at odds with any change of agencies, local communities would feel that their interests in federal land management would not be counted in decisions especially if made further away from the activities, congressional support may be lacking as in the past, etc. There is also the case that placing very different programs into one department will not eliminate policy conflicts and may not result in better decisions.

Ross Gorte and Betsy Cody, in their 1995 Congressional Research Service report, note that there are four policy implications in any merger proposal between the Forest Service and the BLM, although these points also apply to combining the Forest Service with other land management agencies: 1) Federal fiscal impacts - that is potential cost savings; 2) institutional effects - morale and ways of operating; 3) legal and political considerations - laws and legal authorities/regulations; and 4) service to the public - one agency, with one administrator and one set of laws and regulations, as well as centrally located offices. The authors note:

Reducing costs by eliminating duplicative personnel and offices is one of the primary benefits cited in most merger proposals...Another benefit commonly cited by proponents is the creation of a more efficient and effective structure for managing the Federal lands and resources, by merging duplicative efforts. The two agencies have nearly identical missions....In areas with intermingled, adjoining, or neighboring lands, these functions arguably could be more effectively conducted by a larger single entity than by separate agencies. A merger could lead to some higher costs, as well, at least in the short-term. There would be implementation costs... some personnel and planning costs from eliminating redundant positions and from transfers necessary to have the right people in the right locations (Gorte and Cody 1995: 9).

Any merger or consolidation of the Forest Service with the BLM, National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources and Conservation Service, as well as a host of related agencies or functions assumes that in the end the public will be better served by one agency rather than many (Clawson 1965). It is a simple and intuitive proposition, although "critics counter that a merger would create a monolithic agency that would stifle creativity and public policy debates, while creating a larger, less responsive bureaucracy (Gorte and Cody 1995: 14)." It is also unclear that the public will be better served, money will be saved, or that the number of laws and regulations will be fewer. To make such a merger happen, there are many barriers to be overcome from the institutional, congressional, special interest groups, states and communities, and the general public.

Marion Clawson noted that special interest groups are powerful influencers in the congressional arena, especially if the group believes that any legislation will cause harm or undo cost. These interest groups use the land and resources, and are thus concerned about and opposed to any major changes to the management, especially by a new agency with new rules and new people in charge:

Whatever one may think about the desirability of major reorganization of federal land management agencies, my judgment is that such reorganization *is highly unlikely*. There are simply too powerful forces against it, with no corresponding pressures for it. The

federal land agencies concerned oppose major reorganization...It is not only the agencies that are moved which resist change; those who might gain additional responsibility are cool, at least, and sometimes more than cool....

While many will support efficiency in government as a general idea, and hence support reorganization proposed in the name of efficiency, nearly all will have cogent reasons for opposing specific reorganizations....At the best, it is probably impossible to conceive of any federal agency reorganization which will have unanimous and enthusiastic support from the various groups interested in use of the federal lands...In a word, the present rules of the game are known...and all prefer the known problems to the unknown ones... (Clawson 1965e: __-__).

Option 5a - Transfer the Best Recreation Lands to the National Park Service

With this proposal, the best recreation and scenic lands would be transferred to the National Park Service, but retain the most timber productive lands in federal ownership. In this case, the Forest Service would find itself out of the recreation business. The Option 5a proposal is similar to what happened to the New Zealand Forest Service in the 1980s (Reidel 1992). In this option, all the wildernesses, scenic areas, wild & scenic rivers, national monuments, national volcanic monuments, geologic areas, national grasslands, national tallgrass prairie, and national recreation areas would be transferred to the Park Service. The Forest Service would retain the highly productive timber lands and probably the grazing lands.

It would seem likely that most research, state & private forestry, and international forestry would be "spun off" to other federal agencies so that the remaining lands would be managed much like the private or corporate tree farms. Under this alternative, only those functions necessary to implement a timber management program would be kept in the greatly downsized Forest Service. Remaining functions would include tree planting, genetic improvements, intensive management, thinning operations, vegetative management, and related activities. In all probability, tree harvesting would be where the Forest Service would hire or contract with companies to cut and transport the trees.

With this land management arrangement, the Forest Service would oversee and directly contract private companies to cut, plant, and haul logs to sorting yards where the agency would then sort and sell the logs to the highest bidders. The agency would have maximum control over the timing, location, and procedures in timber management operations. It would resemble a large scale timber corporation, but have responsibility to public lands. Timber sales would only occur at the log sorting yards, that would be scattered around the country in strategic locations. The emphasis would be on getting top dollar for the logs, that would then be either put back into replanting operations and/or returned to the U.S. Treasury.

Option 5b - Transfer the Best Timber Lands to Private Industry

The proposition that the highest and most productive timber lands be transferred or sold to private industry has been discussed by a number of forest economists over the years. Marion Clawson was a strong supporter of this option. The Option 5b proposal is similar to what happened to the New Zealand Forest Service in the 1980s (Reidel 1992).

One result would be that the federal government would be left (unless all the land was transferred or sold, with submarginal lands. The costs of management would be very high. Major restructuring of the Nation's laws would be necessary.

Option 6 – Long-Term Leases for Federal Land

Under a leasing arrangement, large watersheds would be leased to one corporation that would be given specific direction in the stewardship of the land, that would include recreation, road building, tree harvesting, planting, thinning, and second and third harvesting after decades of growth and management. This is would many would consider to be a “hands off” management of the national forests, yet the agency would retain a great deal of oversight to the process and procedures that the companies use to manage the forests. A long-term leasing operation would be the standard.

In the distant past, the Forest Service had large timber sales that used this procedure. A number of watershed-scale timber sales were made in the 1920s that emphasized a decades-long management for sustained-yield operations. Many of these sales, like the Westfir sale on the Willamette National Forest, were designed for railroad operations. Cutting would proceed initially at the lower elevations, then as the timber would be all cut, the railroad line would be slowly built up the drainage with spur lines to smaller, side drainages. Timber would then be cut, logs rolled or dragged to the rail line, then transported to the mill. These sales were designed to take decades to finish, so while the lower areas were harvested and replanted, the upper reaches of the watershed would be harvested. By the time the upper drainage was all cut, the lower elevations would have 30-50 years of new tree growth—ready for a new round of harvesting.

Canada uses a similar method of managing its rich timber lands. There are significant differences, however. The Canadian Forest Service does not have management of the crown forest lands—the provinces have direct control. Each province has its own provincial Forest Service and each agency sets the rules for the long-term leases or contracts with corporations within the province. Public input to the process is limited, in part because of the different set of national laws dealing with environmental procedures and processes.

Option 7 – Establish Land Trusts

The idea of establishing land trusts, essentially large groups of interested groups and individuals, to oversee the management of the national forests and other national lands (Fairfax 1999; Kemmis 2000, 2001, 2002; Reidel 1992). The most recent version of the was presented in the 2003 budget proposal from the Bush administration that called for “Charter Forests.” Marion Clawson proposed that many groups form a “joint oversight committee” (an advisory group) to “exert considerable pressure” on the many public land management agencies. He described the potential committee membership and the function:

To be specific, The American Forestry Association, the Society of American Foresters, the National Forest Products Association, American Forest Products Industries, the National Audubon Society, the Izaak Walton League, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the various regional forestry associations, the American National Livestock Association, the National Woolgrowers, the American Mining Congress, the National Reclamation Association, and many regional or state groups join together in a private but comprehensive citizens public land oversight committee?...

A highly diverse group such as this would rarely agree; that would not be its purpose. Instead, it should seek to bring out issues clearly, to sift fact from rumor, to sharpen up the policy issues, to delineate the real alternatives of public action...Policies would still have to be settled by political processes; public land managers would still have to make decision on programs (Clawson 1965f: ____).

Option 8a – Transfer the Federal Lands to the Various States Where the Lands are Located

This option has been discussed for many decades. It was argued long and hard for more than a century. The most recent arguments have centered on long-revered property rights. Initially, forest reserves created in the 1891-1893 era were non-controversial, but in 1897 they became the center of a great western multi-state outcry over the establishment of some 17 million acres of forest reserves on February 22, 1897. The controversies were fueled by state legislatures, chambers of commerce, miners, timber barons, settlers, and sheep owners. Congress reacted by suspending most of the reserves, but allowing the first management of them by the new forest rangers hired by the USDI General Land Office.

Other short-lived efforts followed to transfer federal land to the states or corporations: As early as the Taft administration (1908-1912), there were officials in most administrations who favored the idea of massive federal land transfers. Various national timber industry groups favored national forest transfer to private interests after both world wars. Even the ranching industry led a "great land grab" movement in the late 1940s and early 1950s seeking to have the public grazing lands transferred to those private interests who used the land for cattle and sheep grazing and thus had "vested interests."

The Public Land Law Review Commission of the late 1960s sparked another round of public land transfer ideas. Wayne Aspinall, chair of the commission, favored most if not all of the public lands to the private and/or state sectors. He was reported to have said "We must find the means to provide for the transfer of the public land into non-federal ownership (as quoted in Klyza 1996: 13)."

A quite different land reform movement came about in the 1970s and 80s with the "Sagebrush Rebellion." This effort was largely a land-owner inspired effort to take over or purchase, cheaply, federal grazing land (mostly Bureau of Land Management administered land), which they were accustomed to using. This movement, which was gaining tremendous popularity in the mid- to late-1970s, was effectively taken over by the Ronald Reagan administration of the early 1980s. Reagan, and Interior Secretary James Watt, were sympathetic to the western-led effort, but it fizzled into political slogans and then an aborted "asset management" program to sell off unwanted portions of the public lands.

The "Wise Use Movement" (an off-shoot of the Sagebrush Rebellion), came into being after an August 1988 "Multiple Use Strategy Conference." This national meeting was called by the people, organizations, and companies which utilize the many resources found upon federal lands. It was intended to start an effort to counteract the highly successful efforts by environmental groups to enact tough environmental laws, enforce existing regulations, and stop or slow down projects on federal land. At the conference, 21 goals were adopted covering national parks, wilderness, grazing, mining, timber harvesting, etc.

The Wise Use Movement members are almost all in the West, located in rural communities that are in some ways dependent on mining, forestry, and ranching ways of life. The Wise Use Movement despises federal and even state ownership of land and the complexity of overlapping laws and regulations. Ideally, under the Wise Use Movement scenario federal ownership of lands would disappear, to be replaced by state or county ownership or even ownership by individuals and corporations (Klyza 1996). Today, these land issues are referred to as the "Property Rights Movement" and the "Home Rule Movement."

There would be no guarantee that the states would want to keep all the former national forests and grasslands, as well as BLM grazing lands, national wildlife refuges, and national parks. The cost of administering these lands would be horrendous. Disposal of the least desirable lands from the economic efficiency angle would have a very strong appeal. Besides, from the various states perspectives, selling the unwanted lands would give them more money to manage the more desirable lands. All of this is, of course, predicated on the notion that existing federal laws would not apply (e.g. the restrictions in the Endangered Species Act). If, however, Congress would not give any relief to the state from federal laws, then the states would face a huge management challenge. In addition, the states could face the "unfunded mandates" problem, where Congress directs the states to implement laws that are not funded from the federal budget.

Option 8b – Transfer the Federal Lands to the Regions Where the Lands are Located

This option, similar to Option 7a above, would transfer management and oversight of the federal lands to a regional, multi-state approach (Kemmis 2001). Using this idea, the current management is flawed because of the agencies, including the Forest Service, often try to manage public lands from Washington, DC, or from regional and state centers that only have agency people with the decision making authority. The premise of this option would be to keep the public lands in federal ownership, but transfer management decisions to a regional body that takes into account natural topographic and ecological features, as well as local citizens in decision making for these lands. This idea is similar to that proposed by John Wesley Powell, director of the USDI Geological Survey in the 1870s, after his monumental journey through the arid southwest.

Option 9a - Sell the Public Lands

Selling the federal lands has always been a popular idea, at least in some circles. Behind this option is the assumption that all public land currently being held by the federal government should and must be transferred to the private sector. The notion is a very old one. Certainly from the early 1800s, and especially by the late 1800s, there was always an undercurrent of free or cheap land for the homesteader, miner, timber cutter, sheep and cattle grazer, and other people who would put the land to its best use (Reidel 1992). Many believe that land resting in the public sector should have been a temporary situation, not a permanent one. In fact, using this assumption, one could view federal ownership of land as an anomaly in American history. The rights of the citizen should override those of the government except in times of national emergencies.

These issues have been raised for more than 100 years and were at the heart of the early forest reserve movement. In the 1940s there was an attempt to take away/sell the public grazing lands to those ranchers that use the federal land. The effort failed. Another serious attempt to wrestle control of the grazing and timber lands came in the 1970s with the "sagebrush rebellion." Recently, these notions have been transformed—with the same rhetoric—into the "wise use," "county supremacy," and "property rights" movements. Despite the fact that proponents of these ideas have certainly enlivened the talk radio shows for the last several decades, all have failed.

Option 9b - Give Away the Public Lands

Another related option, that is never discussed, is that of giving the public lands to the citizens. In this scenario, the land would be equally divided into say 40-acre plots. Deeds would be assigned (or through a lottery) to each person in the U.S. The deed holders could then keep, lease, or sell their share of the public lands. In this option, there would be no "up-front" money required. Deeds would be mailed to the residents and that would end the federal government ownership of the land. Conceivably, even the national parks and monuments could be included in the gifting. Developers could purchase from the citizens any number of "shares" of land. Restrictions, if any, would come from the states and counties through zoning or land use ordinances. There would be no federal land and no reason to have federal land management agencies.

CONCLUSIONS

The philosophical foundations of preserving and using the natural resources on Federal land have many deep roots that date to the 19th century. After the decisions made by Congress in the 1890s, the National Forest System has grown to more than 192 million acres. This land, owned by the people of the United States, has been managed by the USDA Forest Service since 1905. Forestry, as worked out by Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, is synonymous with conservation of forests and other natural resources over the long term.

The future is very unclear. There are powerful interest groups that want the Forest Service and the national forests to revert to an intensive management era to protect and preserve jobs and use the trees and other natural resources to the fullest extent possible. While at the other end there are those who want the resources totally preserved, to have a "zero-cut" of the trees, and to keep people out of the

national forests—a policy even more restrictive than those of the national parks. Other special interest groups want to increase their "share" of the resource uses available on the national forests. All groups seem to believe that science and more data will "prove their case." But the reality is that decisions about the future management of the national forests, as well as the use of the natural resources, are essentially political in nature. Data and the scientific method can only give answers to questions, not set policy and practices.

Yet without the foresight and dedication of a great number of people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries there would be nothing to debate today. The national forests would have long ago been carved into millions of private ownership plots and extensively logged and changed forever. The national forests are our legacy for future generations.

APPENDIX A

REORGANIZATION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

Roosevelt Administration—After the transfer of the national forests in the Theodore Roosevelt administration from the USDI Department of the Interior to the USDA Forest Service, the first significant federal reorganization effort began with the Keep Commission of 1905-1909. The Commission or Committee made many recommendations, most of which were embraced and implemented by the administration (Pinkett 1965). For the first time, with the Keep Commission, reorganization came from the Executive Branch of government rather than the Congress. This set the pattern for reorganization and reinvention efforts in the future. Fortunately, Pinchot's presence on the committee kept the Forest Service out of the reorganization spotlight. In fact for years to follow, the Forest Service became widely acknowledged as the most progressive and innovative of the federal agencies.

Taft Administration—President William Howard Taft, Teddy Roosevelt's hand-picked successor, went against his predecessor in wanting to transfer the national forests away from the Department of Agriculture. "The first effort to transfer the national forests back to Interior was begun by Interior Secretary Walter Fisher in the Taft Administration in 1911 (Gorte and Cody 1995: 5-6)." The effort failed.

Wilson Administration—In the 1910s, before the creation of the USDI National Park Service in 1916, the Forest Service proposed to take over management of the national parks from the U.S. Army. The Congress was not convinced. Bills were introduced in the 64th, 65th, and 66th Congresses (1916-20) to transfer the national forests to Interior, but they failed to pass. Near the end of the Woodrow Wilson administration, a voluntary organization known as the National Budget Committee of New York proposed a reorganization plan for the federal government. The plan, reported in 1920, gained widespread attention, suggested the establishment of a department of public works (getting rid of the Department of the Interior). This new department would have all the functions of Interior with the addition of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Public Roads, and several water development programs found in the War Department. The plan was not implemented.

Harding Administration—The first strong executive branch effort to return the national forests to Interior came in 1921 when Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall proposed to transfer the NFs in Alaska. The *Washington Post* thought that the Forest Service was a good example of why reorganization was needed, pointing out that the agency was inefficient and did not cooperate with the Department of the Interior. However, the western livestock industry preferred the status quo over any untested new agency. President Warren G. Harding came to support the Forest Service. There was also a plan conceived by the Brookings Institution in 1923 that looked at governmental reorganization. The Brookings report, much as the National Budget plan three years previous, proposed a new department of public works and public domain, including the Forest Service and the Bureau of Public Roads.

Hoover Administration—In the December 1932, near the end of the Herbert Hoover administration, there was a fleeting effort to reorganize all the resource agencies under one head. This proposal was for the Department of Agriculture to create a new division of land utilization, including the Forest Service, General Land Office, Bureau of Biological Survey, Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, and other programs. Also, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would have been moved to the Department of the Interior. Pressing national problems resulting from the start of the Great Depression put aside any formal attempt by the lame duck administration.

Roosevelt Administration—The Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) administration made a serious attempt to transfer the Forest Service into the Department of the Interior. The fight was led by Interior Secretary Harold S. Ickes and Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace. An Executive Reorganization Order was promulgated in June 1933, which changed the name of the USDI National Park Service to the Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations. By late 1934 Wallace, who would later be vice-president under FDR, changed his mind and became an opponent of any Forest Service transfer. At the same time, the Forest Service counter-proposed to take the new USDI Grazing Service (established in 1934) into the agency. This proposal caused great concern in Interior since control of grazing meant control

over the vast public domain lands in the West (which in 1946 became the core of the Bureau of Land Management). This grazing land proposal was not enacted, but it did create a very heated interdepartmental battle.

A proposal in 1936 by a Senate committee (known as the Byrd Committee) presented a government reorganization plan. This committee recommended that the General Land Office and the Geological Survey be in the same department, that grazing on public lands and in national forests be brought under common direction and that the O & C lands—managed by the USDI-BLM—in western Oregon and national monuments within national forests be transferred to the Forest Service.

By 1937-38, ex-Chief Pinchot joined the transfer battle and he became very active in defeating the proposed transfer of the Forest Service to the Department of the Interior. Roosevelt disciplined the Forest Service for the lack of cooperation in the reorganization attempt. After the death of Chief Silcox in 1939, Earle Clapp was selected to replace him. Yet, Clapp was never given the rank of Chief, only "Acting Chief," because of his strident opposition to the reorganization which earned him the displeasure of President Roosevelt. In late 1939 and early 1940, the President had a draft Executive Order prepared by the Bureau of the Budget, which included a provision to transfer the Forest Service to the Interior Department. After an unsuccessful attempt to keep the draft secret, it was leaked to Congress where it met unexpected, forceful opposition. "The opposition became so overwhelming," Clapp reported, "that the President finally decided to eliminate the Forest Service transfer provision from the transfer Order." Apparently, the transfer order was sitting on FDR's desk waiting for a signature, but it was never signed. By late 1940, energy was waning for a Forest Service transfer as the threat of impending war in Europe overcame any further reorganization efforts for the next decade.

Truman Administration—President Harry Truman launched another government reorganization effort in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1947, Congress established the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of Government, which was chaired by ex-President Hoover and was thus referred to as the "Hoover Commission." The report was printed two years later. One of these committees recommended that the Department of the Interior be renamed as the Department of Natural Resources, where all the functions and operations of the various natural resource management agencies, including the Forest Service, would be transferred. Another of the task groups, this one called the Task Force on Agriculture, recommended that the Department of Agriculture house the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM's O & C lands in western Oregon, and the grazing lands of the General Land Office.

The Commission itself could not come to agreement on a path to take regarding the Forest Service and the other land management agencies: In the end, Hoover Commission simply renewed the ideas of the Hoover presidency: Corps of Engineers to Interior; the O&C timber lands in western Oregon, as well as all grazing lands, be transferred to Agriculture; while the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service were to remain in Agriculture. There were several minor proposals in 1951 and 1952 to transfer the BLM's O&C lands to the Forest Service (Senator Harry Cain bill) and another by Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman to have the Forest Service placed in Interior, making a new "Public Lands Administration," by presidential order (Richardson 1980). Senate hearings on Senate Bill 1149 were held in 1952, but no changes were forthcoming.

Eisenhower Administration—Early in the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration, the new Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay was said to have been favorable to having the Forest Service placed into Interior. At the same time, a new study of the federal government was undertaken. The committee was titled the "Advisory Committee on Government Organization." This was the second Hoover Commission, also led by the ex-president from 1953 to 1955. Contrary to earlier efforts, the new commission recommendations were quite simple: The President, without separate legislation, combine forest and range management in the Department of Agriculture; appoint a committee to study the laws and federal departments which manage the land; the natural resources agencies simply coordinate efforts rather than reorganize; and there should be a uniform policy for all agencies involved in the management of the rural lands. "President Eisenhower proposed Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1959 to transfer certain functions of the Department of the Interior...to the Secretary of Agriculture. Upon further study, however, the President decided not to transmit the reorganization plan to Congress.... (Gorte and Cody 1995: 7).

Kennedy Administration—There were not any reorganization plans put forward by either the President or Congress during the John F. Kennedy administration. However, the two major land management departments took it upon themselves to come up with a mutual understanding: “the Agriculture and Interior Secretaries sent a letter to the President, known as the ‘Treaty of the Potomac,’ proposing greater cooperation and an end to proposals to transfer lands among agencies (Gorte and Cody 1995: 7).”

Johnson Administration—Lyndon B. Johnson's administration looked at ways to improve management of the federal government. A team was organized, under the leadership of Edwin Deckard from the Bureau of the Budget, in the spring of 1965 to review the management and policies of the Forest Service. The Deckard team also looked into the appropriate size of ranger districts, national forests, and regional offices and recommended that these be standardized throughout the national forest system. The report approved the basic principles of Forest Service management and even recommended strengthening the line and staff authority at all levels in the agency. The Deckard Report also looked into the regional office structure and asked a basic question of whether the “historic Regional structure is valid at the present time in view of advances made through the years in transportation, communication, managerial methods, and administrative procedures.”

Nixon Administration—During the Richard M. Nixon administration, the Public Land Law Review Commission (PLLRC), which was established in 1964 by Congress to study and recommend changes or additions to the nation's land laws, published its findings. The PLLRC report (*One Third of the Nation's Land: A Report to the President and to the Congress*), printed in June 1970, made 137 recommendations. One of the major conclusions of the study was that many federal lands were eligible for disposition including national forests, national monuments, and all BLM lands that had not been Congressionally set aside be reviewed by Congress for eventual disposal. The commission, with a strong commodity bias, recommended that “dominant use” should replace multiple use as the “highest and best use of particular areas.” One of the recommendations was to “transfer the Forest Service to the Department of the Interior, to be renamed the Department of Natural Resources...but a merger of these two agencies was not explicitly proposed. No legislative proposals were presented to effect this recommendation (Gorte and Cody 1995: 7).

The Nixon administration also tried to reorganize the Executive Branch through the President's Advisory Council on Executive Organization, led by Roy L. Ash. The Ash Council, as it became known, was established on April 5, 1969. The council embraced several of the PLLRC recommendations, as well as others proposed by the Brownlow Committee of 1937, and the first Hoover Commission of 1949. A major recommendation was made on May 12, 1970: Create a new Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) or a Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DENR proposal was to be more inclusive and would have joined 44 federal agencies together for land management. The President released the “fall-back” DNR recommendation in March 1971. This DNR proposal would have included the Forest Service, Department of the Interior, various programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Soil Conservation Service, parts of the Army Corps of Engineers, and related land and water programs from other agencies, but not include monitoring, energy research, setting environmental, and enforcement programs, many of which are today handled by the Environmental Protection Agency.

There was an internal government plan that was proposed during the Nixon administration—reorganize all the federal agencies into one of ten “standard” regions based on the standard military regions. In this scenario, the reorganization would have changed several of the existing nine Forest Service regions. Bob Wolf explained that “the idea no sooner got out, was announced, than, I don't think the ink was dry [and the idea was dead]... (Wolf 1990: 2).”

In Nixon's second term, beginning in 1973, he announced another reorganization plan. This time, however, he envisioned working through the problems via executive orders. One proposal sent to Congress on June 29, 1973, was for the creation of a new Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR). This was essentially a renamed DNR proposal from two years before, but without the energy research and development components of the old plan. However, this one too died in Congress, as with the previous plan.

Carter Administration—Another attempt at reorganization came during the Jimmy Carter administration in the late 1970s. During his first year in office, Carter formed a President's Reorganization Project (PRP). Basically, the new administration wanted to reorganize the government land management agencies into a Department of Natural Resources. On December 19, 1977, the PRP made public a proposal to create a new Department of Natural Resources, much like the Nixon administration proposal, which would encompass all the Department of the Interior agencies and the Forest Service into one massive land management department. Based on the report, President Carter on March 1, 1979, announced a reorganization plan to create a Department of Natural Resources that would combine the USDI agencies, as well as the USDA Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from the Department of Commerce. "The substantial congressional opposition and other legislative priorities led Carter to withdraw the DNR proposal before any substantive congressional action had occurred (Gorte and Cody 1995: 8)."

Reagan Administration—In the early and mid-1980s, after a rising tide of outrage by western land owners about the "mismanagement" of BLM and Forest Service administered lands, the new Ronald Reagan administration proposed selling these lands to the highest bidder as a way to placate the "Sagebrush Rebellion." While this effort was much ballyhooed across the country, the massive sale of millions of acres of federal lands never materialized. Should this sell-off have occurred, there would have been no need for either agency in the future.

There was an administration proposal on January 30, 1985, which was intended to interchange or exchange around 35 million acres of land between the Forest Service (some 10 million acres to the BLM) and the Bureau of Land Management (some 15 million acres to the Forest Service). The interchange was aimed at increasing efficiency of management by reducing costs and overlapping functions. Congressional opposition to the interchange, as well as opposition by local communities, counties, and states, essentially scuttled the program. However, there were a number of smaller interchanges of forest and grazing lands that occurred between individual national forests and BLM districts.

Bush Administration—There were no significant proposals by the George Bush administration to transfer federal lands into one agency or move the Forest Service to Interior.

Clinton Administration—The William J. Clinton administration in early 1993 discussed a massive reorganization of the Forest Service. The agency was to be split along branch lines: Research to go to the new USDI National Biological Survey, international forestry to USAID, state & private forestry to USDA-SCS, while the national forest system to the Department of the Interior. Nothing was formally proposed to Congress, although the National Biological Survey (now Service) was established in 1993 to combine all the research functions and programs within the USDI into one agency. The huge research arm of the Forest Service was excluded in the transfer. Around the same time, there was an internal Forest Service "reinvention effort" that resulted in a December 6, 1994, report (*Reinvention of the Forest Service: The Changes Begin*) which outlined how the agency would accomplish its goals. The most controversial portion dealt with eliminating or combining several Forest Service regional offices. In Congress and the various states, the proposal fell on deaf ears and was declared as "dead on arrival."

Bush Administration—There is an active proposal in the George W. Bush administration to study the possibility of combining the various regional offices because of the need for greater cost efficiency. In late 2001, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has requested that the Forest Service study proposals to reduce the number of regional offices around the country. Two scenarios were presented—use the BLM regional office design or the Department of Defense model. The concept was dropped. A recent 2002 proposal would establish "Charter Forests" to manage selected national forests as a demonstration to cut through federal red-tape. The discussion continues.

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Mike:

The simplest way for you to come up to Nacogdoches is to get on U.S. 290 East past Elgin until it intersects with Texas Hwy 21 East. Stay on 21 thru Bryan. If you want to take a break after driving a couple of hours, just as you approach Bryan, there is an Exxon Station on the right side at a traffic light and is in a good location. Stay on 21 through Bryan to Madisonville, to Crockett. At Crockett you will come to a traffic light at their loop (304). There are several signs, at least one of which directs you to Nacogdoches. From experience I have found that it is simpler if you just turn right there at the light on loop 304. Stay on the loop as it curves around the city. You will cross Hwy 19, U.S. 287 and Hwy 7, but stay on the loop past 7. There is a lot of construction on 7, so soon after you pass 7 you will see on your right a McDonald's; just past this will be the intersection for Hwy 21 again. Turn right on 21; You are about 53 miles from Nacogdoches. Stay on 21 through Alto all the way to Nacogdoches. As you approach Nac., you will see an overpass that is our loop (224); go straight on under (don't get on it) it into town. Douglas Hwy (21) merges into Main Street. Within a mile you will go down a steep hill into Nac. After crossing railroad tracks, you'll see two traffic lights a block apart. The second light is the intersection of Business Hwy 59 (North St.). Turn left on North St.

After the first block, there will be a traffic light at Hospital Ave.; turn right on to Hospital and go about two blocks to the second (I think) traffic light at Church Street. As you approach Church St., you will see on your left a large church (First Methodist). Just past this is Church Street and the Fredonia Hotel is at the corner of Church and Hospital. TURN LEFT on to Church St. Go past the Hotel to the first street. The Hardeman House is at that corner - on the SW corner (there should be a sign there). You have to turn right, go past the house to their driveway on the east side of the house, and turn in to their parking lot. The phone number for the Hardeman House is 936.569.1947. The owner's name is Mr. Dave Dutton. He'll be expecting you.

After you are settled, call me at my home phone 569-1762. If you arrive in Nacogdoches by 9 pm or earlier, Trudy and I would be happy to take you and Pat out to dinner if you feel like it after a long drive. Just let me know.

Everything is very casual here in Nacogdoches, so don't worry about dressing up for dinner. If you incur any expenses along the way (food, taxi, etc.), just save the receipts.

Mike, Tuesday morning at 10:50 am to 12 noon my Aquatic Biologist, Dr. Alexander Karatayev, teaches "Pollution of Aquatic Environments". He is new this year and this is the first time for the course to be taught. I am sitting in on all of the lectures because this is very interesting and I don't know a thing about it. Alex was the Team Leader for the group of Aquatic Biologists sent in by the Belarusian Government to assess the impact of the Chernobyl Disaster on the lakes and streams in a 50 mile radius. He is relaxed and a laid-back individual, a lot like you! Anyway, Alex has asked me to invite you to come to his class (about 30 students) and talk to them about anything you want to discuss. I thought you might enjoy getting back into the class room. This could be as structured or unstructured as you wish. Most are Biology majors, though not all are aquatic biologists (less than half).

We will discuss the details of the evening's events (that begin at 6 :00 pm) after you get here.

Have a safe trip.

Don