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**MIKE DOMBECK  
Speeches & Talking Points  
1997**

**January 6**

*“Sustaining the Health of the Land Through Collaborative Stewardship”*  
Message to all Forest Service Employees on 1st day as Chief

**January 28**

Remarks to National Leadership Conference

**February 10**

Remarks to Eastern and Southern University

**February 14**

Remarks @ Colloquium on Ecosystem Management  
@ University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point

**February 25**

Remarks to National Forest Foundation & Holland & Holland Dinner

**March 5**

Remarks to National Fish and Widlife Foundation Board of Directors

**March 12**

*“Natural Resources for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
Western Wood Products

**March 16**

Panel at North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

April 2

*“Toward Sustainable Forest Management”*

Sustainable Forests '97 Symposium hosted by National Academy of Science

April 7

Talking Points @ Forest Service Hispanic Employee Association Meeting

April 8

Remarks to Regional Foresters and Station Directors

April 14

Western States Land Commissioners Meeting

May 6

Remarks at Public Affairs Conference

May 22

Western Council of State Foresters

May 22

Remarks at National Grasslands Day

June 3

Remarks to the Green Group

June 24

Outdoor Writers Association of American – Public Lands Forum

July 27  
“Chief’s Expectation, Our Challenge”  
Civil Rights Visits to Regions& Stations

September 8  
International Flyfishing Championship – Conservation Symposium

September 15  
National Association of State Foresters

September 18  
“Urban Natural Resource Stewardship: A Pathway to Ecological  
Restoration and Social Renewal”  
8<sup>th</sup> Urban Forestry Conference

October 3  
“Watersheds and the Evolving American Land Ethic”  
Society of Environmental Journalists

October 22  
Remarks at Recreation Exchange

November 4  
“Seeing the Forest for the Watershed”  
North Carolina State University

November 10  
“To See the Forest for the Watershed: The Challenges of Managing Natural  
Resources Across Broad Landscapes”  
Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

December 3

Remarks at Ski Industry Week

December 9

American Bird Conservancy Policy Council Meeting

December 10

National Association of State Foresters

December 18

Remarks @Washington Office Employees Meeting

# SUSTAINING THE HEALTH OF THE LAND THROUGH COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP

Message to all Forest Service employees from Mike Dombeck  
on his first day as Chief  
January 6, 1997

As many of you know, I am no stranger to the Forest Service and no stranger to Washington, DC. I have worked at various levels of the Forest Service in Michigan, Wisconsin, California, and Washington, D.C., before going to the Department of the Interior. I am glad to be back.

My Forest Service roots go deeper. I grew up 25 miles from a town of 1,500 people in northern Wisconsin's beautiful lake country, in the Chequamegon National Forest, what the author of *Little House on the Prairie*, Laura Ingalls Wilder, called the "Big Woods. My early years were spent fishing, hunting, and hiking, with eleven summers spent as a fishing guide. One of my favorite things to do today are walking in the woods or being on the water.

I'd like to talk today about my professional resource philosophy -- **collaborative stewardship**. I'd also like to discuss my expectations and vision for the Forest Service.

First, however, I want to thank Dave Unger for his leadership and assistance over the past few weeks. I also want to thank the Forest Service Transition Team and the many Forest Service employees and retirees who assisted in this transition and in formulating and reviewing the following statements. I have talked with each of the previous Chiefs and want to thank them for their ideas and counsel.

Let me say right up front that I know and respect the knowledge and skill in the ranks of this organization, among the volunteers, and retirees. I can not do this job without your help. At the same time, many of you have told me you expect me to take action where action is needed. I will do my best.

## A PROUD TRADITION

I am honored to serve with you, and for the American people, as the 14th Chief of the Forest Service.

Since President Theodore Roosevelt defined conservation as applying "common sense to common problems for the common good," the Forest Service has been blessed by leaders of foresight, conviction, and vision.

I recently read a brief biography of each of the previous Chiefs. I was struck by the fact that the mission of the Forest Service is as relevant today as it was nearly a century ago.

From Gifford Pinchot's simple statement that "without natural resources life itself is impossible."

To John McGuire's assertion that "people need to hear forestry's message -- that sound forestry practices can provide both protection and use."

From Dale Robertson's belief that "we have more knowledge about the management of natural resources than any other organization in the world."

All the way to Max Peterson's and Jack Ward Thomas' staunch defense of maintaining public forests and rangelands in public hands.

Since its inception, the Forest Service has been remarkably productive, effective, and critically important. Just as examples, the Forest Service has:

\* Worked with states and private land owners to apply needed conservation measures to state and private lands across the nation.

- \* Improved watershed health in many areas and restored Dust Bowl era grasslands.
- \* Established literally thousands of partnerships to conserve natural resources by improving wildlife and fish habitats, protecting water and air quality, and preventing soil erosion.
- \* Met the needs of millions of American families with wood products, forage, minerals, quality recreation experiences on National Forest lands and so forth.
- \* Discovered and employed more efficient ways to use and recycle wood and wood fiber.
- \* Improved the wildland fire fighter safety record.
- \* Established a world renowned research organization.
- \* Exchanged valuable forestry knowledge with countries around the world.

Too often, these achievements are forgotten and all of the attention is on the problems of the moment. I have not forgotten your many successes, far too many to mention here. I am proud to serve again with employees such as Bob Nelson, who recently joined Chief Thomas as a recipient of the Wildlife Society's Aldo Leopold Award, the highest award given to a wildlife professional.

I am honored to follow in the footsteps of the many retirees -- people who have spent their lives to protect and restore our natural resource legacy.

I look forward to working with all of the excellent Washington and field employees.

## COMMUNICATIONS

We are a better, stronger, and healthier nation due to the work of the Forest Service. In the past, because there were fewer people and demands on the land, we could achieve many of our goals with less conflict. Getting from point A to point B wasn't all that difficult. We helped define the starting point and decided how to get to the endpoint. That has grown more complex as society has changed and become more complex. Today, we are faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges than ever before.

There is an ongoing debate in this nation over how national forests and rangelands should be managed. That's just fine. In fact, it is healthy. Debate and information are the essence of democracy. The people we serve, all of the people, are now more fully engaged in defining how to move from point A to point B. Our task is not to dictate the course or the outcome. Rather, we need to be the facilitators, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the educators and communicators who help people search for solutions.

But as the debate swirls, we cannot forget our successes or the essential services that we provide daily to people and communities. An important part of our job is to articulate our successes. The most enduring and powerful maxim of business is that "money flows to things people want." People want their cultural heritage protected; clean air and water; healthy forests and rangelands; good hunting and fishing; sustainable supplies of timber and forage, etc. The one sure way to guarantee that we will have continued downsizing and declining budgets is by not telling people our story.

Explain the services we provide in a manner that everyone can understand and appreciate. Speak clearly and focus on the positive things we do. When we focus too much of our organizational energy merely responding to contentious issues, we lose the vast majority of people who support and benefit from our good work.

Much of our good work in watershed protection, wilderness management, and forest and rangeland management, the Job Corps and other human resource programs are not well-known. We need to communicate our successes. And, consider our state and private forestry, research, and international forestry programs:

- \* State and Private Forestry works with tribal governments, local communities, states, and private landowners to protect forests and rangelands from the effects of fire, insects, and disease. They work with local landowners to improve the health of private and tribal lands and watersheds and urban forests.
- \* Research provides the scientific and technical underpinnings needed to help assure the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. Science is the foundation of Forest Service management.
- \* International Forestry ensures that the knowledge of the world's finest conservation organization is shared with other countries, continents, and peoples; and that we learn from them. The recently signed Santiago Agreement, a product of Forest Service leadership emanating from the UNCED conference in Rio, is a good example of how different nations of people can work to promote sustainable forest resources world wide.

These are critically important functions! Who opposes them? When we don't effectively communicate these and the countless other good things we do, 10% of the audience ends up controlling 90% of the debate. And far too much of our organizational energy and money is spent in adversity and litigation. That must, and will, change. This is not a matter of desire, it is a matter of long term survival.

Our mission is sound -- **Caring for the land and serving people.** Carrying on with the "Course to the Future" is appropriate. What's changed is how we go about accomplishing it.

As the country grows, its need for timber and water supplies, quality recreation areas, energy and minerals, and healthy fish and wildlife habitats increases. Our task is to responsibly adapt to change in the face of multiple competing interests. More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe -- the very fabric of their lives -- are dependent on the land that sustains them.

Simply stated, we must maintain, healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. We cannot meet the needs of the people if we do not first conserve and restore the health of the land.

**So our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land.** Failing this, nothing else we do really matters. Let me repeat, our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land.

Just how do we maintain the health of the land? By working with people who use and care about the land. People are the delivery system for ensuring healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. Anglers, loggers, campers, families -- everyone who breathes clean air and drinks clean water -- are our delivery system. Assuring healthy ecosystems begins and ends by working with people on the land. As Gifford Pinchot said, "a public official is there to serve the public, not run them." To successfully adapt to growth and change we need to engage people in dialogue.

My expectation is that everything we do -- every environmental impact statement we write, every timber sale, recreation plan, mining plan, or allotment management plan we approve -- will not compromise the health of the land. I want to make it very clear that no Forest Service Program has dominance over another. Timber is not more important than wildlife and fisheries. Nor is wildlife and fisheries more important than timber or recreation, or cultural resources, and so on.

We will care for the land and serve people by listening to all our constituents and by living within the limits of the land. I call this commitment to healthy ecosystems and working with people on the land **"collaborative stewardship."**

## **COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP**

We will implement collaborative stewardship through:

- \* Working with people on the land.
- \* Using partnerships and collaboration.

- \* Enhancing conservation education.
- \* Using science and technology.
- \* Insisting on personal accountability.
- \* Putting the right people in the right jobs.
- \* Communicating a better understanding of how resource management affects economic prosperity.
- \* Fostering a multi-disciplined, multi-cultural organization.
- \* Adapting to growth while maintaining sustainability.

The National Forest Management Act foresaw the possibility of forming citizen stewardship councils for national forests. Other agencies already utilize consensus councils that are made up of a balance of commodity interests, environmental interests and the general public. We can do the same thing in the Forest Service. These collaborative councils, although only one of many ways to more fully involve people in Forest Service management, can bring people together to define a shared vision for management of natural resources.

By definition, collaborative stewardship entails bringing people together. It **does not** imply abrogation of leadership or decision making authority. As a former Forest Service employee, Aldo Leopold, once wrote, "the only progress that really counts is that on the landscape of the back forty." Most resource issues today are less dependent on technical matters than they are on social and economic factors. If we are to maintain and conserve the land's health, we must learn to balance local and national needs. We must learn to better work with the people who use and care about the land while serving their evolving needs. We must be catalysts in bringing people together.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Our first priority is to the land and the people who use and care for it. And our responsibility is to deliver. As a step toward clarifying that responsibility, I am going to ensure that every forest supervisor in the nation have new, clearly-defined performance measures in key areas such as the following:

- \* Riparian condition and forest health.
- \* Water quality.
- \* Watershed health and soil stability.
- \* Noxious weed management.
- \* Management of fire dependent landscapes.
- \* Endangered species habitat.

I don't care if these are called working agreements, performance agreements, or whatever. Every forest supervisor, on every forest, will be held accountable for showing an improving trend in appropriate areas. Performance measurements, by definition, will be quantifiable. We will come up with these measures for forests and rangelands within 6 months.

These measures will allow us to track the health of the land and allow the people we serve to hold us accountable.

Every post and level of the Forest Service organization will be accountable to our mission. During this six month period, other performance measures will be developed and used for areas such as:

- \* Financial management and accountability.
- \* Demonstrated commitment to collaborative stewardship.
- \* Customer service.
- \* Achieving workforce diversity.
- \* Simplification of procedures.
- \* Effective collaboration between research and management.

All Forest Service employees will be evaluated and held accountable for achieving applicable performance measures.

The greatest resource this agency has is its people. More than 30,000 employees and their families live and work in communities, large and small, all across the country. These dedicated employees are the key to making our mission a reality. Such an important resource must be nurtured and protected. I want to make one thing crystal clear, I absolutely will not tolerate discrimination. I am committed to improving workforce diversity, reducing the number of Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, and eliminating their causes in the Forest Service.

We have a constitutional and moral obligation to protect basic civil rights and guarantee equal opportunity. Every Forest Service employee has the right to work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. If we all honor and appreciate each other's strengths, then diversity will become our strength.

There are a few qualities I value and think important to an effective organization.

- \* Honesty
- \* Intelligence and creativity
- \* Clarity and simplicity
- \* Hard work
- \* Loyalty to the mission of the Forest Service

These are the qualities I expect from each of you on a daily basis. They should be your basic operating principles. We have a complex business that need not be made more so. Keep things simple. Write clearly and concisely. No more bureaucrat-ese. Minimize acronyms. If what we say isn't clear to the average citizen, then we are doing something wrong.

All of the benefits of sound forest and range management are easily explained: clean air and water; better recreation opportunities; a sustainable supply of wood and forage; habitat for rare species, vibrant local communities, and so on.

Caring for the land and serving people are what we are all about. All of the world should know. We will be held accountable to this mission. The American people will know they can depend on us if we deliver.

## VISION

My vision is to be the very best at what we do. To more effectively care for the land, to more diligently serve people, than any other organization in the world.

When someone in Bend, Oregon, or Ocala, Florida, or Iowa State, or Cornell -- even China -- asks, which is the premier conservation organization in the world? Or, "what agency works better and costs less to

achieve their mission?" The answer they should hear on the street should be the USDA Forest Service. When they ask what is the best forest research organization in the world? The answer should be the USDA Forest Service. Which agency works most effectively with states and private landowners and other nations to conserve and restore the health of the land? The answer should be the Forest Service.

Conservation starts and finishes with the health of the land. It begins and ends in the communities in which we live and serve. But effective conservation and the strength and credibility of the Forest Service are weakened by perceptions of bureaucratic infighting, end runs, conflicting agendas, and insufficient attention to basic business areas such as financial controls and communications.

An effective organization is able to solve its own problems. Our conservation efforts are diminished if we cannot.

We must solve our own problems; but we need to reach out to all our partners, to the citizen owners, to local, state, and tribal governments, to sister agencies.

I will strengthen the Chief's office so we can function more effectively. We will focus very clearly on policy matters and effective communication to the people we serve. We will focus on solid working relationships with the Congress and Administration and other agencies we work with. Therefore:

- \* I intend to add a counselor to help extend and improve our relations with the Administration and other agencies. Few believe that we are operating as smoothly as we should.
- \* In filling the Director of Public Affairs position, I will emphasize the importance of communications -- on speaking clearly to the people we serve; on our successes; on working closely with our sister agencies and partners; and on articulating policy.
- \* I will have a Chief of Staff to assure the operation keeps running smoothly, to promote teamwork, to focus on accountability and financial integrity, and to help our leadership team improve the quality of everything we do. I am announcing today that Francis Pandolfi will serve as my Chief of Staff. Mr. Pandolfi comes with very broad experience beyond his academic training including: Chairman of the Recreation Roundtable, Chairman of the National Environmental and Training Foundation, CEO of Times Mirror Magazines, Vice President of CBS, Board member of Trout Unlimited, the National Audubon Society, and the American Museum of Natural History Center for Biodiversity and Conservation. I believe you will enjoy and appreciate Mr. Pandolfi. He has dedicated much of his life to natural resource conservation and education.

I realize that some of this is new; however, the goal is to bolster our effectiveness and stature. I will be seeking assistance of the leadership team to assure our success.

Nothing stimulates an organization like success. Within six months, I want us to have at least three major wins under our belt. These will be marked by a spirit of inclusiveness and openness. They will demonstrate to us, and to the people we serve, that we are the pre-eminent conservation organization in the world. I am thinking of such accomplishments as:

- \* Establishing a fund to provide grants to Forest Service units for special resource stewardship projects.
- \* Establishing a group of citizen stewardship councils to serve as models of collaborative stewardship.
- \* Improving the efficiency of the budget and planning process to allow people to spend more time on resource issues. This is a far greater challenge than most recognize. Our financial and administrative houses must be in order. Anything less diminishes our ability to carry out our mission. This must be fixed!

These are a few of my ideas. I want yours too. Tomorrow I will send a Data General message to all employees asking for specific, practical proposals for accomplishments that we can achieve in the next six months. I

firmly believe that the greatest reservoir of practical and innovative ideas rest with the many talented employees across the country.

## CONCLUSION

I want to leave you with a few final thoughts.

This country is blessed with having elected people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. As a result of Congressional foresight and citizen activism:

- \* Our air and water are cleaner.
- \* Rare species have been brought back from the brink of extinction.
- \* People are more active in management and protection of their lands.
- \* Recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing are better.

We are a better, more secure, and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Forest Management Act. These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America. Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and a healthy, properly functioning democracy.

So where do we go from here? Our task is to help bring people together on the land. That's what collaborative stewardship is all about. Whether we are engineers, support staff, or line officers, we are the educators and communicators, the teachers and technical experts who can bring communities of interests together to help define the policies and practices needed for healthy sustainable forests. In doing so we must streamline our regulations and simplify the way we implement the laws toward the goal of a "government that works better and costs less."

We are the professionals, scientists and managers who can work hand-in-hand with state agencies, tribal governments, regulatory and other federal agencies, conservationists -- all who use and care about public lands and natural resources to assure the most efficient and effective conservation management possible.

Our vision cannot be stated better than in the dedication of *Breaking New Ground* by Gifford Pinchot published in 1947.

"To the men and women of the Forest Service, whose courage, devotion, and intelligence have made it and kept it the best organization in the Government of the United States."

Finally, let me tell you how pleased I am to be here and to serve as your Chief. It is an honor and at the same time a heavy responsibility. I can not do the job alone. I'm going to need your help. I am going to give the job my best, my very best. I ask you to do the same. Save time for you family and other pursuits but while here doing the business of the Forest Service, give it your best.

This is a new year, a new Administration, a new Congress. Let's see if we can add some new positive dimensions to our jobs. I challenge each of you to look around in your workplace and your relationships and find some fresh starts...fresh looks...new ways to look at old problems.

We have a lot to be thankful for in this country including the treasure chest of natural resources entrusted to our care. **Our task is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the land through collaborative stewardship.**

SUSTAINING THE HEALTH OF THE LAND  
THROUGH  
COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP

Message to all Forest Service employees from  
Mike Dombeck  
on his first day as Chief, January 6, 1997

As many of you know, I am no stranger to the Forest Service and no stranger to the Washington, DC. I have worked at various levels of the Forest Service in Michigan, Wisconsin, California, and Washington, D.C., before going to the Department of the Interior. I am glad to be back.

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I'd like to talk today about my professional resource philosophy -- collaborative stewardship. I'd also like to discuss my expectations and vision for the Forest Service.

First, however, I want to thank Dave Unger for his leadership and assistance over the past few weeks. I also want to thank the Forest Service Transition Team, the many Forest Service employees and retirees who assisted in this transition and in formulating and reviewing the following statements. I have talked with each of the previous Chiefs and want to thank them for their ideas and counsel.

Let me say right up front that I know and respect the knowledge and skill in the ranks of this organization, among the volunteers, and retirees. I can't do this job

without your help. At the same time, many of you have told me you expect me to take action where action is needed. I will do my best.

## 2 A PROUD TRADITION

I am honored to serve with you, and for the American people, as the 14th Chief of the Forest Service.

Since President Theodore Roosevelt defined conservation as applying "common sense to common problems for the common good," the Forest Service has been blessed by leaders of foresight, conviction, and vision.

I recently read a brief biography of each of the previous Chiefs. As I read about their many accomplishments and philosophies, I was struck by the fact that the mission of the Forest Service is as relevant today as it was nearly a century ago.

From Gifford Pinchot's simple statement that "without natural resources life itself is impossible." To John McGuire's assertion that "people need to hear forestry's message -- that sound forestry practices can provide both protection and use."

From Dale Robertson's belief that "we have more knowledge about the management of natural resources than any other organization in the world."

All the way to Max Peterson's and Jack Ward Thomas' stauch defense of maintaining public forests and rangelands in public hands.

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- worked with states and private land owners to apply needed conservation measures to state and private lands across the nation.

- improved watershed health in many areas and restored Dust Bowl era grasslands.
- established literally thousands of partnerships to conserve natural resources by improving wildlife and fish habitats, protecting water and air quality, and preventing soil erosion.
- met the needs of millions of American families with wood products and quality recreation experiences on National Forest lands.
- discovered and employed more efficient ways to use and recycle wood and wood fiber.
- improved the wildland fire fighter safety record.
- established a world renowned research organization.
- exchanged valuable forestry knowledge with countries around the world.

Too often, these achievements are forgotten and all of the attention is on the problems of the moment. I have not forgotten those many successes, far too many to mention here. I am proud to serve again with employees such as Bob Nelson, who recently joined Chief Thomas as a recipient of the Wildlife Society's Aldo Leopold Award, the highest award given to a wildlife professional.

I am honored to follow in the footsteps of the many retirees; people who have spent their lives to protect and restore our natural resource legacy.

I look forward to working with all of the excellent Washington and field employees.

## COMMUNICATIONS

We are a better, stronger, and healthier nation due to the work of the Forest Service. In the past, because

there were fewer people and demands on the land, we could achieve many of our goals with less conflict. Getting from point A to point B wasn't all that difficult. We helped define the starting point and decided how to get to the endpoint. That has grown more complex as society has changed and become more complex. Today, we are faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges than ever before.

There is an ongoing debate in this nation over how national forests and rangelands should be managed. That's just fine. In fact, it is healthy. Debate and information is the essence of democracy. The people we serve, all of the people, are now more fully engaged in defining how to move from point A to point B. Our task is not to dictate the course or the outcome. Rather, we need to be the facilitators, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the educators and communicators who help people search for solutions.

But as the debate swirls, we cannot forget our successes or the essential services that we provide daily to people and communities. An important part of our job is to articulate our successes. The most enduring and powerful maxim of business is that "money flows to things people want." People want their cultural heritage protected; clean air and water; healthy forests and rangelands; good hunting and fishing; sustainable supplies of timber and forage, etc. The one sure way to guarantee that we will have continued downsizing, and declining budgets is by not telling people our story.

Explain the services we provide in a manner that everyone can understand and appreciate. Speak clearly and focus on the positive things we do. When we focus too much of our organizational energy on responding to contentious issues we lose the vast majority of people who support and benefit from our good work.

Much of our good work in watershed protection, wilderness management, and forest and rangeland management is not

well-known. We need to communicate our successes. And, consider our state and private forestry, research, and international forestry programs:

- State and Private Forestry works with tribal governments, local communities, states, and private landowners to protect forests and rangelands from the effects of fire, insects, and disease. They work with local landowners to improve the health of private and tribal lands and watersheds and urban forests.
- Research provides the scientific and technical underpinnings needed to help assure the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. Science is the foundation of Forest Service management. *Staying power*
- International Forestry ensures that the knowledge of the world's finest conservation organization is shared and transferred to other countries, continents, and peoples. The recently signed Santiago Agreement, a product of Forest Service leadership emanating from the UNCED conference in Rio, is a good example of how different nations of people can work to promote sustainable forests resources world wide.

*I will function as  
the  
Chief Voice  
(conservation)*

These are critically important functions! Who opposes them? When we don't effectively communicate these and the countless other good things we do, 10% of the audience ends up controlling 90% of the debate. And far too much of our organizational energy and money is spent in adversity and litigation. That must, and will, change. This is not a matter of desire, its a matter of long term survival of the National Forests and Grasslands.

5 Our mission is sound -- caring for the land, serving the people. Carrying on with the Course to the Future is appropriate. What's changed is how we go about accomplishing it.

As the country grows, its need for timber and water supplies, quality recreation areas, energy and minerals, and healthy fish and wildlife habitats increases. Our task is to responsibly adapt to change in the face of multiple competing interests. More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe -- the very fabric of their lives -- are dependent on the land that sustains them.

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**So our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters. Let me repeat, our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land.**

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## COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP

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- Working with people on the land.
- Using partnerships and collaboration.
- Conservation education
- Using science and technology.
- Insisting on personal accountability.
- Putting the right people in the right jobs.
- Communicating a better understanding of how resource management affects economic prosperity.
- Fostering a multi-disciplined, multi-cultural organization.
- Adapting to growth while maintaining sustainability.

The National Forest Management Act foresaw the possibility of forming national forest advisory committees. Other agencies utilize these consensus councils that are equally balanced among commodity interests, environmental interests and the general public. We can do the same thing in the Forest Service. These collaborative councils, although only one of many ways to more fully involve people in Forest Service management, can bring people together to define a shared vision for management of publicly owned resources.

Stewardship  
Council

*aldo leopold*

By definition, collaborative stewardship entails bringing people together. It **does not** imply abrogation of leadership or decision making authority. As a former Forest Service employee once wrote that "the only progress that really counts is that on the landscape of the back forty." Most resource issues today are less dependent on technical matters than they are on social and economic factors. If we are to maintain and conserve the land's health, we must learn to balance local and national needs. We must learn to better work with the people who use and care about the land while serving their evolving needs. We must be catalysts in bringing people together.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Our first priority is to the land and the people who use and care for it. And our responsibility is to deliver. Thus, I am going to ensure that every forest supervisor in the nation will have new clearly defined performance measures in key areas such as the following:

- Riparian condition and forest health
- Water quality
- Watershed health and soil stability
- Noxious weed management
- Management of fire dependent landscapes
- Endangered species habitat

I don't care if these are called **working agreements**, performance agreements, or whatever. Every forest supervisor, on every forest, will be held accountable for showing an **improving trend** in appropriate areas. Performance measurements, by definition, will be **quantifiable**. I expect that we will come up with

*Agreements to work on this done by FS Tablature*

measures for forests and rangelands within 6 months.

These measures will allow us to track the health of the land and allow the people we serve to hold us accountable.

Every level of the Forest Service organization will be accountable to our mission. During this six month period, other performance measures will be developed and used for areas such as:

- Financial management and accountability
- Demonstrated commitment to collaborative stewardship
- Customer service
- Achieving workforce diversity
- Simplification of procedures
- Effective collaboration between research and management

All Forest Service employees will be evaluated and held accountable for achieving applicable performance measures. *accountability begins & ends w/ you and me.*

The greatest resource this agency has: its people, the more than 30,000 employees and their families who live and work in communities, large and small, all across the country. These dedicated employees are the key to making our mission a reality. Such an important resource must be nurtured and protected. I want to make one thing crystal clear, I absolutely will not tolerate discrimination. I am committed to improving workforce diversity, reducing the number of Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, and eliminating their causes in the Forest Service.

We have a constitutional and moral obligation to protect

basic civil rights and guarantee equal opportunity. Every Forest Service employee has the right to work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. If we all honor and appreciate each others strengths, then diversity will become our strength.

There are a few qualities I value and think important to an effective organization.

- Honesty
- Intelligence and creativity
- Clarity and simplicity
- Hard work
- Loyalty to the mission of the Forest Service

~~-confidentiality~~  
~~-buff employees~~

These are the qualities I expect from each of you on a daily basis. They should be your basic operating principles. We have a complex business that need not be made more so. Keep things simple. Write clearly and concisely. No more bureaucrat-eze. Minimize acronyms. If what we say isn't clear to the average citizen, then we are doing something wrong.

All of the benefits of sound forest management are easily explained: clean air and water; better recreation opportunities; a sustainable supply of wood and forage; habitat for rare species, vibrant local communities, and so on.

Caring for the land and serving people are what we are all about. All of the world should know. We **will** be held accountable to this mission. The American people will know they can depend on us if we deliver.

## VISION

My vision is to be the very best at what we do. To more

effectively care for the land, to more diligently serve people, than any other organization in the world.

When someone in Bend, Ocala, at Iowa State, or Cornell -- even China -- asks, which is the premier conservation organization in the world? Or, "what agency works better and costs less to achieve their mission?" The answer they should hear on the street should be the USDA Forest Service. When they ask what is the best forest research organization in the world? The answer should be the USDA Forest Service. Which agency works most effectively with states and private landowners and other nations to conserve and restore the health of the land? The answer should be the Forest Service. *Use telling each other we are the best isn't enough.*

*Conservation starts and finishes with the health of the land. It begins and ends in the communities in which we live and serve. But effective conservation and the strength and credibility of the Forest Service are weakened by perceptions of bureaucratic infighting, end runs, conflicting agendas, and insufficient attention to basic business areas such as financial controls and communications.*

*Con by controversy  
Tight Team  
credibility &  
trust*  
An effective organization is able to solve its own problems. Our conservation efforts are diminished if we cannot.

We must solve our own problems; but we need to reach out to all our partners, to the citizen owners, to local, state, and tribal governments, to sister agencies

I will strengthen the Chief's office so we can function more effectively. We will focus very clearly on policy matters and effective communication to the people we serve. We will focus on solid working relationships with the Congress and Administration and other agencies we work with. Therefore:

- I intend to add a counselor to help extend and improve our relations with the Administration and

other agencies. Few believe that we are operating as smoothly as we should.

- In filling the Director of Public Affairs position, I will emphasize the importance of communications -- on speaking clearly to the people we serve; on our successes; on working closely with our sister agencies and partners; and on articulating policy.
- I will have a Chief of Staff to assure the operation keeps running smoothly, to promote teamwork, to focus on accountability and financial integrity, and to help our leadership team improve the quality of everything we do. I am announcing today that Francis Pandolfi will serve as my Chief of Staff. Mr. Pandolfi comes with very broad experience beyond his academic training including: Chairman of the Recreation Roundtable, Chairman of the National Environmental and Training Foundation. CEO of Times Mirror Magazines, Vice President of CBS, Board member of Trout Unlimited, Audubon Society, and American Museum of Natural History Center for Biodiversity and Conservation. I believe you will enjoy and appreciate Mr. Pandolfi. He has dedicated much of his life to natural resource conservation and education.

I realize that some of this is new, however the goal is to bolster our effectiveness and stature. I will be seeking assistance of the leadership team to assure our success. *Ship analogy*

Nothing stimulates an organization like success. Within six months, I want us to have at least three major wins under our belt. These will be marked by a spirit of inclusiveness and openness. They will demonstrate to us, and to the people we serve, that we are the pre-eminent conservation organization in the world. I am thinking of such accomplishments as:

- Establishing a fund to provide grants to Forest Service units for special resource stewardship

projects.

- Establishing a group of citizen stewardship councils to serve as models of collaborative stewardship
- Improving the efficiency of the budget and planning process to allow people to spend more time on resource issues. This is a far greater challenge than most recognize. Our financial and administrative houses must be in order. Anything less diminishes our ability to carry out Mission. This must be fixed!

These are a few of my ideas. I want yours too! Tomorrow I will send a Data General message to all employees asking for specific, practical proposals for accomplishments that we can achieve in the next six months. I firmly believe that the greatest reservoir of practical and innovative ideas rest with the many talented employees across the country.

~~— 30 days~~ — Immediate Schedule  
CONCLUSION

13  
14  
15 I want to leave you with a few final thoughts.

~~This country is blessed with having elected people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. As a result of Congressional foresight and citizen activism:~~

- our air and water are cleaner;
- rare species have been brought back from the brink of extinction;
- people are more active in management and protection of their lands; and

- recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing are better.

We are a better, more secure, and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Forest Management Act. These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America. Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and healthy, properly functioning democracy.

So where do we go from here? Our task is to help bring people together on the land. That's what collaborative stewardship is all about. Whether we are engineers, support staff, or line officers, we are the educators and communicators, the teachers and technical experts who can bring communities of interests together to define the policies and practices needed for healthy sustainable forests. In doing so we must streamline our regulations and simplify the way we implement the laws toward the goal of a "government that works better and costs less." We are the professionals, scientists and managers who can work hand-in-hand with state agencies, tribal governments, regulatory and other federal agencies, conservationists -- all who use and care about public lands to assure the most efficient and effective conservation management possible.

Our vision cannot be stated better than in the dedication of *Breaking New Ground* by Gifford Pinchot published in 1947. "To the men and women of the Forest Service, whose courage, devotion, and intelligence have made it and kept it the best organization in the Government of the United States."

Finally, let me just say that I am pleased to be here and to serve as your Chief. It is an honor and at the same time a heavy responsibility. I can't do the job alone. I'm going to need your help. I am going to

give the job my best...not my all...but my best. I ask you to do the same. Save time for you family and other pursuits but while here doing the business of the Forest Service, give it your best.

This is a new year, a new Administration, a new Congress. Lets see if we can add some new positive dimensions to our jobs. I challenge each of you to look around in your workplace and your relationships and find some fresh starts...fresh looks...new ways to look at old problems.

We have a lot to be thankful for in this country including the treasure chest of natural resources entrusted to our care. Our task is **sustaining the health of the land through collaborative stewardship.**

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
National Leadership Conference, 1/28/97

"To the men and women of the Forest Service, whose courage, devotion, and intelligence have made it and kept it the best organization in the Government of the United States"

Gifford Pinchot, 1947.

I am truly honored to serve you as the 14th Chief of the United States Forest Service. For 100 years now, since passage of the Organic Act in 1897, the National Forest System has helped to "improve and protect forest [resources]... secure favorable conditions of water flows, and furnish a continuous supply of timber" for the United States.

Our mission, caring for the land and serving people, has never been more important than today.

I am honored to serve in the presence of so many dedicated resource professionals. I am honored to follow in the footsteps of the many Forest Service retirees; people who have spent their lives to protect and restore our natural resource legacy. I am honored to be part of the team. Together we are entrusted with the awesome responsibility of stewarding our children's lands and waters into the next century.

There is an ongoing debate in this nation over how national forests and rangelands should be managed. That's just fine. In fact, it is healthy. Debate is the essence of democracy. The people we serve, all of the people, are now more fully engaged in defining the goals of the Forest Service.

Our task is *not* to dictate the course or the outcome. Rather, we need to be the facilitators, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the educators and communicators who bring people together to search for solutions.

We are a better, stronger, and healthier nation for having a national forest system and for having a Forest Service to manage it. In the past, because there were fewer people and fewer demands on the land, we could achieve many of our goals with less conflict. We helped define the starting point and decided how to get to the endpoint. That has grown more complex as society has changed and become more complex. Today, we are faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges than ever before.

I know that many yearn for the stability and predictability of the "old days." Stability and predictability in outputs -- stability and predictability from the expectations of the people we serve -- stability and predictability from the lands we manage. ~~We know~~ Of course, that's impossible. Ecological systems are dynamic and unpredictable. We manage these systems within the context of an ever-changing society. So, the only certainty I can assure you is the certainty of change. *and that the rate of change will increase.*

Our task will not be without debate. But as the debate swirls, we cannot forget our successes or the essential services that we provide daily to people and communities. An important part of our job is to articulate our successes. The most enduring and powerful maxim of business is "money flows to things people want." If our successes are things people want then money will flow to them.

*If FS stays in the belly of adversity budgets will decrease.*

People want their cultural heritage preserved; clean air and water; healthy forests and rangelands; good hunting and fishing; sustainable supplies of timber and forage, etc. *recreation opportunities energy & minerals etc.*

- Consider the work of State and Private Forestry which helps tribal governments, local communities, states, and private landowners to improve the health of private and tribal lands and watersheds and urban forests.
- Consider the work of Research which provides the scientific and technical underpinnings needed to help assure the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. Science is the foundation of Forest Service management.
- Consider the work of International Forestry which ensures that the knowledge of the world's finest conservation organization is shared and transferred to other countries, continents, and peoples.

These are critically important functions! Who opposes them? When we don't effectively communicate these and the countless other good things we do, 10% of the audience ends up controlling 90% of the debate. Far too much of our organizational energy and money is spent in adversity and litigation. That must, and will, change. This is a matter of long term survival of the National Forests and Grasslands. Our mission is sound -- caring for the land, serving the people. What's changed is how we go about accomplishing it.

As the country grows, its need for timber and water supplies, quality recreation areas, energy and minerals, and healthy fish and wildlife habitats increases. Our task is to adapt to change in the face of multiple competing interests. More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe -- the very fabric of their lives -- are dependent on the land that sustains them.

Simply stated, we must maintain, healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters. Let me repeat, our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land; and to this end we are fully accountable. *We are on course to defend our accountability measures in ecological health of land & how we use this organization.*

Just how do we maintain the health of the land? By working with people who use and care about the land. People are the delivery system for ensuring healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. Anglers, loggers, campers, families -- everyone who breathes clean air and drinks clean water -- are our delivery system. Assuring healthy ecosystems begins and ends by working with people on the land. As Gifford Pinchot said, "in the long run the Forest Service cannot succeed unless the people who live in and near the national forest are for it and not against it."

*challenge is balancing local & National interests*

My expectation is that everything we do -- every Environmental Impact Statement we write, every timber sale, recreation plan, mining plan, or allotment management plan we approve -- will improve the health of the land. I want to make it very clear that no Forest Service Program has dominance over another. Timber is not more important than wildlife and fisheries. Nor is wildlife and fisheries more important than timber or recreation, or cultural resources, and so on.

We will care for the land and serve people by listening to all our constituents and living within the limits of the land. I call this commitment to healthy ecosystems and working with people on the land **"collaborative stewardship."** By definition, collaborative stewardship entails bringing people together on the land. As Aldo Leopold, once wrote "the only progress that really counts is that on the landscape of the back forty."

A few people have asked what I mean by collaborative stewardship. Let me provide a few examples.

- It's typified by Regional Foresters such as Dale Bosworth, who in a recent meeting with all of his Forest Supervisors, told his people that they were expected to work in partnership -- not cross-purposes -- with the regulatory agencies. The American people don't care which agency we work for, they just want to know that the federal government is working together to serve them and to protect their air, water, and land.
- The diverse and balanced Resource Advisory Councils established by BLM that are used by the Forest Service in Oregon, and other more informal watershed coalitions springing up all around the country, are examples of collaborative stewardship.
- Bob Jacobs told me about the Friends of the Forests who are helping in some Eastern Region Forests. Again, collaborative leadership.
- Our leadership in helping 12 countries, comprising 90% of the temperate and boreal forests of the world, develop a come to terms on what sustainable forestry means -- that's collaborative stewardship. *ing*
- Whenever we help private wood-lot owners to develop management plans that protect biological diversity and ecological sustainability -- that's collaborative stewardship.

Basically, collaborative stewardship requires enough humility to acknowledge we don't know all the answers; that we are better stewards when we work with our sister agencies, conservationists, and industry; that we only have one chance to pass on healthy public lands to our children. To quote Charles Wilkinson,

it would be a sad legacy for our generation if, twenty years from now, we cannot say, yes, we finally turned the corner somewhere in the late 1980s, yes, land health in the national forests is clearly improving and, yes, that land health in the national forests is clearly good.

Most resource issues today are less dependent on technical matters than they are on social and economic factors. If we are to maintain and conserve the land's health, we must learn to balance local and national needs. We must learn to better work with the people who use and care about the land while serving their evolving needs.

We must be catalysts in bringing people together.

As conservationists, we have a complex business that need not be made more so. Keep things simple. All of the benefits of sound forest management are easily explained: clean air and water; better recreation opportunities; a sustainable supply of wood and forage; habitat for rare species, vibrant local communities, and so on.

The greatest resource this agency has is its people. More than 30,000 employees and their families live and work in communities, large and small, all across the country. These dedicated employees are the key to making our mission a reality. Such an important resource must be nurtured and protected. I want to make one thing crystal clear, I absolutely will not tolerate discrimination. I am committed to improving workforce diversity, reducing the number of Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, and eliminating their causes in the Forest Service.

We have a constitutional and moral obligation to protect basic civil rights and guarantee equal opportunity. Every Forest Service employee has the right to work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. If we all honor and appreciate each other's strengths, the diversity will become our strength.

My vision for the Forest Service is to be the very best at what we do. To more effectively care for the land, to more diligently serve people, than any other organization in the world.

This country is blessed with having elected people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. As a result of Congressional foresight and citizen activism:

- our air and water are cleaner;
- rare species have been brought back from the brink of extinction;
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- recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing are better.

We are a better, more secure, and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Forest Management Act. These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America. Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and healthy, properly functioning democracy.

I've heard a lot of discussion about our "conflicting laws." From my point of view, it is simply good stewardship to ensure that we maintain clean air and water; protect rare species; preserve our historic and cultural legacy; provide sustainably managed timber and forage; and environmentally benign energy and minerals. It is simply common sense that we provide every opportunity for public involvement in management of public land. After all, we work for the public.

The bottom line is that when we share a common goal, our laws and regulations are largely complementary. That common goal is *maintaining and restoring the health, diversity, and productivity of the land.*

*and where we are today*  
*read list*

Over the past weeks, I've spoken with many of you about your vision for the future of the Forest Service. I've also spoken to the Administration, members of Congress and their staffers, the ex-Chiefs, the retirees, and conservation and industry leaders. As a result, I have heard many perspectives from people both inside and outside the Forest Service. Many of you have told me you expect me to take action where action is needed; and I will do my best.

Several key themes emerged from these discussions. If we are to make progress, we must address them. As I think about these comments from our fellow employees, certain important themes emerge, and they are themes which concern me if we are to make the progress required of us in the next four years. I want to discuss all this with you in depth on Thursday morning.

Therefore, between now and Thursday morning, I'd like each of you to think about a number of problem themes which are clearly reflected in these employee comments and which give me concern about our ability to move this agency forward into the next millenium. The prominent problem themes I hear are:

1. A "can-do" agency mentality has been replaced by a "can't-do" agency mentality.
2. A defensiveness and insularity seem pervasive. There is a clear feeling that we are not appreciated any longer.
3. There is a concern with process rather than what we must do with the land. Amazingly, only a very few people mentioned their concerns with how we care for the land.
4. There is a lack of trust throughout the organization. A lack of trust in our leadership, in the Administration and Congress, in our "systems" such as financial reporting and assuring diversity, and so on.

With these themes in mind, I'd like you to reflect on four questions relating to how we will move this agency forward and be prepared to speak up and give me your thoughts on any one or more of these questions on Thursday morning (in a moment we'll hand out a list of these questions; so

you don't have to write them down).

1. By the end of the year 2001, I'd like to be able to characterize the Forest Service as an agency **with the highest employee morale, self confidence and outstanding civil rights record in government**. What things do we need to do to make this happen?
2. By the end of the year 2001, I'd like to be able to characterize the Forest Service as an agency with the **clearest record of improving the health of the land in the world while having created true sustainability with regard to natural resource extraction**. What things do we need to do to make this happen?
3. By the end of the year 2001, I'd like to be able to characterize the Forest Service as an agency with **a strong infrastructure - financial and information systems, fairness in treating all employees and so on - capable of supporting and fully integrated with a first-class conservation effort**. What things do we need to do to make this happen?
4. By the end of the year 2001, I'd like to be able to characterize the Forest Service as an agency with **effective and well-accepted individual accountability in every corner of the agency**. What things do we need to do to make this happen?

Also, now that I've been speaking about it for three weeks, I'd be interested in what the term "collaborative stewardship" means to you personally.

I recognize that these are not easy questions. The answers are complex. But they are questions we must answer. And let me say further that no answer is off limits.

By the way, I believe you all know that we have four teams currently working on how we can build better relationships internally, externally, with the Administration and with Congress. They will report their ideas to me - and to all of you - during the week of February 18. I don't want to duplicate that exercise here. So this is a different set of questions.

We will now hand out the sheet which lists these questions for your review. Jot down your thoughts and bring them with you on Thursday morning. And please, no long speeches. Condense your thoughts to their essence. Two hours will fly by and I consider all of your ideas very important; so filibusters will not be allowed!

Many thanks for your participation. I am truly looking forward to this part of our meeting.

*for colleagues*

I know these are difficult questions to ask. But the status quo is unacceptable. Nor is it acceptable to blame the people we serve, the Congress which passes, or the Courts which interpret, our laws.

If we are to thrive as an agency we must:

- embrace innovative ideas and
- readily adapt to change..
- ~~balance the below~~

We can do no more. I expect no less. I look forward to hearing your ideas on Thursday.

Pinchot  
Quote 1947

*Read Pinchot Quote*

**Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
Eastern and Southern University, 2/10/97**

Thanks for letting me be here today. This is an important week for me and I'm pleased to begin it by meeting with you. My first official "field visit" will be to the Munising Ranger District in Michigan where I began my Forest Service career as a fisheries biologist. Later, I will stop by John Muir's farm and Aldo Leopold's shack. I consider this trip to be a sort of return to my conservation roots.

I'd like to talk with you today about my vision for the future of the Forest Service. How I envision us moving forward as the conservation leaders of the 21st century.

I am honored to serve you, and the American people, as the 14th Chief. You know, it was 100 years ago that Congress passed the Organic Act in 1897. Since then, the National Forest System has helped to "improve and protect forest [resources]... secure favorable conditions of water flows, and furnish a continuous supply of timber" for the United States.

Our need to work together -- as elected officials, public servants, resource professionals -- to conserve and restore the health of the land has never been more relevant or important than today.

That was the message I gave my top managers two weeks ago. I asked them to help me move the Forest Service forward to better care for the land and meet the needs of the people. My vision for the Forest Service is quite simple -- to be the very best.

1. By the end of the year 2001, I want the Forest Service to be internationally known as an agency **with the highest employee morale, self confidence and outstanding civil rights record in government.**
2. By the end of the year 2001, I want the Forest Service to be an agency with the **clearest record of improving the health of the land in the world while having created true sustainability with regard to natural resource extraction.**
3. By the end of the year 2001, I'd like to be able to characterize the Forest Service as an agency with **a strong infrastructure - financial and information systems, fairness in treating all employees and so on - capable of supporting and fully integrated with a first-class conservation effort.**
4. By the end of the year 2001, I expect the Forest Service to be an agency with **effective and well-accepted individual accountability in every corner of the agency.**

There is an ongoing debate in this nation over how national forests and rangelands should be managed. That's just fine. In fact, I think it is healthy. Debate is the essence of democracy. The

people we serve, all of the people, are now more fully engaged in defining the goals of the Forest Service. Our job is to be the facilitators, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the educators and communicators who bring people together to search for solutions.

That is one of the reasons why I am so pleased to see that part of your curriculum this week is the *Urban Forest Academy*. More and more Americans are growing up in urban areas. Often their connection to the land is less immediate than ours may have been. Less immediate perhaps, but by no means less important.

As John Muir said "everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and places to pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to the body and soul alike." Increasingly, more and more people are looking to their national forests to provide this refuge. It is critically important that we explain to them the benefits of restoring the health of the land and the consequences of degradation.

We are a better, stronger, and healthier nation for having a national forest system and for having a Forest Service to manage it. In the past, because there were fewer people and fewer demands on the land, we could achieve many of our goals with less conflict. We helped define the starting point and decided how to get to the endpoint. That has grown more complex. Today, faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges, we need to cast our nets wider than ever before.

We need to help bring people together to define a collective vision for management of their lands. We need to explain consequences and benefits in ways that are meaningful to people who don't have the technical backgrounds that we do.

Our task will not be without debate. But as the debate swirls, we shouldn't forget a critically important thing. "Money flows to things people want." And people -- all people, be they Democrats or Republicans -- support clean air and water, good hunting and fishing, public involvement in management of public resources, healthy forests and rangelands, and so forth

These are critically important functions! Who opposes them? When we don't effectively communicate these and the countless other good things we do, 10% of the audience ends up controlling 90% of the debate.

As the country grows, its need for timber and water supplies, quality recreation areas, energy and minerals, and healthy fish and wildlife habitats increases. Our task is to adapt to change in the face of multiple competing interests. More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe -- the very fabric of their lives -- are dependent on the land that sustains them.

Simply stated, we must maintain, healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters. I mentioned I would be visiting Aldo Leopold's shack in a few days. He said, "The only progress that matters is on the actual landscape of the back forty."

Just how do we maintain the health of the land? By working with people who use and care about it. As Rachael Carson was fond of saying, "the lasting pleasures of contact with the natural world are not reserved for the scientist but are available to anyone who will place himself under the influence of earth, sea, and sky, and their amazing life." In other words, people -- all of the people -- are the delivery system for ensuring healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems.

Anglers, loggers, campers, families -- everyone who breathes clean air and drinks clean water -- are our delivery system. Assuring healthy ecosystems begins and ends by working with people on the land. As Gifford Pinchot said, "in the long run the Forest Service cannot succeed unless the people who live in and near the national forest are for it and not against it."

My expectation is that everything we do -- every Environmental Impact Statement we write; every timber sale, recreation plan, mining plan, or allotment management plan we approve -- will improve the health of the land.

We will care for the land and serve people by listening to all our constituents and living within the limits of the land. I call this commitment to healthy ecosystems and working with people on the land "**collaborative stewardship.**" By definition, collaborative stewardship entails bringing people together on the land.

Basically, collaborative stewardship requires enough humility to acknowledge we don't know all the answers; that we are better stewards when we work with our sister agencies, conservationists, and industry; that we only have one chance to pass on healthy public lands to our children. To quote Charles Wilkinson,

it would be a sad legacy for our generation if, twenty years from now, we cannot say, yes, we finally turned the corner somewhere in the late 1980s, yes, land health in the national forests is clearly improving and, yes, that land health in the national forests is clearly good.

Most resource issues today are less dependent on technical matters than they are on social and economic factors. If we are to maintain and conserve the land's health, we must learn to balance local and national needs. We must learn to better work with the people who use and care about the land while serving their evolving needs.

We must be catalysts in bringing people together.

This country is blessed with having elected people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world.

From my point of view:

- it is simply good stewardship to maintain clean air and water;

- protect rare species;
- preserve our historic and cultural legacy;
- provide sustainably managed timber and forage; and
- environmentally benign energy and minerals.

It is simply common sense that we provide every opportunity for public involvement in management of public land. After all, we work for them.

The bottom line is that when we share a common goal, our laws and regulations are largely complementary. That common goal is *maintaining and restoring the health, diversity, and productivity of the land.*

Thanks for being here. I'd be happy to take some questions.

## National Forest and Grassland facts

- More than 191 million acres of forests and grasslands contained within 155 national forests and 20 grasslands in 44 states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico (**9%** of the United States land base).
- **2.2** million acres of lakes.
- Over **200,000** miles of rivers and streams.
- Over **16,500** miles of coast and shoreline.
- Habitat for more than 3,000 animal species and over 3,000 rare plant species.
- More than 7,600 miles of National Scenic Byways in 33 states.
- Habitat for 283 threatened and endangered plant and animal species.
- **50%** of the West's water supply.
- **34.6** million acres of wilderness.
- 60% of all skiing in the United States occurs on National Forest lands.
- Nearly half of all federal land recreation. Nearly **830** million visits were made to Forest Service managed land in fiscal year 1996.
- Over 23,000 recreational facilities.
- Over **4,385** miles of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- Over **125,422** miles of hiking trails.
- Over 192,500 private woodland owners were given professional forestry assistance.

**Remarks of Mike Dombeck**  
**Colloquium**  
**Ecosystem management**

It's a pleasure to be with you today. This is the end of my first official "field visit." It is ironic that it would end here, at Stevens Point, where my career truly began.

I'd like to visit with you today about my own personal land ethic, and how I think you folks -- the agency leaders, conservation leaders, natural resource managers, and biologists of the 21st century -- can contribute to the conservation and restoration of America's lands and waters.

You've probably heard the words ecosystem management. In fact, you've probably even debated its meaning in class. I'm not going to sit here and offer you a foolproof definition but I will describe for you how I intend for the United States Forest Service to use it.

Simply put, ecosystem management is a way of doing business. I'll be quoting Aldo Leopold quite a bit throughout my talk. Earlier this week, I went to the Leopold shack and the farm of John Muir. I thought it would be wise to re-energize by visiting some of the historic places of the conservation giants whose footsteps we follow.

## **PRINCIPLES**

Leopold said that as resource managers, we must recognize that humans are "members of a biotic team ... plain members and citizens of one humming biotic community." That's what the ecosystem approach is all about. It involves

- coordinated resource planning at the local level,
- forming partnerships,
- communicating benefits and educating people, and
- using the best scientific and technical information to manage the land.

Whether you work for a federal land management agency, a state wildlife agency, or the Chamber of Commerce, there are some basic "operating principles" to the ecosystem approach. They include:

- 1● Sustain the productivity and diversity of ecological systems. Or simply put, keep the land healthy.
- 2● Gather and use the best available scientific information to make resource allocations and other land management decisions. Or, know the condition of the land.

- 3● Involve the public in the planning process and coordinate with other federal, state, and private land owners. Simply stated, communicate with and educate people.
- 4● Determine desired future ecosystem conditions based on historic, ecologic, economic, and social considerations. Or, have common goals.
- 5● Minimize and repair impacts to the land. Or, fix what's wrong.
- 6● Adopt an interdisciplinary approach to land management. That is, invite all interests to the table.
- 7● Base planning and management on long-term horizons and goals. Or think ahead.
- 8● Reconnect isolated parts of the landscape. Or, look at the big picture.
- 9● Practice adaptive management. Remain humble. Be flexible and willing to change as new information becomes available.

It is increasingly clear that society cannot protect individual resources, be they endangered species or sustainable timber and forage supplies, without managing them in the context of larger ecosystems. As Muir said, "Whenever we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe".

And again, in the well-known words of Leopold,

The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people.

Leopold recognized that humans shape, and are in turn shaped, by the land and its resources. And experience has proven that we cannot meet the needs of people if we do not first secure the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. As J. Baird Callicott said, "human beings are not specifically created and uniquely valuable demigods any more than nature itself is a vast emporium of goods and services. We are, rather, very much a part of nature."

The recognition that sustainable management of natural resources depends on maintaining and restoring the natural processes that occur within ecological systems prompted the Forest Service, BLM, and other resource agencies to adopt ecosystem approaches to management.

I've always felt that ecosystem management isn't a "new" philosophy so much as it is a validation of many of Gifford Pinchot's, Rachel Carson's, John Muir's and Leopold's beliefs. Our challenge as land managers — your challenge as you become resource professionals — is to communicate their philosophies by working with local communities to ensure that the production of natural

resources does not impair the land's ability to produce.

To the early settlers, the nation's supply of forests, minerals, forage, and water must have seemed inexhaustible and limitless. Of course, they were wrong. But the difference between the United States and other developed countries of the world is that *we still have something left to save.*

## THE TWO ECONOMIES

You see, there are essentially two economies from which we view and manage our natural resources: an industrial economy and a natural economy. In the past, we often tended to exploit our natural economies in order to "grow" our industrial economies. The industrial economy is dependent upon extractive processes whereas the natural economy is dependent upon sustainable cycles. The industrial economy emphasizes *production and products* while the natural economy emphasizes *reproduction and renewal*. The industrial economy strives on the short-term perspective, whereas the natural economy looks more to the long-term.

Obviously, both economies have value. But we must remember that the health of natural systems must be maintained and restored so that the production that drives the industrial economy can occur.

Ecosystem approaches to natural resource management provide a logical connection between the technical "know-how" of resource professionals and the community support necessary for ecosystem approaches to resource management.

Ecosystem approaches, and all of the natural and societal benefits that accrue from healthy watersheds, must be community-based and community-driven. Partnerships among state and federal land and resource management agencies, user groups, environmental coalitions, and local communities are essential to ecosystem management.

As resource professionals -- as good stewards -- we need to be patient educators and effective communicators. We must explain the consequences of resource degradation in ways that people understand while clearly articulating the benefits of conservation. We need to recognize the limits of the land and manage in ways that maintain ecosystem health. If we do this, everyone wins — people, wildlife, commercial users who depend on natural resources, and most important, future generations.

Effective conservation and restoration strategies must protect ecosystem forms and processes at different geographic and temporal scales while recognizing that different land ownership patterns rarely coincide with distinct topographic boundaries. Long-term conservation and restoration strategies cannot overlook the relationship among the health of federal lands and the condition of adjoining state and private lands. The ecosystem approach requires the active participation of all who use, value, and influence the land's health.

Ecosystem approaches to management are either unlikely to be initiated, or once accomplished,

endure, if those that affect ecosystem health do not support both the work itself and the maintenance thereafter. All the technical expertise in the world cannot overcome public disinterest in — or worse, distrust of — conservation and restoration activities. Thus, resource professionals should spend more time on the land with local community leaders, user and conservation groups, state officials, and school children, building community support for ecosystem approaches.

Speak clearly. Keep it simple. Communicate in ways that everyday people can understand. As Senator Hiakowa said "I got my Ph.D. and it took me 3 years to get over it." The problem is that we technical folks spend too much time talking to each other and not enough speaking to the public in clear English.

## SETTING LIMITS

At its root, ecosystem management involves providing values, products, and services from the land in a manner that safeguards ecological sustainability. Expressed another way, ecosystem management entails setting limits on use of the land.

No-one likes to talk about limits; it is almost unethical, if not un-American. Yet, everything has limits. The simplest distillation of the concept is that *ecosystem management entails setting limits on land use in order to maintain ecological sustainability*.

To embrace the ecosystem management concept is to accept that ecological factors such as maintaining biological diversity, ecological integrity, and resource productivity dictate strict limits on social and economic uses of the land.

Soil disturbing activities on the land should demonstrate that they will not compromise ecosystem health and biological diversity. The burden of proof should be placed on those who use the land in ways that are known to degrade ecological sustainability, including livestock grazing, timber harvesting, road construction, mining, and some recreation activities. Implementing ecosystem management will not alleviate the need for managers to make occasional local "trade-offs" in order to accomplish social or economic goals, but these trade-offs should represent the exception, not the rule.

Faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges than ever before, resource professionals need to cast our nets wider than ever before. We need to help bring people together to define a collective vision for management of their lands. We need to explain consequences and benefits in ways that are meaningful to people who don't have the technical backgrounds that we do.

Our task will not be without debate. But as the debate swirls, we shouldn't forget a critically important thing. "Money flows to things people want." And people -- all people, be they Democrats or Republicans -- support clean air and water, good hunting and fishing, public involvement in management of public resources, healthy forests and rangelands, and so forth.

More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe -- the very fabric of their lives -- are dependent on the land that sustains them.

Simply stated, we must maintain, healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters. As Leopold would say, "The only progress that matters is on the actual landscape of the back forty."

Just how do we maintain the health of the land? By working with people who use and care about it. In other words, people -- all of the people -- are the delivery system for ensuring healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems.

Anglers, loggers, campers, families -- everyone who breathes clean air and drinks clean water -- are our delivery system. Assuring healthy ecosystems begins and ends by working with people on the land. As Gifford Pinchot said, "in the long run the Forest Service cannot succeed unless the people who live in and near the national forest are for it and not against it."

Thanks for being here. I'd be happy to take some questions.

**National Forest Foundation  
Holland & Holland Dinner  
2/25/97 - 6:30 p.m.**

**CHIEF'S COMMENTS (10-15 MINUTES)**

**1. FOREST SERVICE -- A LEGACY OF PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP**

- A. In 1997, Americans celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Organic Act of 1897 which provides for the designation, protection, and use of the National Forests. Today we continue this direction in our mission statement -- caring for the land and serving people.
- B. Maintaining healthy, productive and sustainable forests and grasslands requires scientific knowledge, the nation's willingness to commit the necessary resources and our informed public actively engaged in caring for their public land and their National Forests. We have been at this business for over a hundred years in this country, it's not getting any easier.
- C. Since its inception, the Forest Service has been remarkably productive, effective, and critically important. Just as examples the Forest Service has:
  - o Worked with States and private land owners to apply needed conservation measures to state and private lands across the nation.
  - o Improved watershed health in many areas and restored Dust Bowl era grasslands.
  - o Established literally thousands of partnerships to conserve natural resources by improving wildlife, fish habitats, protecting water and air quality, and preventing soil erosion.
  - o Established a world renowned research organization.
  - o Improved the wildland fire fighter safety record.
- D. The next 100 years can be even more successful but will require dedication to a conservation ethic and continued striving for public consensus to guide sustainable use and protection of our increasingly scarce resources.

**2. THE FOREST SERVICE INTO THE FUTURE**

- A. We are implementing collaborative stewardship through working with people on the land, using partnerships and collaboration, enhancing conservation education, using science and technology, and insisting on personal accountability.
- B. We will be the very best we can be by more effectively caring for the land and more diligently serving people than any other organization in the world.
- C. We will solve our own problems and will reach out to all our partners, especially the National Forest Foundation, our official nonprofit partner.

**3. THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION IS CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS AS AN AGENCY**

- A. Declining budgets and increasing demands mean we must find new ways to get the job done. The Foundation was established by Congress to serve as the official nonprofit partner of the USDA Forest Service and we will continue to turn to them for assistance to help us move more aggressively into the future world of public-private partnerships.
- B. The National Forest Foundation can promote the many values of the National Forests and other programs of the Forest Service with strong support from the people of America.
- C. The Support generated by the Foundation can help the Forest Service maintain and improve its legacy of quality resource stewardship, management, and service to the public through both project funding and helping the Forest Service communicate the benefits of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of our public lands.

**4. IT IS IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT THE FOREST SERVICE AND THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION**

- A. Because you care about and support the resources of our Forests and want to see their legacy of successful management continued for the benefit of future generations.
- B. The Congress and Administration need to hear from people like you the importance of our National treasures and maintaining a legacy of responsible and responsive resource stewardship.

**Remarks for Chief Mike Dombeck  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
Board of Director's Meeting  
March 5, 1997**

I can't tell you how pleased I am to be here today. Who would have thought that a small challenge grant in 1988 to restore trout habitat in the Monongahela National Forest would be the first of over 120 cooperative efforts between the Forest Service and the Foundation.

From 1988 to 1994, the Foundation used funds appropriated from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support 42 Forest Service projects. Funding for these projects exceeded \$1.5 million, with nearly two-thirds coming from non-federal partners. In FY 1995 and 1996, the Foundation used nearly **\$1.9** million in Forest Service funds to leverage over **\$4.8** million dollars from non-federal sources.

Our joint accomplishments include:

- **115 Bring Back the Natives** projects restoring native fish and aquatic species to historic habitats;

- 11 **Restore Our Southern Rivers** projects improving the health of key watersheds throughout the southeastern U.S.;
- 37 **Native Plant Conservation Initiative** projects;
- 10 **Seeking Common Ground** projects to resolve big game/livestock conflicts on western rangelands;
- 172 **Answer the Call** projects improving upland habitat for quail, grouse and other wildlife associated with early successional habitats; and
- 14 other projects addressing conservation issues, including restoration of threatened/endangered species and the preservation of critical wildlife habitat.

Other initiatives such as **Partners in Flight**, helps spread our conservation message to other nations, people, and customs.

We also appreciate the Foundation's support to the Forest Service through the **Fisheries and Wildlife Assessments** which effectively inform Congressional and executive branch leaders of the importance of fish and wildlife conservation.

Regardless of their fancy names, different partners, or size these projects all share a common theme. They are all examples of how people -- state and federal agencies, conservationists, and industry -- can come together to reconnect their social and cultural values to the land that sustains them. I call this commitment to working with people *collaborative stewardship*. And when people ask me to define it or point to on-the-ground examples, I send them to you for examples: places such as:

- Crooked River in southeastern Oregon where children are being taught the benefits of watershed restoration and the consequences of degradation; or
- Logan Forestry Sciences Lab in Logan Utah where Foundation money is helping us to develop monitoring protocols that will aid in future restoration on public lands; or

- Oakwood Bottoms on the Shawnee National Forest where the Foundation is helping us to restore 3,400 acres of wetlands -- wetlands that will provide duck habitat and natural flood protection for local communities.

These are what I call win-win opportunities. Too often resource management is made more controversial than it needs to be. Too often 10% of the people control 90% of the debate. For nine years, the Foundation has shown us there is another way.

Many of you may know that two colleagues and I, Jack Williams and Chris Wood, are editing a book on watershed restoration. A book by the way that is only made possible by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The centerpiece of the book is a section of case studies that demonstrate that where people of good will come together with a common goal -- restoring the health of the land - they can succeed.

The book showcases case studies of restoration efforts where communities -- often strangers -- come together to restore their waters, the process of restoration rebuilds the community itself.

Most of these efforts developed locally; all involve local landowners, farmers, and ranchers working in partnership with anglers, scientists, environmentalists, government agencies, and a host of local citizens to restore their lands. It calls to mind the words of the cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

All across the country people are awakening to the fact that we can use our laws — lend our voices and backs — to the cause of watershed restoration.

It is not enough to simply stop the decline, we must reverse it.

Not enough to preserve the isolated parts but to reconnect entire landscapes and watersheds.

Not enough just to fence off the local greenway or trickling neighborhood stream, but to unite them with public lands, national forests, state and national parks and the wide oceanbound rivers.

Another core theme is the forging of sound scientific knowledge with local communities and watershed-based coalitions. The combination of sound science and community based partnerships is a potent force for environmental restoration.

We all want healthy watersheds, open space, productive soils, and a good diversity of plants and animals. As we begin to restore our rivers and riparian areas, we must look at the broader picture. We must understand what is happening upstream of us and be aware of how our actions affect those downstream. From Oregon's Crooked River to New York's famed Beaverkill, people of dedication and persistence are combining our best available scientific knowledge with the hard work of local citizens to successfully restore our landscape. The efforts of these local coalitions are working; they are making strong contributions to producing a better future for those of us here today and for those that will follow.

The work and mission of the Foundation is a call to action. We must work together to restore the integrity of our landscape; our native fishes, riparian areas, forests, and streams.

The health of our watersheds depends upon developing a proper land ethic, conducting ourselves in a manner consistent with the principles of that ethic, and restoring damages from past actions. The challenge is not an easy one, but one that is worthy of our best fight.

Thank you for providing us with the tools we need to accomplish one of the most important tasks facing our society: the healing of the land for the use and benefit of present and future generations.

[12 MAR 1997]

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

### an Agenda for the USDA FOREST SERVICE CHIEF

In response to evolving public demands and legal challenges, substantial progress has been made in realigning federal natural resource management from a commodity to an ecosystem based approach. For example, between 1992 and 1996 the federal timber sale program has declined by more than 60%. Doing so has created both perceived and real economic disruptions to some rural resource dependent communities and small businesses, though even the most resource dependent states are enjoying tremendous economic growth.

**The Forest Service's challenge will be to institutionalize the progress that has been made and restore some sense of public trust in federal resource manager's ability protect our environment and the livelihoods of people who depend on it.** Doing so in the aftermath of the salvage rider will present a tough challenge because of the entrenched positions that elected officials and many public spokespersons are in.

Listed below are some thoughts on five strategic objectives -- Institutionalizing an ecosystem approach; broadening support for non-timber programs; conflict management; repair polarization created by the salvage rider; managing conflict; and seeking consensus on federal forest management.

### MOVING FORWARD TODAY

**Poll** -- The agency needs a better handle on what people think about *natural resource* issues such as timber, grazing, and mining as compared to *environmental issues* such as clean water, clean air, and hazardous waste. For example, differences between rural and urban citizens, support for local consensus building efforts, and perceptions on fixing problems to underlying resource management laws. If polls have already been done, they should be compiled to get a better handle on how policies could be developed to guide management decisions.

**State of the Forest Briefing** -- Incredible progress has been made in applying an ecosystem approach to Forest Service lands. The environmental benefits of such an approach needs to be advertised and a high visibility briefing, or series of regional briefings, could help dispel the myth created by the rescissions bill. If people know that supply has dropped by 60% nationwide they may be more willing to support existing management actions.

**Creating an Associate Chief for External Affairs** -- Currently congressional relations is with the budget shop, communications is a separate staff area, and there is no public liaison shop that effectively integrates public perspectives into line management decision processes. These functions should be integrated to effectively measure different types of input into Forest Service decisions **and** to effectively communicate decisions back to the public. It is essential that personnel in this shop be considered equal partners in all decision so that when non-agency people provide them with information they know it will be considered.

An issue to be discussed here is where the budget shop would be most effectively placed under this scenario.

**Short-term Successes** -- The Forest Service needs some wins with their major constituents. Working groups could be established within staff areas to identify opportunities for policy and management changes that could be administratively applied in the environmental, timber, recreation, and state and private forestry program areas.

**Communications** -- External communication's strategies within the agency still seem to be focused on responding to information requests rather than being proactive with new information. Where the agency is proactive, it often leads to a more realistic reporting about what they are trying to achieve.

**Develop clear organizational, management, and accountability goals for the Chief and Forest Service** -- The administration is frustrated by the agency's inability to respond to information requests and the agency is frustrated by what they perceive as micro-management by the administration. Mutually agreed upon goals will help keep both parties in line and should help improve accountability.

## GOALS FOR A SECOND TERM

### Policy:

**Institutionalize the ecosystem approach** -- Beneath the blanket of controversy, our ecosystem approach is successfully: 1) recognizing the different economic and environmental opportunities that both federal and non-federal landowners provide; 2) managing the increased and often polarized demands on a limited federal land base; and 3) complying with the nation's environmental laws. Where an ecosystem approach has been fully implemented, the federal government has rarely lost a legal challenge.

- **Move Forward with Regional Assessments** -- Regional assessments have resolved issues in the Pacific Northwest and are on their way for doing so along the lower and upper Columbia river basin, Sierra Nevada, New England's northern forests, and Alaska's Tongass National Forest. They take time and money, but, in the long run they should save time and money and be applied to other regions.
- **Redesign Management Tools to Fit the Ecosystem Approach** -- The Forest Service's current management tools -- such as budgeting, performance standards, contracting procedures, and organizational framework don't complement and often impede implementation of an ecosystem approach. The Forest Service put an excellent plan to address some of these problems a couple years ago. Their work should be reworked and expanded with the help of congress to make more efficient use of resources and to allow us to better meet our commitments.

- **Move Forward with National Forest Management Act Rulemaking** -- The Forest Service has spent considerable time and effort in proposing changes to the rule which guides their planning efforts. The new rule could establish the policy framework for the agency's ecosystem approach into the future, positively clarify their relationship to other agencies, and clarify and integrate relationships with other environmental laws.
- **Reassess Programs for Small Business** -- Small businesses are disproportionately affected by reductions in federal commodity outputs because they often depend wholly or significantly on federal lands to supply their raw material. The President promised to assist small business in the Pacific Northwest, but, a report by the Office of Forestry and Economic Development which included numerous opportunities to assist small business was never released. The report could be updated and an action plan could be developed from its recommendations.

**Broaden understanding of and support for less controversial Forest Service roles and responsibilities, including recreation, state and private forestry, research, and international forestry** -- There is so much focus on the controversy surrounding federal timber harvest, grazing, and mining that people don't recognize all the other benefits of Forest Service programs.

- **Recognize Economic and Ecological Role of Recreation Industry** -- According to the Draft 1995 Resources Planning Act Program, by 2000 Forest Service lands recreation activities will contribute \$111 billion of \$8 trillion to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), approximately 1.3% of GDP. In contrast all other activities, including commodity extraction, will account for approximately \$20 billion. Most Forest Service funding, however, is targeted to commodity extraction while most benefits are derived from recreation.

The recreation industry is a largely unorganized and untapped ally of the Forest Service. It is also becoming increasingly controversial as those who favor developed recreation have strong disagreements with those who favor undeveloped recreation. Now is the time to try and get ahead of the curve and design an initiative that elevates recreation's role in the agency and attempt to get ahead of the disagreements.

*Home*

- **Highlight and Expand Assistance to Non-Federal Landowners** -- The Forest Service's State and Private Forestry programs provide financial and technical assistance to non-federal landowners throughout the nation. These programs are non regulatory, voluntary and range from the Forest Legacy Program's land conservation focus to the Forest Stewardship Program's multiple use planning programs. There is great support for these programs which leverage federal, state, and private sector resources. It's a white hat program fro the Forest Service that gets lost inside and outside the agency.
- **Protect Rural America** -- With all the emphasis with national concern over forest protection, rural America should not be forgotten. However, the relationship must be realistically redefined. There are three ways for doing so. First, create a national task force to look at what should be done about payments to counties which are declining as

federal harvest declines. Second, place greater emphasis on the Forest Service's rural development program which serves as a link between communities and opportunities for diversifying their economy. Third, redouble efforts to require the Rural Development Agency and Forest Service to work cooperatively in assisting rural communities who are impacted by reductions in commodity outputs.

- **Reward Environmentally Responsible Non-Federal Forest Management (Tax Incentives)** -- Environmentalists and industry have agreed in the past that the tax code should recognize the unique long-term nature of forest management and reward landowners who manage their forests in an environmentally sensitive manner. While USDA could not authorize, they could certainly work with the administration and congress in pushing a tax package that recognizes responsible non-federal land management.

**Repair the polarization created by the salvage rider** -- The salvage rider nationalized the polarization that was isolated in the Pacific Northwest in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Doing so has undermined perceptions of the significant progress that was made in resolving resource issues and moving to an ecosystem approach during the last three years. Without strong but delicate leadership, preferably bi-partisan, that attempt to heal wounds, it may be a very long time before the Forest

Service can manage federal forests with any kind of public support. Opinion leaders could be brought together from around the nation in early 1997 to help pave the way for more constructive public debate in the salvage rider's aftermath.

- **Protecting Citizen's Right to Question their Government** -- This is straightforward. State that USDA will recommend that the President veto any legislation that limits citizens' ability to question their federal government that is not agreed to by an array of parties. We would need to be careful here that we don't promise anything that will allow improvements to the current appeals process which some people take advantage of.
- **Protecting Forest Health** -- there is a forest health problem in some parts of the west. In this sense legislation or rulemaking that clarifies salvage and forest health treatments would provide valuable definitions to a term that has serious political baggage.

**Manage conflict in a proactive manner** -- Even if the salvage rider's damage can be repaired and more support can be achieved by emphasizing non-commodity programs, federal forest management will remain controversial. Developing positive means to manage conflict will be essential for successfully managing forests in the future. Opportunities exist to help displace some of the focus on federal land managers decisions to the people who so strongly disagree themselves.

- **Promote Partnerships** -- Despite what some people say about the increased bureaucracy of all the implementation groups that have been established in the Northwest, **they work**.

They bring all parties to the table, increase trust among federal land management agencies, and require everybody at the table to publicly lay out their perspective to the Forest Service. If agreements are reached the agency is wise to accept them. If agreements are not reached, the agency at least has some cover for moving forward. The NFMA authorizes the use of advisory committees, but they have not been widely established. Now is the time to formalize the involvement of those who are most concerned and vocal about forest management decisions.

- **Streamlining Process** -- As previously mentioned, people are pro-environment and anti-regulation. Red tape is a legitimate problem in applying the nation's natural resource laws. For example, we have three regulatory agencies and two management agencies doing similar jobs. If you want to think big, you should run the trap lines on having the White House propose consolidation of the Fish and Wildlife Service with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Forest Service with the Bureau of Land Management. A more realistic approach would be to have the appropriate cabinet secretaries and/or National Performance Review II focus on streamlining environmental laws. Doing so, could substantially reduce the amount of conflict between and among federal regulatory and management agencies.

- **Reach some kind of consensus on federal forest management** -- With all the polarization and partisanship over federal forest management, many think consensus is impossible. Yet, the Seventh American Forest Congress which brought thousands of people with an array of perspectives together laid a foundation for consensus that has yet been made a priority by the administration or congress. If progress can be made on the four goals mentioned above, an opportunity may well exist to facilitate some agreement between people on the Forest Service's role in the 21st century.

- **Facilitate Follow up on Seventh American Forest Congress** -- The Department and Forest Service could aggressively promote and financially support the implementation activities of the Seventh American Forest Congress which offers maybe the best hope of reaching some kind of consensus regarding forestry in the next century. Given that the Congress was a meeting of "citizens" the most appropriate role is one of facilitator and benefactor. If the citizens can reach agreement, then the Forest Service's job as public servants will be made that much easier.

Whole is more powerful than the sum of the parts.

I am People  
- Knowledge  
- Land

## Chief's Talking Points NAUFWP Panel at North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference March 16, 1997

Thanks for the opportunity to participate in this panel. As one who started his career as a fisheries biologist and university professor, I feel right at home here.

Since becoming Chief of the Forest Service three months ago, I've emphasized two major points in similar discussions with other groups.

\*The mission of the Forest Service is caring for the land and serving people. Our mission requires use of the best available scientific information; information that can only be developed through a strong and vibrant research program.

\*Collaborative stewardship is our approach to management and to research.

Through collaboration, we combine our talents and resources with partners' talents and resources, and together, create greater value for the American public than either of us can muster alone.

Stewardship describes the responsibility entrusted to us by the American public for wildlife and fish habitats.

Universities are among the Forest Service's most important research collaborators

→ Training

\*Our Research arm has nearly 1000 active cooperative research agreements and grants; 84 percent with universities.

\*Although overall Research funding is lower today than in the early 1990s, funding for wildlife and fish research has not declined.

For the past ten years, wildlife and fish research results have been at the center of policy discussions over how we redeem our stewardship responsibilities

\*Spotted owl, FEMAT, the President's Plan, defining habitat conservation areas for carnivores and inland native trout, the Columbia River Basin Assessment, the Tongass Land Management Plan--all have fish and wildlife research at the core of policy discussions.

\*Some of you have helped conduct the research, and others have played a key role as peer reviewers. We value highly your contributions as research partners and peers.

As I look to the future, we need to move beyond the point where we are today.

\*We need research that focuses on managing ecosystems instead of individual species.

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\*We need research that focuses on habitat improvement and restoration, especially for non-game species.

\*We must find ways to protect and improve habitat so populations never need to be listed as threatened or endangered.

\*Collaboration with universities is critical to attaining this future, because neither of us, alone, have all the skills and resources the future demands.

Through partnerships with universities, we are already having some successes building for the future. Let me mention a couple of highlights:

- \*Research on bats in cooperation with the University of New Hampshire has pioneered acoustic identification of T&E bats in mixed colonies of more common bats. This lets us manage bat habitat better.
- \*Research on Atlantic salmon in cooperation with the Universities of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Dartmouth College is enabling researchers to sample returning adults and identify their natal streams, leading to new understandings of ecosystem conditions key to restoration of the species in watersheds where it was extirpated
- \*These highlights are not unique--most Forest Service research units can point with pride to collaborative studies that offer great promise for resource managers.

Successes like these depend on having a strong, long-term commitment to research within the Forest Service.

- \*Our experimental forests with their long-term ecological studies and a cadre of talented, well-trained Forest Service scientists and support staff make possible wildlife and fish research that would be almost impossible for universities to conduct by themselves. *191 million ac. lost corner of habitat*
- \*We provide field settings and context for wildlife and fish research not available elsewhere. It's a critical aspect of training for your students and it helps keep your faculty at the cutting edge.
- \*Forest Service resource management issues--sustainability and population viability to name two--are extending the frontiers of fisheries and wildlife science today. We need your support as we wrestle with these issues.
- \*That's why continued support for Forest Service research is of direct benefit to university fisheries and wildlife programs.

I appreciate your collaboration with Forest Service Research, both as partners in conducting the research and as peers in reviewing it. With your help, we will continue to fulfill the stewardship responsibilities the public has entrusted to us.

By providing the research results essential to protect and sustain wildlife and fish habitats on the nation's forests and grasslands, we truly are caring for the land and serving the American people.

**Remarks for Chief Mike Dombeck**  
**Joint Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management Reception**  
**March 16, 1997**

On behalf of the Forest Service, I want to welcome all of you to the Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Reception.

It has been only three months since I've taken the reigns if the Forest Service having come over from the BLM. While it is good to be back with the agency I started with, I am also proud of the many hard working and dedicated professionals in the BLM ranks. **I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with folks such as yourselves.**

**I am also pleased to be with you this evening to help honor the work of some dedicated individuals for their efforts on behalf of bird conservation and *Partners in Flight*. Launched in 1990 by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, *Partners in Flight Aves de las Americas* is an international cooperative effort among federal and state agencies, conservation organizations, industry, universities, and private individuals all working toward the goal of keeping common birds common.**

The Forest Service is proud partner in this effort. To our many partners in bird conservation and other conservation endeavors, I say THANKS! The simple fact is that because of your generous contributions of time, energy, and dollars, projects that restore and protect our public lands, our wildlife and fisheries resources are sprouting from Alaska to Florida and from Maine to New Mexico. Thank you.

Finally, I want to thank the BLM and Forest Service employees that worked so hard to coordinate tonight's event.

I would now have the pleasure of turning things over to Mr. Matt Millenbach, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

TOWARD SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Mike Dombeck

Chief of the USDA Forest Service

April 2, 1997

Forest lands in the United States are complex and diverse -- from privately owned woodlots to large publicly owned forests lands. They vary in forest type from the boreal forests of Alaska, to the temperate forests of the continental U.S. to the tropical forests of Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

Seventy percent of America's forests are privately owned. These are not regulated by the federal government except in extraordinary situations. Some states have forest practices acts which regulate management of some activities on these lands. This is significantly different from some other countries of the world; many of whom exert significant national control over private lands and resources.

America's forests have changed substantially since the arrival of the first European settlers. Even before the arrival of Europeans to the New World, evidence suggests that Native American tribes had, in some places, substantially altered forest ecosystems through road construction, earth works, and field creation.

These impacts were exacerbated by the growth of America's population from approximately 5 to 76 million in the 19th century and the subsequent development of forest lands for agriculture, industry, and habitation.

Beginning in 1900, however, several trends emerged that helped to initiate the conservation of public forests in this country. Growing western communities increasingly demanded clean water supplies. Second, the growth of the nation demanded that more timber be made available for industrial use. Third, the timber industry began to expand westward after exhausting the timber supplies of the Great Lakes and northeast regions.

Since 1900, the conservation of our lands and waters has generally been a success story.

There are more forest lands today than at the turn of the century, and many species severely depleted or facing extinction then -- such as the wild turkey, egrets, herons, other wading birds, black bears, beavers, white tail deer, and prong horn antelope -- are abundant today.

That is not to say everything is rosy. We have many significant challenges to the sustainability of our forest legacy. Although there are more forest lands today than at the turn-of-the-century, some of them are in an unhealthy condition.

For example, frequent fire is a part of the natural cycle of places such as the interior Columbia River Basin. Past management practices and the elimination of fire from fire-dependent ecosystems have increased the risk of catastrophic wildfires, insect infestation, and disease.

In normal conditions, fire burns these forests every 5-30 years. These fires have a "cleansing" effect, creeping along the forest floor clearing out shade

Given @ Sustainable Forests  
'97 Symposium  
hosted by AFRI  
Academy of Sciences

tolerant tree species such as Douglas-fir, grand and white fir and spruce, and creating open park-like canopies of fire resistant species such as ponderosa pine and western larch. Inadvertently, we have altered the ecological cycle of the interior Columbia River Basin and allowed dense thickets of grasses and smaller trees to grow underneath the larger ponderosa pine -- forming a ladder of fuels that when ignited results in catastrophic wildfires that threaten lives and private property and whose flames can exceed 200 feet and travel at 50 miles per hour.

The use fire is only one of many tools available to reseource managers. Restoration will require looking at the full spectrum of activities that influence forest health: thinning of green trees, road maintenance and obliteration, extensive use of prescribed fire, better grazing management, riparian restoration, salvage logging. Our challenge is to build a support base for sustainable forest management and restoration. In order to build that support, we must effectively communicate the many environmental, social, and economic benefits of sustainable forests. It is simply common sense. If people do not support our restoration activities, then all of our best efforts will be for naught. But we should always bear in mind that we cannot meet the needs of people without first sustaining the health of the land.

Similarly, although improved forest management has benefitted many wildlife species, many other species -- particularly aquatic species -- are in decline. Many species of salmon and steelhead, other native trout, mussels, crayfish, frogs, etc., are in peril.

Though they seemingly lack economic value or practical utility, aquatic species such as these are excellent indicators of the overall health of the land. As I will discuss later, we are making strides to sustain them and the habitats upon which they depend. Our continuous challenge is to help people to identify and live within the limits of the land.

Something that is often overlooked -- but which has enormous conservation value -- is that we are far more efficient at using harvested trees today than in 1900. Due in large part to the collaborative efforts of Forest Service research and industry, sawmills today create more than two times the amount of usable wood products than they could at the turn of the century.

Public and privately owned forests provided wood for building railroads, forage for grazing livestock, areas for camping, respite from an urban environment, game and fish for subsistence and sport, and wild areas that are protected from further influence of humans.

Resource managers in the US are faced with a societal dilemma. Our expanding population over the past 25 years resulted in a 55% increase in demand for wood and fiber. The three million annual increase in population suggests a continued increase in demand. Currently, the average annual volume growth of trees across all ownerships in the U.S. exceeds harvest by 25%, yet the U. S. is, and has been, a net importer of forest products.

Over the recent past we have imported about 15% of our annual consumption. Historically, the demand for wood and fiber was met through a stable forest base, by imports (primarily from Canada), and by the development of new technologies and products that conserve wood use. Demands will continue to

increase, creating a greater need for forest products conservation, recycling, management.

Increasingly, people are recognizing that their lifestyles, financial well being, and happiness are inextricably linked to the health of the land. This realization has caused unprecedented interest in management of our nations forests -- interest that often manifests itself in controversy.

I think that's a good thing. More and more, people are demanding -- demanding -- that we manage our forests in a sustainable manner. Debate and the sharing of information are the essence of democracy. During this period of transition, resource managers should not attempt to provide all the answers.

Rather, we must be the educators, and conservation leaders, the people who teach about, and learn from, our neighbors the values of conservation and restoration and the consequences of degradation. The complexity of this ecological-based approach to management has highlighted the need for partnerships to accomplish our objectives. In the Forest Service we refer to this approach as collaborative stewardship.

Clearly, we need a broad perspective to fully understand risks and opportunities. This perspective should be used in conjunction with local perspectives when developing plans and management actions at smaller scales. As John Muir was fond of saying, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

coregion assessments for the Southern Appalachian region and the Columbia River Basin assessment are examples of this approach. This broader perspective, however, points out the need to work across agencies and states and in collaboration with local communities to accomplish agreed upon objectives.

As resource leaders we have an international responsibility. We in this country -- with all of our national wealth, industrial strength, and international trade -- must demonstrate to the rest of the world that yes, we can live in productive harmony with the natural world that sustains us. We have an almost moral obligation to those who will follow to lead by example.

And we are doing so now. In 1993, the U.S. joined other nations in committing to achieve conservation and sustainable management of forests by the year 2000. This was followed by the signing of the Santiago Declaration in 1995, in which the U.S. agreed to evaluate national-level criteria and indicators for forest sustainability (the Montreal Process). This commitment was further strengthened by the work of the President's Council on Sustainable Development.

And as Secretary Glickman and Deputy Secretary Rominger have made clear, all of us at the Department of Agriculture are committed to integrating the concepts of sustainable development throughout all our policies and programs. The Department's sustainable development council will help to coordinate all of our efforts.

A global perspective is vital. We must take advantage of the knowledge and information about forests that will be developed worldwide, so that we better

understand the influence and effects of human actions in regard to all forests and forest resources. The criteria and indicators of the Montreal Process help guide us in developing policies that restore, maintain, and sustain our forest legacy.

To further this perspective, the U.S. and the other 11 countries of the Montreal Process will present a report on the criteria and indicators at the 12th World Forestry Congress in Turkey in October. This Congress will help to encourage sustainable forest management strategies worldwide.

Ultimately, our domestic and international challenges are to help society sustain the goods, services, and values that it derives from forests in ways that meet the needs of the present without compromising the health, productivity, and diversity of the land.

*Caring for Land  
Serving People*

TALKING POINTS  
for  
Chief Mike Dombeck  
April 7, 1997

FOREST SERVICE HISPANIC EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION (FSHEA)

**Talking Points:**

- \* Chief's vision regarding the Forest Service's future...Roadmap and Leadership expectations.
- \* Support for Employee Resource Groups openly and visibly.
- \* Stewardship for the future - we are agencies representative of Forest Service as a global conservation leader and emphasize the importance of people.
- \* How can we prepare ourselves for the future.
- \* Should expect the same of ourselves when dealing with employees as that which we expect of ourselves when dealing with our external publics - Forest Service should be the place, the employer of choice.
- \* We talk about how we want to inform our external publics and how they should participate in our decision making, we should utilize the same model to involve our employees. ...getting away from our fears and capturing talents.
- \* In response to the heightened awareness regarding the Civil Rights situation within the Agency, there are many initiatives and taskforce findings related to Civil Rights which FSHEA as partners can help sort through, and also help with a number of identified action items.
- \* FSHEA can help us achieve a much more representative organization.
- \* In terms of organizational effectiveness, FSHEA can help in:
  - increasing diversity
  - working like a diverse organization
  - healthy moral - moral affects productivity
  - collaborative stewardship (describe your meaning of this concept)
  - outreach to various communities and globally as natural resource awareness increases particularly in Latin American countries
- \* FSHEA and management should work together to resolve issues - both parties get the assignment.

*People  
Knowledge  
Land  
Take  
Responsibility  
C.R.A.T.*

**REMARKS OF MIKE DOMBECK  
TO REGIONAL FORESTERS AND DIRECTORS**  
**April 8, 1997**

### **Introduction**

Next week I will celebrate my 100th day on the job. I want to tell you how much I appreciate all of your patience, advice, and encouragement over the past few months. More importantly, I want to say thank you to all of our field employees for their hard work and support.

More and more, I appreciate the scope and breadth of the services and leadership that we provide to the American people. For example, through our leadership on the Santiago Agreement, we are making clear to other nations that we can live in productive harmony with the natural world that sustains us. Indeed, we are the testing-ground for sustainable development. We in this country -- with all of our national wealth, industrial strength, and international trade -- must demonstrate to the rest of the world that economic prosperity and environmental protection can co-exist. To further this perspective, I will lead the U.S. delegation to Turkey next fall for the 12th World Forestry Congress.

The Forests Products Lab in Madison and the Pacific Northwest Research Station are working with the people of southeast Alaska to bring new value-added technologies to the region that will enhance conservation, more efficient wood utilization, and economic opportunities.

We are the leaders in an USDA wide effort to beautify and improve Washington, D.C. This effort will begin in several weeks with the planting of the first of 1000 trees that we intend to plant in the city. After all, how can we in good conscience preach collaborative stewardship and neglect the nation's capitol?

I traveled to Brooklyn, New York a few weeks ago and learned how State and Private Forestry is working with the city of nearby Greenpoint to control the spread the Asian long-horned beetle and to replant the city's urban forest. I learned firsthand just how deeply people who live in urban areas care for the land when an elderly woman asked me how the tree she had planted the day she learned of her son's death in Vietnam, could be replaced. Later that day, a group of Bronx schoolchildren showed me an abandoned lot that bordered their school and the Bronx River – once the area's *de facto* garbage dump – that the Urban Resources Partnership helped convert the lot to a beautiful park and environmental education center.

### **Forest Service Leadership**

The tears in the eyes of the mother whose son had died and the smiles on the faces of those school-children made clear to me that from Washington, D.C. to southeast Alaska to Greenpoint, New York, the Forest Service is helping people reconnect to the land that sustains them. Even after just 100 days, I think we are on the right course.

- My first week here, I commissioned four teams to review and make recommendations for improving our relations with the Administration, Congress, external groups, and internal groups. The teams came up with suggestions that are helping to define our agenda and improve internal and external relationships. My suggestion box has been inundated with excellent ideas. Much of what I have to say this evening and later this week are based on the recommendations of these groups.
- We have improved our working relationships with the Office of Management and Budget, the Council of Environmental Quality, the Domestic Policy Council, and others within the Administration.
- We are working in a bipartisan and constructive manner to accelerate the restoration of the health of our National Forests and Grasslands. This is a cooperative effort that we can replicate across the country.
- We are at the table with the White House and helping to chart the course for high profile Administration priorities such as the Summit on Volunteerism and the Lake Tahoe Summit.
- We redefined installation of a new financial reporting system with the cooperation and support of the Department of Agriculture.

These are only several of the countless examples of how the Forest Service cares for the land and serves people. These efforts are not borne of plans, or initiatives, or even legislative mandates. They are made possible by the sweat and labor of our hard-working employees. The most important resource this agency has is its people. If we have the wisdom to honor and appreciate each other's strengths then diversity will become our strength. That is the real message of civil rights. We want to be the employers of choice. We want our people to feel valued. Not only will it make us a more productive and effective organization, it is simply the right thing to do.

So where do we go from here? In preparing this talk, I asked myself two basic questions.

- Will the role of the Forest Service be the same in the next few decades as it was in the past?
- Second, who will be the support base for the Forest Service in the next few decades and how can we position ourselves to best meet their needs?

Daniel Botkin, author of Our Natural History, tells about the engineer who spent a year of his life building a bridge over the Missouri River and the rest of his career trying to keep the river under the bridge. I recall that story when I think about the challenges we face. I think it sometimes reflects our response to change. We say, "Well, that doesn't really jibe with how it used to be or how I came up through the system." So we ignore -- or lament -- the changes and act surprised when we find our bridges no longer cross our rivers and we find ourselves submerged in controversy.

I know that many yearn for the stability and predictability of the "old days." Stability and predictability are fascinating words. We manage natural systems that are inherently unstable and unpredictable, yet seek to impose on them something they cannot be. The strength of this nation is our flexibility and adaptability -- that we are quick to embrace new ideas -- faster in responding to change. Indeed, this is what has made us the world's leaders in technology, innovation, and conservation. The only thing we can count on is that the rate of change will be faster.

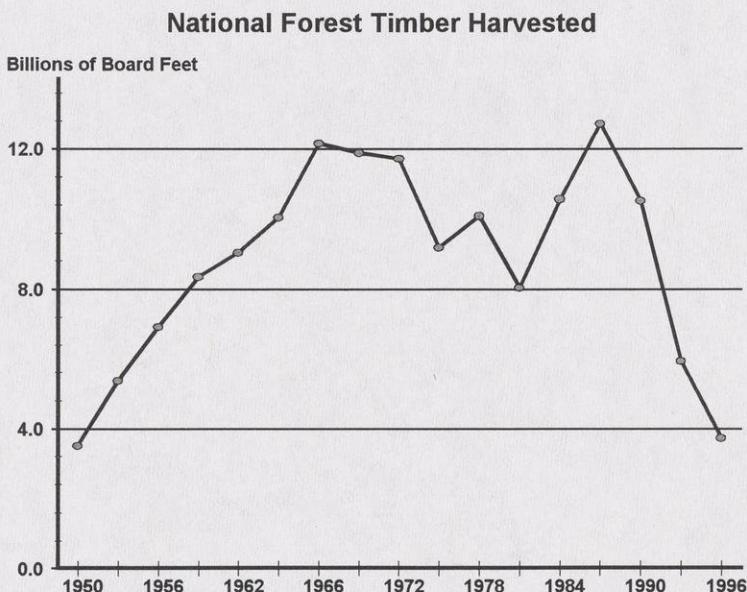
### **Addressing Social and Economic Changes in a Period of Consequences**

Winston Churchill said on the eve of World War II, "the era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences." The fact is that we are the senior managers in a very large organization with a complex mission in a complex society. We, you and me, are at the helm of an organization that is undergoing profound -- truly profound -- changes.

How we respond during this "period of consequences" will determine whether we are what some call a confused bureaucracy with a muddled mission or a superstar agency with an unparalleled commitment to caring for the land and serving people. I know it will be the latter.

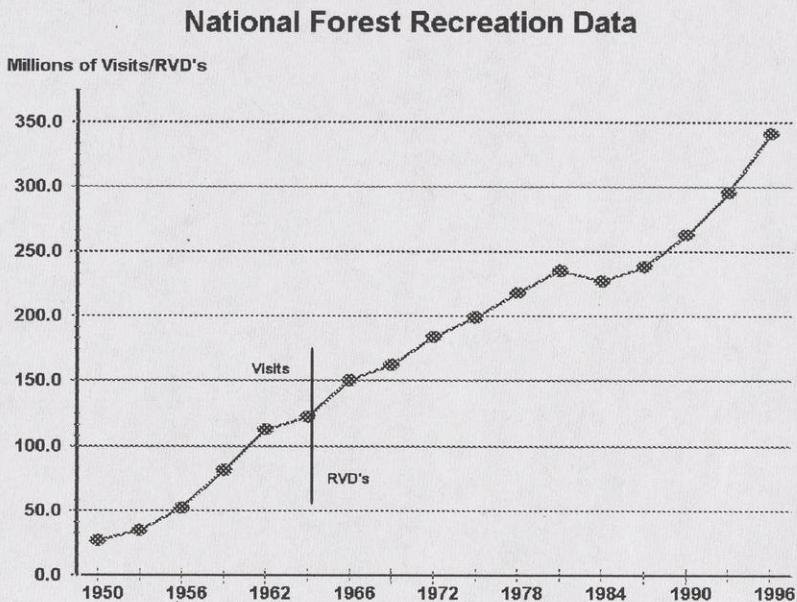
I thought of that erstwhile engineer as I examined some recent Forest Service trends.

As this chart shows, in the past ten years, timber harvest on federal lands has gone from approximately 11 billion board feet to 4 billion. Federal lands used to supply 25% of the nation's soft wood saw timber; today they supply about 10%.



At the same time, other uses of national forests are growing rapidly.

For example, looking at another chart, in 1980, 560 million recreational visits were made to national forests. That figure grew to about 860 million by 1996. Recreation on Forest Service managed lands contributes \$112 billion dollars to state economies and local communities each year.



This is not new information to you but it illustrates major changes in use patterns of our nation's forests and grasslands.

Jack Ward Thomas once told me a story of how, as a young biologist working for Texas Fish and Game, he became angry at an inaccurate comment made by a reporter about a wildlife program Jack was working on. Jack was infuriated and decided to "learn that reporter a thing or two." On the way to track down the reporter, he stopped by his boss' house and informed him of his plans. His boss sat him down and said:

Son, let it go. What you fail to realize is that we are insignificant people working on insignificant issues that few significant people care about. Until the time comes that conservation issues move off of the sport page and onto the front pages, no-one will care.

In the front section of my paper on Sunday were stories about: endangered species issues in Riverside, California; potential effects of a mine on the Okefenokee wildlife refuge; and another on potential measures by the United States and Canada to protect endangered species that migrate between the two nations.

I think Jack's old boss would say that conservation -- and conservationists like us -- have become "significant." Seventy-four percent of Americans consider themselves either active environmentalists or sympathetic to environmental concerns. We are in the midst of a profound social change -- a change of values and priorities. Our challenge is not to wistfully stand idle or, like the engineer, to try and get that river back under the bridge. Instead, we need to be leaders in the national dialogue over how to best care for the land and serve people.

Let me talk for a few moments about the northern spotted owl. In so many ways, that issue typifies the sort of challenges we see cropping up in other parts of the country. I don't want to get into the finger-pointing that so characterized that issue. I just want you to think back.

Remember how in the late 1980s, people said that protection of the Northern Spotted Owl under the Endangered Species Act would economically "cripple" the Pacific Northwest?

Well, the opposite occurred. From 1988-1994, the economy of the Pacific Northwest has been remarkably strong and productive. Why? Because businesses and jobs are moving to those parts of the country that are the most desirable places to live.

For example, from 1988-1994:

- Employment in the Pacific Northwest grew 2.4 times faster than the rest of the country;
- Personal income grew 2.2 times faster;
- Average income grew 2.1 times faster; and
- Earnings increased 2.7 times faster than the rest of the United States.

What does this all mean? I think it proves that a healthy environment is a major stimulus for a healthy economy. Population growth and economic expansion are occurring in most non-metropolitan counties of Oregon and Washington. At the same time, many households and families are suffering from the downturn in many traditional industries. We need to be sensitive to those who are affected by social change and economic shifts while actively managing our programs to adapt to these changes.

### **Changing Priorities**

I read in a previous regional program budget recommendation that we need to decrease funding for ecosystem management, heritage programs, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species while increasing timber sales, timber roads, forest vegetation, and grazing management. We are often criticized for such proposals because they seemingly value one suite of multiple uses -- commodity production -- over other uses. Now I am not criticizing that Region's proposals because commodity production has often driven our management decisions. To be sure, we also developed world class research capabilities and provided many other multiple use benefits. But, commodities such as timber drove our budgets, our incentive and reward systems, it even drove a fair amount of our wildlife and fish habitat work, watershed restoration, and recreation projects.

Our record of commodity production, is not something to be ashamed of; quite the contrary. The country owes us a debt of gratitude for our service. Timber from Forest Service lands helped build homes for service men and their families after World War II. It fueled the industrial growth of this nation. It helped to sustain economies and resource dependent communities.

Today, however, society's priorities are shifting. Our management priorities must keep pace with our scientific knowledge of ecological systems and society's values. Our challenge is to link our processes, rewards, and incentives to the health of the land, to places where we intersect with societies needs -- not specific program areas. If we do not, then when specific programs falter -- when society's values shift -- the agency itself suffers.

My challenge to you is to help make watershed health, ecosystem health, the health of the land -- whatever you wish to call it -- the driving force. The production of commodities such as timber will remain an important use of national forest lands. These are the things that make multiple use agencies unique and relevant. I stand firmly behind a viable timber industry that depends on federal lands for wood fiber. But we cannot allow production to diminish the land's productive capacity. Nor can we allow our traditional incentives or budget processes to impede proper silviculture, or range management, or watershed restoration.

Rather than spending our time in pitched battle over individual and controversial timber sales, how can we best leverage our resources to assist in rural economic development, Jobs in the Woods type programs, and so on?

How can we expand the land owner assistance, stewardship, and stewardship incentives program to assist the private landowners who own 70% of the nation's forest land? Private woodland owners, state foresters, private non-industrial woodlot owners -- this is our future support base.

We cannot become conservation leaders if we are not first conservation leaders. How can we more effectively communicate our conservation message to the 80% of Americans who live in urban areas and who increasingly will influence both the ecological health and management priorities of national forests and grasslands. This is our largest and most rapidly growing support base. How can we design internal processes that translate to external actions that best meet their needs?

What I have heard from you and hundreds of other people both within and outside the agency over the past few months is that the health of the land must be the unifying factor that brings people together. We must use all of our available tools to shift our priorities, establish new processes, and create new incentives.

## Resource and Management Priorities

All of the goods and services that we provide to the American people are dependent on healthy lands and waters. The health of the land must be our overriding priority! As resource professionals, we must be able to explain to people, the existing condition, desired state, and trend of the following resource priorities.

- water quality and quantity,
- riparian health,
- forest ecosystem health,
- rangeland ecosystem health,
- recreation, and
- partnerships.

In the next few years, we have some unique opportunities to establish processes and incentives that track more closely with maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. For example, over the next three years, 78 forest plans – plans for fully one half of our forests and grasslands -- will be revised. How can we use this process as a framework for implementing our priorities?

Additionally, we are in the process of drafting a strategic plan for the Forest Service as required by the *Government Performances and Results Act*. Within the broad context of the *Government Performances and Results Act*, we must develop performance measures for Forest Supervisors, Research, State and Private Forestry, and so on, that relate to maintaining healthy ecological systems. This will be the most significant expression of our commitment to the American people.

Consider water. Now this may sound glib, but it is not. “Gravity works cheap and never takes a day off.” The end results of most of our management actions are reflected by the health of our rivers, streams, and lakes. I want you to work with your people to determine the appropriate characteristics of healthy aquatic ecosystems and to hold them accountable for their improvement.

For example, on national forests and grasslands:

- Certain *keystone species* of fish, wildlife, and plants can be used as surrogates for general biotic integrity.

- *Properly functioning riparian areas* have a disproportionate value in determining ecosystem health.
- The *health of fire dependent ecosystems*, particularly given public debate and interest, are critically important.
- *Erosion* -- concerns over which contributed to the creation of the eastern national forests and western grasslands -- can reflect the effect of management activities on the land.

The idea here is not to institute a new layer of process and bureaucracy over our management actions. Land-based accountability is *intrinsic* to responsible resource stewardship.

### **Conclusion**

Our challenge is to work with people to implement meaningful strategic national goals and on-the-ground measures that reflect these and other appropriate issues. Once developed, we must then communicate to people their importance and begin to build the public support base, financial systems, budget processes, and management incentives to accomplish these priorities. Then, and only then, can we say with certainty that we are truly caring for the land and serving people.

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
Western State Land Commissioners  
April 14, 1997

## INTRODUCTION

It's good to be back among so many old friends. I've met with the Western State Land Commissioners many times over the past few years and have always enjoyed working with tireless public land advocates such as Curt Johnson, Ray Powell, and many others in this room.

I won't take up too much of your time here because frankly, I think it's more important that I hear what you have to say than it is to stand up here and lecture. I want to share with you some of the ways the Forest Service is working to improve the way we deliver our services to the American people. I'd also like to visit with you about some of the ways we can work together to streamline our processes and cut red tape.

I know that cutting red tape and streamlining processes may sound like mundane topics. But they are not. In fact, given recent congressional proposals to rewrite many of our existing environmental laws, they are critically important.

## CONSERVATION LAWS ARE IMPORTANT

Before I go on, there's one thing I think you should know. I do not support the wholesale revision, repeal, or undoing of our framework of environmental laws.

Our country has been blessed by electing people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. As a result of congressional foresight and citizen activism:

- Our air and water are cleaner;
- Rare species have been brought back from the brink of extinction;
- People are more active in management and protection of their lands; and
- Recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing are better.

We are a better, more secure, and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Forest Management Act. These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America.

Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and healthy, properly functioning democracy.

The ongoing debate over how public forests and rangelands should be managed is healthy. Debate and information are the essence of democracy. The people we serve -- all of the people -- are now more fully engaged in defining how we should manage their natural resource legacy. Our challenge is not to allow our disagreements to make us disagreeable.

We need to work together to explain to people that conservation does matter – that sustainability is not simply the job of the State Land Commissioner, the local fed, or the Park's people. Rather, sustainability and conservation are a collective obligation that we owe to those yet born.

Nor should we attempt as resource professionals to dictate the course or the outcome.

Rather, we need to be the facilitators, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the communicators who bring people together to search for shared solutions to shared problems.

The first job of the resource professional is to teach. We must more effectively communicate to people the consequences of resource degradation and the many societal benefits that flow from healthy, properly functioning ecosystems.

You're probably scratching your head wondering what this has to do with Forest Service efforts to improve the way we do business; to cut red tape, and to streamline our processes.

You see, we've allowed our processes to impede our ability to work with people.

- Instead of talking over problems over a pick-up truck, we write voluminous reports that few people read.

- Instead of working with community leaders to help define a collective vision for managing healthy, productive and diverse ecological systems we prepare thick 10-step environmental impact statements.
- Rather than meeting people one-on-one in their homes and ranches, we conduct something called “scoping” and “provide opportunities for public comment.”

We've become so driven by bullet-proofing our decisions from litigation and appeals that our processes have become an end in themselves, rather than a means of bringing people together to achieve healthy landscapes.

The answer to these problems is not new legislation. Nor is the mission of the Forest Service inappropriate. The need to care for the land and serve people has never been greater. We simply need to get back to basics. That is precisely the direction I gave all of the Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and Forest Service Program Directors last week—get back to basics.

## GPRA AND FOREST MEASURES OF HEALTH

How do we get back to basics? It begins by linking our national goals and priorities with accountability measures for managers on-the-ground.

We are in the process of drafting our strategic plan for the Forest Service as required by the *Government Performances and Results Act*. We will focus these broad agency goals on maintaining and restoring the health of our lands and waters.

The health of the land -- watershed health -- whatever we decide to call it, must be the unifying factor that brings people together. We must use all of our available tools to shift our priorities, establish new processes, and create new incentives. It begins on the land.

Thus, within the broad context of the *Government Performances and Results Act*, we will develop performance measures for Forest Supervisors that relate to maintaining healthy ecological systems. We will begin to establish these measures immediately.

## NEPA STREAMLINING

On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Policy (CEQ) initiated an effectiveness study to identify prospects for improvement in the NEPA process.

The study found that NEPA's most enduring legacy is as a framework for collaboration among federal agencies and those affected by the impacts of their decisions. The American people have the right to participate in and understand the effects of federal actions on the land.

The NEPA process can be improved by focusing less on preparing lengthy environmental documentation and more on making better decisions. The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are committed to working hand-in-hand with CEQ to streamline implementation of NEPA.

## ESA CONSULTATION PROCESS

An interagency team is working to dramatically shorten the length of time it takes to consult on whether a proposed project on federal lands would hurt an imperiled species.

We employed this approach with excellent results last year in the Pacific Northwest. Several years ago, literally hundreds of projects were stalled in prolonged Section 7 consultation procedures. Today, we have eliminated the backlog in the Pacific Northwest and in many other places.

We are in the process of implementing these streamlined procedures nationwide. What this means is that more goods and services can be produced from federal lands in a manner that maintains sustainability.

These are a few of the many ways we are cutting red tape, avoiding unnecessary delays, delivering more resources to agency field personnel, and, thereby, better serving the American people.

## REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND PLANS

Additionally, regional assessments and planning efforts such as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, although expensive in the short term, actually will save money. Without this effort, over 74 separate plans of the Forest Service and BLM would need to be amended; each plan potentially taking a divergent path from adjacent forests and BLM public lands.

The Interior Columbia Basin project will help ensure consistent direction among forests and resource areas, interagency cooperation, and broad county and public support.

Progress is also being made in streamlining the cultural resources clearance process and improving the efficiency of land exchanges. We must begin to work more closely with our state and county partners. In fact, one of the areas I'd really like to work both with you and the county commissioners is in improving land ownership patterns.

We should be working with the states and local communities to trade Forest Service and BLM lands with high commercial and real estate values in exchange for areas of recreational significance or high ecological value, as appropriate.

## **CONCLUSION**

These are some of the ways that we hope to simplify our procedures and processes so that we can more effectively care for the land and serve people. I am hoping for your active support and assistance as we work to direct more resources to maintaining and restoring the health of the land.

Thanks for the good work you do.

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
Western State Land Commissioners  
April 14, 1997

*Leaving Curve*

## INTRODUCTION

It's good to be back among so many old friends. I've met with the Western State Land Commissioners many times over the past few years and have always enjoyed working with tireless public land advocates such as Curt Johnson, Ray Powell, and many others in this room.

I won't take up too much of your time here because frankly, I think it's more important that I hear what you have to say than it is to stand up here and lecture. I want to share with you some of the ways the Forest Service is working to improve the way we deliver our services to the American people. I'd also like to visit with you about some of the ways we can work together to streamline our processes and cut red tape.

I know that cutting red tape and streamlining processes may sound like mundane topics. But they are not. In fact, given recent congressional proposals to rewrite many of our existing environmental laws, they are critically important.

NEPA  
GPRRA

## CONSERVATION LAWS ARE IMPORTANT

Before I go on, there's one thing I think you should know. I do not support the wholesale revision, repeal, or undoing of our framework of environmental laws.

Our country has been blessed by electing people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. As a result of congressional foresight and citizen activism:

- Our air and water are cleaner;
- Rare species have been brought back from the brink of extinction;
- People are more active in management and protection of their lands; and
- Recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing are better.

We are a better, more secure, and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Forest Management Act. These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America.

Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and healthy, properly functioning democracy.

The ongoing debate over how public forests and rangelands should be managed is healthy. Debate and information are the essence of democracy. The people we serve -- all of the people -- are now more fully engaged in defining how we should manage their natural resource legacy. Our challenge is not to allow our disagreements to make us disagreeable.

We need to work together to explain to people that conservation does matter – that sustainability is not simply the job of the State Land Commissioner, the local ~~fed~~, or the Park's people. Rather, sustainability and conservation are a collective obligation that we owe to those yet born.

<sup>not</sup>  
Nor should we attempt as resource professionals to dictate the course or the outcome.

Rather, we need to be the **facilitators**, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the communicators who **bring people together** to search for shared solutions to shared problems.

*result of hearing*

The first job of the resource professional is to teach. We must more effectively communicate to people the consequences of resource degradation and the many societal benefits that flow from healthy, properly functioning ecosystems.

You're probably scratching your head wondering what this has to do with Forest Service efforts to improve the way we do business; **to cut red tape**, and to streamline our processes.

You see, we've allowed our processes to impede our ability to work with people.

*Done needs to be positive*

- Instead of talking over problems over a pick-up truck, we write voluminous reports that few people read.

- Instead of working with community leaders to help define a **collective vision for managing healthy**, productive and diverse ecological systems we prepare thick 10-step environmental impact statements.
- Rather than meeting people one-on-one in their homes and ranches, we conduct something called “scoping” and “provide opportunities for public comment.”

We've become so driven by bullet-proofing our decisions from litigation and appeals that our processes have become an end in themselves, rather than a means of bringing people together to achieve healthy landscapes.

The answer to these problems is not new legislation. Nor is the mission of the Forest Service inappropriate. The need to care for the land and serve people has never been greater. We simply need to get back to basics. That is precisely the direction I gave all of the Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and Forest Service Program Directors last week—get back to basics.

## GPRA AND FOREST MEASURES OF HEALTH

How do we get back to basics? It begins by linking our national goals and priorities with accountability measures for managers on-the-ground.

We are in the process of drafting our strategic plan for the Forest Service as required by the *Government Performance and Results Act*. We will focus these broad agency goals on maintaining and restoring the health of our lands and waters.

The health of the land -- watershed health -- whatever we decide to call it, must be the unifying factor that brings people together. We must use all of our available tools to shift our priorities, establish new processes, and create new incentives. It begins on the land.

Thus, within the broad context of the *Government Performance and Results Act*, we will develop performance measures for Forest Supervisors that relate to maintaining healthy ecological systems. We will begin to establish these measures immediately.

We won't get there overnight but this will be a most significant expression of our commitment to the American people.

## PLANNING

We are in the final stages of revising Forest Services planning regulations. When completed, these will

- 1) streamline forest planning procedures and forest plans;
- 2) strengthen relationships with the public and other Federal agencies and State, local, and Indian tribal governments;
- 3) incorporate the principles of ecosystem management into forest planning; and
- 4) clarify the agency's planning and decision-making framework.

## NEPA STREAMLINING

On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Policy (CEQ) initiated an effectiveness study to identify prospects for improvement in the NEPA process.

The study found that NEPA's most enduring legacy is as a framework for collaboration among federal agencies and those affected by the impacts of their decisions. The American people have the right to participate in and understand the effects of federal actions on the land.

The NEPA process can be improved by focusing less on preparing lengthy environmental documentation and more on making better decisions. The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are committed to working hand-in-hand with CEQ to streamline implementation of NEPA.

## ESA CONSULTATION PROCESS

An interagency team is working to dramatically shorten the length of time it takes to consult on whether a proposed project on federal lands would hurt an imperiled species.

We employed this approach with excellent results last year in the Pacific Northwest. Several years ago, literally hundreds of projects were stalled in prolonged Section 7 consultation procedures. Today, we have eliminated the backlog in the Pacific Northwest and in many other places.

We are in the process of implementing these streamlined procedures nationwide. What this means is that more goods and services can be produced from federal lands in a manner that maintains sustainability.

These are a few of the many ways we are cutting red tape, avoiding unnecessary delays, delivering more resources to agency field personnel, and, thereby, better serving the American people.

## REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND PLANS

Additionally, regional assessments and planning efforts such as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, although expensive in the short term, actually will save money. Without this effort, over 74 separate plans of the Forest Service and BLM would need to be amended; each plan potentially taking a divergent path from adjacent forests and BLM public lands.

The Interior Columbia Basin project will help ensure consistent direction among forests and resource areas, interagency cooperation, and broad county and public support.

Progress is also being made in streamlining the cultural resources clearance process and improving the efficiency of land exchanges. We must begin to work more closely with our state and county partners. In fact, one of the areas I'd really like to work both with you and the county commissioners is in improving land ownership patterns.

We should be working with the states and local communities to trade Forest Service and BLM lands with high commercial and real estate values in exchange for areas of recreational significance or high ecological value, as appropriate.

*charts*

## **CONCLUSION**

These are some of the ways that we hope to simplify our procedures and processes so that we can more effectively care for the land and serve people.

I am hoping for your active support and assistance as we work to direct more resources to maintaining and restoring the health of the land.

Thanks for the good work you do.

## Talking Points for the Chief to use at Water Resources for Line Officers Course

Durango, Colorado  
April 28, 1997

Why this course is important to me, and should be to you.

(1) Management of water and riparian resources are two of my top priorities. To meet the challenges they pose will require some effort, such as increasing your awareness and commitment to learning more about water and riparian resources on your home unit. Watersheds have three functions: they catch, store, and safely release water. The biggest supporters of watershed management should be the 25 million people who live in the 900 communities that depend upon national forest watersheds for their clean drinking water supplies. I need you to make decisions that will help sustain watershed functions.

(2) Water sustains life itself. As an agency, we must become better in applying knowledge of the roles that water plays in sustaining natural and human communities, of any limitations that water places on these processes, and of the changing economic and social values humans place on the water resource. In a book on watershed restoration that I am co-editing, there are case studies from across America that illustrate these changing values. Some examples: using hydroelectric relicensing to restore watersheds in New England; using school systems and encouraging communities to heal local watersheds in Oregon and California; using River Action Teams to improve water quality in Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina, and the Henrys Fork Watershed Council in Idaho.

(3) The public thinks water is very important; I think so too. We depend upon agency hydrologists to:

- advise us of the effects our management decisions will have on water quality and water quantity,
- help us set appropriate goals and standards in forest planning,
- help us respond to the ever-increasing numbers of letters, appeals, lawsuits, and adjudications we face as managers.

Yet, some 39 national forests do not have any hydrologists. I am worried about the added risks these forest supervisors are taking by not having this expertise available.

(4) In five weeks - on June 4th - we will celebrate the centennial of the Organic Administration Act of 1897. One of the two purposes for which the national forests were created was to "secure favorable conditions of water flow." The second was for a continuous supply of timber. You will hear more about the water language this week; pay attention to what is said, debate it if you think necessary.

Beyond these four key messages, I would like to say a few more things about my perspective on water and riparian resources as Chief.

First - I love to canoe, to float rivers, and to fish. While growing up in Wisconsin, I spent 11 summers as a musky fishing guide and my doctorate focused on the natural reproduction of this species. My interest in rivers and lakes is strong and life-long; without enough clean water, an aquatic ecosystem will deteriorate and die, and a piece of us will die too.

Second - I want to restore the health of the land, particularly riparian areas, which are so essential to maintaining water quality, fisheries and dependent wildlife, and human communities. We have fallen behind the pace we needed to keep to eliminate the backlog of watershed improvement needs on the national forests by the year 2000. I encourage - urge - you to apply for some of the \$500,000 that Congress appropriated this year in establishing a new Challenge Cost-Share program for watershed activities, just as the Wildlife and Fisheries people have had for many years. I am sure there are other opportunities to restore damaged watersheds with local partners and groups anxious to accomplish something good for their local national forest. Let us see what we can do to get back on track.

Third - I would like you to practice accountability and personal leadership for the condition of the water resources under your management. For about 25 years now, the Forest Service told the public we would monitor and evaluate water quality on the National Forests and Grasslands. Too often we have failed to deliver on this promise. Some forests have done a good job, at least for a few years, but none anywhere can report with any reasonable level of assurance, about trends in water quality or about violations of either legal standards or self-imposed goals in forest plans. I would like us to find better ways, with public collaboration, to really assess water quality conditions in critically important watersheds we manage, and report results on a regular basis to the EPA, the States, and all the people. I would like to implement reasonable and measurable performance standards which gauge the condition and trends of watershed health for all line officers who have direct responsibility for taking care of public land.

Fourth - Each of you as responsible watershed managers have a role for meeting the public's expectations of you, the people you supervise, and sustaining the multiple uses, benefits, and values of the natural resources located on your home unit to the best of your ability. With over 30 major Federal laws that relate to the water resources of your area, this is a daunting challenge in the closing years of the 20th century. Yet, less than one percent of the 200,000 miles of fishable streams of the National Forests now have instream flow water rights that will insure they are not de-watered without our involvement. We have a tremendous challenge ahead to extend legal protection to the other 99 percent. We need the cooperation of the States to do this, yet many western States are bitterly opposed to granting us instream flow rights. They want to hold such valuable rights themselves. They cannot provide us sufficient legal security, as we have discovered in Colorado over the last five years in the Piedra wilderness and the bypass flow issues. It is hard to do the right thing in cases like this; it is all too easy to do the easy thing instead.

Fifth - Money will flow to issues and places of strongest public concern. Let people know of the good work you are already doing to sustain or enhance the water resources in your area. For example, the new video from Region 6, titled *Torrents of Change* does a great job of showing the adaptive management being practiced by Siuslaw National Forest Supervisor Jim Furnish in his road storage program. Jim found a way of providing effective drainage of many miles of currently unneeded logging roads, minimizing risk of roadfill failures during storms, protecting fish habitat, while still being able to re-open those roads in the future at minimal cost. Also, documented in that video is how PNW Station researchers Fred Swanson and Gordon Grant used the December 1996 flooding on the Willamette's H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest to study changes in stream channel morphology. I think their real-time, on-site learning about channel dynamics during and after that flood will prove very helpful. I liked the way both stories were told in this video.

And finally, every astronaut and cosmonaut that has looked down on planet earth from space orbit has been moved by the sight of so much lovely water here. Many have vowed to take better care of the Earth. Ancient civilizations from the Assyrians of 5,000 years ago to the Anasazi of 500 years ago knew the value of using water to grow crops, to trade by dugout or ship, to baptize believers, and all the other things for which we still use water. Try to keep both a global and time-free perspective this week. Learn well!

Now, I have some time left for your questions.

Talking Points for the Chief to use at Water Resources for Line Officers Course

F.1

S. Glaser  
cc: Sue

F05 -1765

FAX

Durango, Colorado

TO: Sue or Donna T. April 28, 1997

From: Chris

Dis, get to Sue Glaser for MD. He needs this for the weekend. Thanks

Why this course is important to me, and should be to you:

Sue, really go  
job!

and riparian are two of my jobs

1. Water resource management is my top priority natural resource issue.

Riparian area management is a close second. To meet the challenges they pose will require some effort, such as increasing your awareness and commitment to learning more about water and riparian resources on your home unit. I need you to make decisions that will help sustain them, rather than impair them.

Chris

As an agency, we must

2. Water sustains life itself. As the Forest Service is going to become good at ecosystem management, we must become better in applying knowledge of the roles that water plays in sustaining natural and human communities, any limitations that water places on these processes, and the changing economic and social values humans place on the water resource. Some of these values will be discussed and maybe debated among you this week.

3. The public thinks water is very important; I think so too. We depend upon agency hydrologists to:

advise us of the effects our management decisions will have on water quality and water quantity.

help us set appropriate goals and standards in forest planning.

OPTIONAL FORM 10 (7-90)

**FAX TRANSMITTAL**

Chris Wom	From	5
Department	Phone #	Sue
Fax #	Fax #	
RSN 750041-017-7308		6050-101
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION		

help us respond to the ever-increasing numbers of letters, appeals, lawsuits, and adjudications we face as managers.

Yet, some 39 National Forests do not have any hydrologists - I am worried about the added risks they are taking by not having this expertise available.

4. In five weeks - on June 4th - we will celebrate the centennial of the Organic Administration Act of 1897. One of the two purposes for which the national forests were created was to "secure favorable conditions of water flow." The second was for a continuous supply of timber. You will hear more about the water language this week - pay attention to what is said, debate it if you need to, ~~but know that the U.S. Supreme Court itself has interpreted this language and their ruling is supreme, even as it is ominous to us!~~

Beyond these four key messages, I'd like to say a few more things about my perspective on water resources as Chief.

First - I love to canoe, to float rivers, to fish. While growing up in Wisconsin, I spent 11 summers as a musky fishing guide and my doctorate focused on the natural reproduction of this species. My interest in rivers and lakes is strong and life-long; without enough clean water, an aquatic ecosystem will deteriorate and die, and a piece of us will die too.

Second - I want to restore the health of the land, particularly riparian areas, which are so essential to maintaining water quality, fisheries and dependent wildlife and human communities. ~~Because of poor funding for at least 10 years,~~

we have fallen behind the pace we needed to keep to eliminate the backlog of watershed improvement needs on the national forests by the year 2000 - a goal of the last two Chiefs. Perhaps you will apply for some of the 8500,000 that Congress appropriated this year in establishing a new Challenge Cost-Share program for watershed activities, just as the wildlife and fisheries people have had for many years. I'm sure there are other opportunities to restore damaged watersheds with local partners and groups anxious to accomplish

something good for their local national forest. Let's see what we can do to get back on track. Mike, myself and Jack E. Williams are editing a book on H2O shed restoration - public of contents is attached. Talk about the building here - how the case studies depict places where people are reworking their social & economic futures to the land that sustains them! Third - Accountability and personal leadership for the condition of the water resources under your management. For about 25 years now, the Forest Service told the public we would monitor and evaluate water quality on the National Forests and Grasslands. Too often have we failed to deliver on this promise. Some Forests have done a good job, at least for a few years, but none anywhere can report with any reasonable level of assurance, about trends in water quality or about violations of either legal standards or self-imposed goals in forest plans. I would like us to find better ways, with public collaboration, to really assess water quality conditions in critically important watersheds we manage, and report results on a regular basis to EPA, the States, and all the people. I would like to implement reasonable and measurable performance standards which gauge the condition and trends of watershed health for all line officers with direct responsibility for taking care of the public's land.

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One of MD's favorite lines is : H2O sheds ~~that~~ <sup>their</sup> 3 basic functions they catch, store, and safely release water. The biggest supporters of watershed mgmt. should be people who live in urban areas & depend on clean drinking water supplies.

home unit to the best of your ability. With over 30 major federal laws that relate to the water resources of your area, this is a daunting challenge in the closing years of the 20th century. Yet, less than one percent of the 200,000 miles of fishable streams of the National Forests now have instream flow water rights that will insure they are not de-watered without our involvement. We have a tremendous challenge ahead to extend legal protection to the other 99 percent. We need the cooperation of the States to do this, yet many western states are bitterly opposed to granting us instream flow rights. They want to hold such valuable rights themselves. They cannot provide us sufficient legal security, as we have discovered in Colorado over the last five years in the Piedra wilderness and the bypass flow issues. It isn't easy to do the right

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\* Talk to Rick Swanson about opportunities provided by the bybro - re-licensing ... instream flows, recreational uses, restoration, fifth - money will flow to issues and places of strongest public concern. Let me highlight, etc.

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channel morphology. I think their real-time, on-site learning about channel

dynamics during and after that flood will prove very helpful. I liked the way

both stories were told in this video.

— get M/S a copy of this video to review over the weekend.

Finally - Every astronaut and cosmonaut that has looked down on Planet Earth from space orbit has been moved by the sight of so much lovely water here. Many have vowed to take better care of the Earth. Ancient civilizations from the Assyrians of 5,000 years ago to the Anasazi of 500 years ago knew the value of using water to grow crops, to trade by dugout or ship, to baptize believers, and all the other things for which we still use water. Try to keep both a global and time-free perspective this week. Learn well!

Now, I have some time left for your questions.

5/97

## Talking Points for Mike Dombeck Public Affairs Conference

### Introduction

I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person today. I am supposed to meet with Erskine Bowles, President Clinton's Chief of Staff later today. And, as you of all people know, we all have to answer to our bosses!

Even though I cannot be with you in person, I did want a chance to talk with you about:

- my priorities for the Forest Service,
- the importance of the services that we provide to the American people, and
- why education and communication are the two most valuable commodities of resource professionals.

#### Priorities

1 Protecting & Restoring Ecosystems

2 Providing Benefits to people within the capabilities of Ecosystems

3 Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness

At the last senior leadership team, we identified the following priorities for the agency.

- Improving water quality and quantity,
- Restoring and conserving riparian health,
- Restoring and conserving forest ecosystem health,
- Restoring and conserving rangeland ecosystem health,
- Promoting responsible recreation use, and
- Promoting partnerships.

few  
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through  
By 98 and  
further as  
needed.

#1 priority  
must have  
all others  
in place

Our priorities are clear, straightforward, and simple. I'm a big believer in keeping things simple. I think we have a tendency to make things far more complicated than they need to be. Take for example, the General Accounting Offices' latest audit on Forest Service decision-making. GAO thinks we have a confused mandate. I think we have the most straightforward, direct mandate of all of the resource management agencies. Care for the land. Serve people.

That's about as straightforward as it gets. All of the goods and services that we provide to the American people are dependent on healthy lands and waters. Maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the land must be our overriding priority!

Yet, never before have our agency mission and conservation mandate come under such scrutiny. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Organic Act, I'd like to share with you a few observations.

### Importance of Forest Service

Not since President Theodore Roosevelt expanded the National Forest Reserves has the nation seen such a heated debate over the use and management of public lands. When I entered public service, the country was still responding to President Kennedy's admonition to "ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

Today, faced with declining budgets, threats of violence, and overwhelming responsibilities, the temptation is strong for resource professionals to simply withdraw from the system, to, as Richard Nelson said in his book, The Island Within, "participate minimally in a system that debases its own sustaining environment, work toward a different future, and hope that someday all will be forgiven."

Our children cannot afford that we succumb to such a luxury. Nor need we. We have a wonderful story to tell.

The lands that we manage are the open spaces of the future. Places of economic prosperity and solitude; refuges for rare species and the destination of recreationists. All across the West, we are learning what most communities and economists already knew: *a healthy environment translates to healthy economy*.

I cannot predict the future but I can promise you this: I will tell our story. I will tell Congress, the media, and the tens of millions of Americans who use and enjoy Forest Service lands that you are working for them. I will tell them that Forest Service employees are community leaders. I will show them how you are working with local citizens, state and local government, and interest groups to maintain and restore healthy federal lands. On Capitol Hill, in the media — to anyone who will listen — I will tell our story.

And, I need your help. Let's spend less time worrying about change and more telling the story of local successes, improvements to customer service and how we are working with people on the land. Talk about how we are preserving the nation's cultural heritage, restoring the health of forest and rangeland ecosystems, improving hunting and fishing, managing properly functioning riparian areas, etc.

Take comfort in knowing that the public unequivocally supports environmental protection and enforcement, clean air and water, sustainable development, and the preservation of rare species. If we effectively communicate the importance of healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems, people will demand that our programs be fully staffed and funded.

Persons in Relationships as Messengers**Education and Communication***not only*

I'm counting on you folks to tell our story. I think there is an unfortunate tendency for federal agencies to leave communication and education to the "professional" communicators and educators or external affairs staffs.

but to help us involve and engage our communities, experts & detractors alike — to help us build the

*nature* *essential to*  
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Each and every one of us--as land managers, natural resource professionals and public servants -- have an obligation to keep people informed and involved in what we are doing on the ground. This requires communicating the ecological and economic importance of public lands. Educating people about the consequences of watershed degradation and the benefits of restoration. It also requires helping local communities anticipate and plan for changing sociological, economic and demographic trends.

Whether the issue involves grazing, forestry, or anadromous fish — most of our resource challenges are less technical than they are social. We cannot work in isolation. If we do not have community support for what we are doing, we will fail.

*This is my vision for collaborative stewardship —*

If those who are affected by our actions are not supportive, our chances for long term success quickly disintegrate. How many times have we erected signs, only to have them torn down; erected fences only to have them cut; planted stream side vegetation, only to have it trampled? All the technical expertise in the world cannot overcome disinterest or worse, distrust of agency actions.

Visiting the local school, taking time to attend civic group meetings, serving on local watershed and other natural resource coalitions will go a long way toward strengthening public trust in our goal of realizing healthier public lands.

There are outstanding examples of community involvement throughout the Forest Service — riparian restoration efforts that involve hundreds of volunteers in a community; weed-pulling days that not only get rid unwanted weeds, but more importantly, educate parents, teachers, and children about the work of the Forest Service.

*a healthy environment and*

Before we can be successful resource professionals, we must be effective communicators. Before we can be top scientists, we must become committed educators. Help your communities to appreciate and understand the health of the land and the wealth of their public land legacy this is the mark effective resource professionals.

Keep up the good work. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

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- my priorities for the Forest Service,
- the importance of the services that we provide to the American people, and
- why education and communication are the two most valuable commodities of resource professionals.

### **Priorities**

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- Restoring and conserving riparian health,
- Restoring and conserving forest ecosystem health,
- Restoring and conserving rangeland ecosystem health,
- Promoting responsible recreation use, and
- Promoting partnerships.

Our priorities are clear, straightforward, and simple. I'm a big believer in keeping things simple. I think we have a tendency to make things far more complicated than they need to be. Take for example, the General Accounting Offices' latest audit on Forest Service decision-making. GAO thinks we have a confused mandate. I think we have the most straightforward, direct mandate of all of the resource management agencies. Care for the land. Serve people.

That's about as straightforward as it gets. All of the goods and services that we provide to the American people are dependent on healthy lands and waters. Maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the land must be our overriding priority!

Yet, never before have our agency mission and conservation mandate come under such scrutiny. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Organic Act, I'd like to share with you a few observations.

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I cannot predict the future but I can promise you this: I will tell our story. I will tell Congress, the media, and the tens of millions of Americans who use and enjoy Forest Service lands that you are working for them. I will tell them that Forest Service employees are community leaders. I will show them how you are working with local citizens, state and local government, and interest groups to maintain and restore healthy federal lands. On Capitol Hill, in the media — to anyone who will listen — I will tell our story.

And, I need your help. Let's spend less time worrying about change and more telling the story of local successes, improvements to customer service and how we are working with people on the land. Talk about how we are preserving the nation's cultural heritage, restoring the health of forest and rangeland ecosystems, improving hunting and fishing, managing properly functioning riparian areas, etc.

Take comfort in knowing that the public unequivocally supports environmental protection and enforcement, clean air and water, sustainable development, and the preservation of rare species. If we effectively communicate the importance of healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems, people will demand that our programs be fully staffed and funded.

## **Education and Communication**

I'm counting on you folks to tell our story. I think there is an unfortunate tendency for federal agencies to leave communication and education to the "professional" communicators and educators or external affairs staffs.

Each and every one of us--as land managers, natural resource professionals and public servants -- have an obligation to keep people informed and involved in what we are doing on the ground. This requires communicating the ecological and economic importance of public lands. Educating people about the consequences of watershed degradation and the benefits of restoration. It also requires helping local communities anticipate and plan for changing sociological, economic and demographic trends.

Whether the issue involves grazing, forestry, or anadromous fish – most of our resource challenges are less technical than they are social. We cannot work in isolation. If we do not have community support for what we are doing, we will fail.

If those who are affected by our actions are not supportive, our chances for long term success quickly disintegrate. How many times have we erected signs, only to have them torn down; erected fences only to have them cut; planted stream side vegetation, only to have it trampled? All the technical expertise in the world cannot overcome disinterest or worse, distrust of agency actions.

Visiting the local school, taking time to attend civic group meetings, serving on local watershed and other natural resource coalitions will go a long way toward strengthening public trust in our goal of realizing healthier public lands.

There are outstanding examples of community involvement throughout the Forest Service — riparian restoration efforts that involve hundreds of volunteers in a community; weed-pulling days that not only get rid unwanted weeds, but more importantly, educate parents, teachers, and children about the work of the Forest Service.

Before we can be successful resource professionals, we must be effective communicators. Before we can be top scientists, we must become committed educators. Help your communities to appreciate and understand the health of the land and the wealth of their public land legacy this is the mark effective resource professionals.

Keep up the good work. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
Western Council of State Foresters  
May 20, 1997

Thanks for inviting me to be here with you today. I always enjoy coming to Boise. In fact, a few years back I bought a house here in Boise and accepted a job as the Fisheries Program Manager of the Intermountain Research Station. Every so often when things start getting frantic back in Washington, I think of Boise and my wife, Pat, reminds me, "you wanted to stay." But it is good to be back in beautiful Boise.

Before we begin today, I want to offer my heartfelt sympathy and support for the people of North Dakota who have been hit so hard by the recent floods. I know that Chairman Larry Kotchman and all the State Foresters will do everything you can to help the affected families. Larry, if there is anyway that the Forest Service can provide additional assistance, please let me know.

I'll only talk briefly today because mostly, I'd like to hear what you have to say. But I would like to share with you my priorities for the agency in general and State and Private Forestry in particular.

I spent a day in the field last week with one of your eastern counterparts, Maryland State Forester, Jim Mallow. We visited several private land-owners who are working with the State to improve the health and productivity of their lands. As one landowner involved in a watershed project told me, "I sleep easier at nights knowing I'm doing the right thing; the right thing for the land, the right thing for my neighbor's downstream, the right thing for my little grandchildren."

Now, I'm not a Pollyanna but when you get down to it, that's what natural resource management is all about: "doing the right thing."

We need to focus our work -- be it fire management, logging, ecosystem restoration, or recreation developments -- in areas with broad public agreement. If there is no broad agreement, we must build it. If we cannot, then we need to find other areas to focus our efforts.

In every case, we must aggressively work with the regulatory agencies, professional societies, conservation groups, and industry. From project design and development -- to project implementation -- through project monitoring, our greatest challenge as resource professionals is to help people understand the consequences of degradation and the many benefits of management and restoration. And there is no better place to start than with state and private forestry.

All across the country, I hear about the work that State Foresters are doing to restore and conserve the health of the land. As Chief of the Forest Service, I am personally proud to support and be affiliated with your work. For example:

- In New Mexico, over 225 landowners have received cost share funding and developed stewardship plans through the Stewardship Incentive Program.
- The Arizona Land Department's Forest Stewardship Program is reintroducing fire to fire dependent communities. This will help to reduce catastrophic fires that threaten lives and private property.
- I saw the effects of the Millers' Reach fire in Alaska which burned over 37,000 acres and consumed over 400 structures. I was proud of the teams that helped the State quell that fire and equally proud of the two Forest Service Fire Prevention Task Teams that were brought up from the lower 48 to work with communities from Homer to Fairbanks.
- Kansas is working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to employ cost-share funds to protect existing woodlands along riparian areas and to re-establish trees in formerly cleared areas.
- In Colorado, the Colorado Forest Service has worked with the San Juan National Forest, Dolores County Commissioners, and adjacent landowners to reintroduce fire and improve both wildlife habitat and grazing. This effort has helped reduce fire danger, improve forest ecosystem health, and protect the resources that help to support this diverse economy.
- Through their watershed councils, Oregon is demonstrating that when people of good will talk to, instead of at, each other they can work together to restore the health of their lands and waters.

One of the areas of which I'm most proud is of our collaborative partnership in managing fire. The western United States has the fastest growing, most urbanized population in the country. Increasingly, people are moving into undeveloped areas, along the urban-wildland interface. At the same time, years of fire suppression and other management practices have left a tremendous fuel build up in many areas resulting in fires that can imperil lives and destroy public property.

Our continuing partnership and implementation of our new fire policy will help to reduce the damages associated with these large fires and the risk they pose to lives and property.

These are just a few of the many important services that you provide the American people. And they all relate to maintaining and restoring the health of our nation's lands and waters

It's important to remember how far we've come -- the great strides we have already made. Every day, I'm pulled by people to become engaged in this controversial timber sale or mining claim. So it's inevitable that we get caught up in the controversy. But as we work to resolve some of these issues, we should keep sight of some basic facts.

Less than 1/3 of America's forest lands are in public control. The rest are privately owned. Similarly, nearly 80% of this country live in urban areas. If we are to be effective conservationists we must, absolutely must, work more closely with states and private land owners. We must pay more attention to those folks who are living in urban areas. They are our future support bases. And that is what state and private forestry is all about.

I firmly believe that we cannot meet the needs of people without securing the health of the land. All of the goods and services that we provide to the American people are dependent on healthy lands and waters.

I've met with a number of long-time foresters in the past few months who have told me how times have changed, how resource issues have become so intractable, so controversial. But there is nothing controversial about planting trees, controlling pests, or managing fire. What one Forest Service silviculturist told me makes a lot of sense – these aren't technical issues we're dealing with they are social issues. But everything we do – every service we provide – is contingent on healthy, productive and diverse ecological systems.

The health of the land must be our overriding priority! Thus, a few weeks ago, I told my senior leadership that our priorities in the coming years will be:

- water quality and quantity,
- riparian health,
- forest ecosystem health,
- rangeland ecosystem health,
- recreation, and
- partnerships.

Not surprisingly, the State Forester's top priorities – cooperative fire protection, forest health protection, forest stewardship, urban and community forestry – truly compliment our priorities

Increasingly, people are recognizing that their lifestyles, financial well being, and happiness are inextricably linked to the health of the land. This realization has caused unprecedented interest in management of our nations forests -- interest that often manifests itself in controversy. As I've said before, such debate is OK. It is simply a symptom of democracy at work.

People are more involved, more passionate about forest management than at any time in our history. Our future effectiveness as resource managers will have more to do with the relationships we develop, the trust we build, the partnerships we form – than with our technological advances. We should not dictate how forests are to be managed.

How can we work together to more effectively lead this renewed interest in a positive direction? How can you help us to more proactively use fire as a management tool? How can we together work with local communities to help them understand the benefits of landscape management? How can we expand stewardship incentives from tree planting to watershed restoration? These are some of the challenges and opportunities that we face in caring for the land and serving people.

Our challenge is to be the facilitators and educators -- the technical experts who help communities apply common sense to solutions to common problems for the common good. Thanks for the good work that you do.

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
National Grasslands Day  
May 22, 1997

Final  
- CW

Thank you for that kind introduction, \_\_\_\_\_.

It is particularly appropriate that Paul Johnson, Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, should proceed me. It was through the efforts of private ranchers, grazing associations, conservationists, and NRCS that the Grasslands have been reclaimed from the Dustbowl they once were.

As we celebrate National Grasslands Week, I pledge that we will continue to work with NRCS, permittees, conservationists, and all others who use and care for the land. We will continue the legacy of those who have gone before us and promote sound land stewardship.

Thank you for inviting me to be here today to share in this celebration of the National Grasslands. As others have said before me, the National Grasslands are truly an American treasure.

The commodity, recreational, and ecological values of these special places is unparalleled.

Consider the wealth of resources found on these 4 million acres:

- 1.3 million animal unit months of cattle and sheep graze on these lands,
- the largest coal mine in the world is found on the Thunder Basin National Grassland
- 1.26 million acres are leased for mineral development, and
- over 1,730 producing oil wells are found on grasslands.

Meanwhile recreational use of the grasslands continues to grow.

Over one million people a year visit these lands, using and enjoying the campgrounds, boat ramps, picnic areas, hiking trails, and the exceptional National Grasslands Visitor Center, right here in Wall.

But the greatest of all these values and accomplishments is the commitment by users and interest groups, hunters and anglers, permittees and hikers to restore the health, diversity, and productivity of our National Grasslands.

To walk out among these lands with their endless sky and waving grasses is to know how the pioneers must have felt – the promise and the opportunity of a new land. To meet and talk with the people who use and care about these lands – be they livestock operators or hikers -- oil and gas developers or anglers is to appreciate the respect that such a wondrous landscape instills in all of us.

And that's why we are here today – to celebrate the unique blend of private initiative and public interest that has made conservation on the National Grasslands possible. To be sure we are not there yet. Currently, 64 threatened or endangered species reside in the Great Plains – many of these depend on Grassland's habitat. Similar declines are evident in fish, reptile, and amphibian populations. Indeed, the black footed ferret, which was recently reintroduced to the Buffalo Gap National Grassland and will soon be on the Thunder Basin National Grassland, is considered the most endangered mammal in North America.

No we are not there yet. But thankfully, through the cooperative efforts of many of the people here today, we have many examples to guide us. Just to name a few:

- In partnership with Quail Unlimited, Oregon Hunter's Association, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Crooked River National Grassland will improve upland game bird habitat through prescribed burns, riparian restoration, fencing, etc.
- In the Sheyenne National Grasslands of North Dakota, approximately 2-3,000 acres of prescribed burning, angora goat grazing, and use of biological controls is helping to control leafy spurge.

This work, conducted in conjunction with Sheyenne Valley Grazing Association, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will help stop the spread of 10-12,000 acres of leafy spurge.

- Due in large part to improved grazing management, greater prairie chicken populations on the Fort Pierre National Grassland have tripled.

This is the only huntable population of greater prairie chickens on the National Grasslands.

- In partnership with the Butte Valley Grazing Association, Ducks Unlimited, and the California Department of Fish and Game, the Butte Valley National Grassland has successfully restored 1,800 acres of drained wetland. This four year, \$750,000 project provides nesting, resting, and foraging habitat for migratory waterfowl and shore birds.

These are several of the dozens of similar projects underway on our National Grasslands. They remind of us of the potential and opportunities that exist when people decide to come together to heal the lands and waters that sustain them.

I expect the National Grasslands Council to promote and assist all coalitions of state, private, and federal interests to work together to conserve and restore the health of our grasslands

Livestock permittees are historic partners on the National Grasslands. Our challenge is to bring traditional users together with the new users to define and implement a shared vision for management of healthy, diverse, and productive grasslands.

Before I leave, I want to assure you that so long as I am Chief, I will continue to support and promote collaborative partnerships that promote the sound stewardship and multiple use principles of our National Grasslands.

National Grasslands are important to the Forest Service. They are and will be a priority – because of the resources they represent, the people they serve, and the communities they support.

## Remarks of Mike Dombeck to the Green Group June 3, 1997

Thank you for inviting me to be here today. I see some old friends and colleagues here and I want to thank you all for the advice and counsel you've provided me with since I began this job. This is not a one-person job, and I can use all the help I can get.

### ON CONSERVATION

Those of you who know me, know that I am an unbridled optimist. The longer I'm around, the more I realize that to be unusual in a conservationist. As Aldo Leopold said:

One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.

As usual, Leopold's words ring true. However, I am convinced that our effectiveness as conservationists depends in no small part on our ability to focus on the positive. We cannot afford to be too cynical - or we will surely lose popular support for conservation.

### Tongass

I'm going to try and make my point by talking about one of the more divisive issues that I've ever worked on. One that the Forest Service was harshly criticized for - the Tongass forest plan. I don't want to get into the specifics of the plan except to say, that we have:

Reduced the amount of timber that may be harvested by more than half of what it was.  
Reduced the amount of acreage available for timber harvest by more than half from 1.7 to .7 million acres.  
Recommended that more than 500 miles of river be included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system.  
Dramatically increased buffer zones on streamside areas and set aside 1.1 million acres in old growth reserves. This is in addition to the over 6 million acres of old growth already under federal protection.

If we harvested the maximum amount of timber possible in this plan - something that is exceedingly unlikely - in 10 years 92% of the productive old growth on the forest will remain. After 100 years, 84% would remain.

I'm not trying to do a sales job on the Tongass Plan. It is clearly not perfect. But just as clearly it is a step in the right direction. Yet, we have been engaged in a pitched battle - spent incredible time, money and resources - arguing over something that I think does take us in the right direction.

I'm not saying that there are areas that we should not take dramatic and decisive actions. When you look back over the past 25 years our most significant environmental gains have been more evolutionary than revolutionary. As a community of conservationists, one of our greatest challenges is to bring people along with us. We cannot afford to marginalize ourselves and alienate the American people.  
We have many opportunities to work together on conservation issues that will relate in meaningful on the ground improvements.

### Opportunities

Westslope Cutthroat Trout recovery: Over the next year, the Fish and Wildlife Service will be deciding whether or not to list the Westslope Cutthroat Trout for protection under the Endangered Species Act. I am committed to using the Forest Service's resources to work with conservationists, other agencies, industry, and the States to take proactive measures that help recover the species before listing is required.

Bull Trout recovery: How can we do the same with the Bull Trout? Governor Batt of Idaho wishes to work with the Forest Service to help recover the Bull Trout. How can we work together to make it happen?

Forest Health restoration: Forest health was a particularly divisive issue in the last Congress. But in many national forests, fuel build up, overstocked stands, past management practices, and roads pose serious forest health problems. We must use active management to restore these forests. Active management includes thinning, increased use of prescribed fire, riparian restoration, better road management, and salvage - all of the tools we have available.

We have already begun a dialogue in Oregon due to the leadership of Governor John Kitzhaber. Governor Kitzhaber, advised by a panel of scientists, has recommended that we employ active management to treat many sick forests. He has also urged us to avoid controversy in our early forest health treatments. We need the help of the conservation community to help us identify areas where we can and should go forward with management. It is not enough to simply tell us where not to go. Becoming constructively engaged is the only way I believe we will build the relationships and trust we need to promote conservation.

Watershed restoration: Jack Williams, Chris Wood, and I are editing a book on watershed restoration. The centerpiece of the book is a series of case studies where people of good will have come together with a common goal - restoring the health of the land. The book will be out in August.

The book showcases restoration efforts where communities have come together to restore their lands and waters, and in the process of restoration rebuild the community itself. Most of the efforts developed locally; all involve local landowners, farmers, and ranchers working in partnership with anglers, scientists, environmentalists, government agencies, and a host of local citizens.

I am committed to using my position, and all of the resources of this agency, to promote these restorations all across the country. Help me to promote, initiate, and support these restorations. More importantly, as leaders of the national conservation movement you have an obligation to get involved.

It is not enough to simply stop the decline, we must reverse it. It is not enough to preserve the isolated parts but to reconnect entire landscapes and watersheds. It is not enough just to fence off the local greenway or trickling neighborhood stream, but to unite them with public lands, national forests, state and national parks and the wide oceanbound rivers.

#### CHANGIN TRENDS

Daniel Botkin, author of *Our Natural History*, tells about the engineer who spent a year of his life building a bridge over the Missouri River and the rest of his career trying to keep the river under the bridge. I think that sometimes reflects our response to change. We say, "Well, that doesn't really jibe with how it used to be or how I came up through the system." So we ignore - or lament - the changes and act surprised when we find our bridges no longer cross our rivers and we find ourselves submerged in controversy.

I thought of that erstwhile engineer as I examined some recent Forest Service trends.

As this chart shows, in the past ten years, timber harvest on federal lands has gone from approximately 11 billion board feet to 4 billion. Federal lands used to supply 25% of the nation's soft wood saw timber; today they supply about 10%.

At the same time, other uses of national forests are growing rapidly.

For example, looking at another chart, in 1980, 560 million recreational visits were made to national forests. That figure grew to about 860 million by 1996. Recreation on Forest Service managed lands contributes \$112 billion dollars to state economies and local communities each year.

Our record of commodity production, is not something to be ashamed of; quite the contrary. Timber from Forest Service managed lands helped build homes for service men and their families after World War II. It

fueled the industrial growth of this nation. It helped to sustain economies and resource dependent communities.

Today, however, society's priorities are shifting. Our management priorities must keep pace with our scientific knowledge of ecological systems and society's values. Our challenge is to link our processes, rewards, and incentives to the health of the land, to places where we intersect with society's needs. If we do not, then when specific programs falter - when society's values shift - the agency suffers.

I need the support of the conservation community to help make watershed health, ecosystem health, the health of the land - whatever we call it - the driving force behind public land management. The production of commodities such as timber will remain an important use of national forest lands. But we cannot allow production to diminish the land's productive capacity.

Rather than spending our time in pitched battle over individual and controversial timber sales, how can we best leverage our resources to assist local restoration coalitions? To assure that they are proceeding in an ecological manner?

How can we expand our work to assist private landowners, who own 70% of the nation's forestland?

How can we more effectively communicate our conservation message to the 80% of Americans who live in urban areas and who increasingly will influence both the ecological health and management priorities of national forests and grasslands. This is our largest and most rapidly growing support base.

All of the goods and services that we provide to the American people are dependent on healthy lands and waters. I have identified the following as the top resource priorities for this agency.

Restoring and maintaining water quality and quantity.

Restoring and maintaining riparian health.

Restoring forest ecosystem health.

Maintaining and restoring rangeland ecosystem health.

Promoting responsible recreation use, and

Expanding partnerships.

In the next few years, we have a unique opportunity to implement these priorities. For example, over the next three years, 78 forest plans - plans for fully one half of our forests and grasslands - will be revised. Get involved in the planning process.

I am asking for your help in getting these priorities implemented. Work with us - for too long we have sat at opposite sides of the table. The bottom line is that we are both more effective - as conservationists and land managers - when we work together. Let's begin today.

Remarks of Mike Dombeck, Chief of the USDA Forest Service  
Outdoor Writers Association of America  
Public Lands Forum  
June 24, 1997

Several weeks ago, I visited the DeSoto National Forest in Mississippi to celebrate National Fishing Week and the restoration of Turkey Fork Lake. I stood by the water and watched small boys with stringers of catfish nearly half their size, men working long cane poles for bream, and bass fishermen carefully releasing their hard won quarry.

I asked an elderly man the universal question. "Catch anything?" He smiled and shook his head. "No. But when I go fishing, even though I may have an empty stringer, I always leave with a full heart." Those words perfectly capture what conservation and public land stewardship are all about.

The restoration of Turkey Fork Lake is a perfect example of how private groups and state and federal government can work together for the benefit of the American people. Were it not for the concerted efforts of Forest Service employees, the State, the Mississippi Sport Fishing Foundation, and the Greene County Board of Supervisors, Turkey Fork would be a dying resource today. Instead, it is now a tremendous fishery capable of serving local fishing demands and those of people who live in the rapidly growing cities of Biloxi, Gulfport, and Jackson.

What happened at Turkey Fork demonstrates how people of good will can come together to restore the health of their lands and waters. This is no only ecologically sensible, it is fiscally prudent as well. In 1980, 560 million recreational visits were made to national forests. That figure grew to about 860 million by 1996. Recreation on Forest Service managed lands contributes \$112 billion dollars to state economies and local communities each year.

One in three Americans fish on national forest lands. Half of the nation's threatened, endangered and candidate aquatic species occur on Forest Service lands. These same lands provide habitat for 80% of

the elk, mountain goat, and bighorn sheep in the lower 48 states. Forest Service lands provide habitat for over 250 migratory birds and 5.4 million acres of waterfowl habitat.

These values extend from the land to directly influence the lives and well being of communities all across the country.

Consider our eastern forests. At one time, they were little more than cutover wastelands and farmed-out dustbowls. Today they contain wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, and countless recreation opportunities.

Consider our state and private forestry program. Over the past five years, we have worked with States to provide more than \$40 million in financial assistance to private landowners to restore the health and productivity of private forests.

Consider our research program. Technological increases – many of, which were made possible by Forest Service research – have allowed for a projected recycling rate for paper products of about 40% by the year 2000. If we increase the use of recycled fibers in paper to 45% and in housing materials to 20% we could offset timber harvest by about 1.5 billion cubic feet per year – enough wood to build approximately 800,000 homes.

Major social and demographic changes are occurring across the nation. In the past ten years, timber harvest on federal lands has gone from approximately 11 billion board feet to 4 billion. Public land management priorities must keep pace with our scientific knowledge of ecological systems and society's values. Our challenge is to link our processes, rewards, and incentives to the health of the land, to places where we intersect with societies needs and values.

Our challenge is to make watershed health, ecosystem health, the health of the land – whatever you wish to call it – our driving force. The production of commodities such as timber will remain an important use of national forest lands; these are the things that make multiple use agencies unique and relevant. But we cannot allow production to diminish the land's productive capacity.

I would like your help to begin a national dialogue. How can we more effectively communicate a conservation message to the 80% of Americans who live in urban areas and who increasingly will influence both the ecological health and management priorities of national forests and grasslands.

Rather than spending our time in pitched battle over individual and controversial timber sales, how can we best leverage our resources to assist local restoration coalitions? To assure that they are proceeding in an ecological manner?

How can we accommodate growing recreation usage of public lands before the mountainside is terraced by tire tracks?

How can we better protect rare fishes before excessive grazing puts the stream bank in the stream course?

We can only answer these questions and respond to our other challenges by working together. We are a nation of communities. Communities that work together adapt to changing conditions. Communities that work together thrive and retain a strong sense of identity.

Our collective challenge as resource professionals, outdoor writers, and conservationists is to redirect the debate back to those things that draw us together as a nation of communities. We must counter rhetoric with reason, meet ideology with common sense.

Given the opportunity, people *will* work together to protect the land's health. Not unreasonably, you may wonder how I could hold this position, given all of the natural resource controversies in Washington, D.C. Well, the fact is that for most Americans, environmental protection is less a political issue than it is a public trust.

Conservation is a uniquely American proposition – one that has thankfully taken root in many parts of the world. Our collective effort to conserve and restore the health of our lands and waters reflects deeply held beliefs. Conservation is another way of saying that ours is a way of life worth passing on, that we respect the gifts our

forefathers handed down, and that surely we are leaving a better place for those whom will follow.

As former Senator Clinton Anderson of New Mexico put it,

Conservation is to a democratic government by free men as the roots of a tree are to its leaves. We must be willing wisely to nurture and use our resources if we are going to keep visible the inner strengths of democracy. For as we have and hold dear our practices of conservation, we say to the other peoples of the world ... that we are still a rich nation, tending our resources as we should—not a people in despair searching every last nook and cranny of our land for a board of lumber, a barrel of oil, a blade of grass, or a tank of water.

That is precisely what Secretary Babbitt meant when he talked about the importance of *Bring Back the Natives*. But in order to understand fully the importance of that program:

- You have to leave the confines of places such as Washington and visit the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona where we are working to restore habitat for four rare native fishes.
- You have to witness the largemouth bass habitat improvement work of the Fish and Wildlife Service in Kirwin, Kansas.
- You have to see the Book Cliffs of Utah and appreciate the ongoing restoration of the native Colorado River cutthroat trout.

In all, *Bring Back the Natives* through the program's sponsor, the National Fish and Wildlife Federation, funds 44 projects benefiting over 183 rare aquatic species.

And it begins and ends in the community. Some of you may know that two colleagues — one from the Forest Service and the other from the Bureau of Land Management — and I are completing a book on watershed restoration. In it, we trace a number of restoration case studies — lessons from watersheds and communities such as the

Henrys Fork in Idaho, the Crooked River in Bend, Oregon, and Bear Creek in Iowa.

The book depicts places where people realized, and acted on, the need to reconnect their social and economic culture to the land that sustains them. All across the country, people are awakening to the fact that we can use our laws — lend our voices and backs — to conserve and restore our lands and waters.

It is not enough to simply stop the decline, we must reverse it; not enough to preserve the isolated parts but to reconnect entire landscapes and watersheds; not enough just to create a local greenway or clean a neighborhood stream, but to unite them with public lands, national forests, state and national parks and the wide, ocean-bound rivers. As Aldo Leopold said “the only progress that counts is that on the actual landscape of the back forty.”

Most of the restorations developed locally; all involve local landowners, farmers, and ranchers working in partnership with anglers, scientists, environmentalists, government agencies, and a host of local citizens to restore their lands. It calls to mind the words of the cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

What will be the measure of our stewardship? How will our children view our care of their legacy that we hold in trust? My hope is that this nation will have the courage, commitment, and foresight to bequeath to them the greatest free gift we can offer — healthy, diverse, and productive public lands.

Thanks for being here today. Thanks for your continued support of public lands and waters.

Remarks of Mike Dombek  
International Flyfishing Championship, Jackson Hole, Wyoming  
Conservation Symposium  
September 8, 1997

As a fisheries biologist and someone who spent 11 summers guiding in the beautiful Wisconsin lake country, I am extremely pleased to be here. I've learned that guiding for muskies and fly-casting for trout are very skills. When I was guiding for muskies, the first challenge was to avoid being hit on errant back-casts by the large suckers – and I'm talking about the fish here – that we used for bait.

It is with a sense of both pride and humility that I speak to you today. Pride, because of all the places in the world to hold the 17<sup>th</sup> annual International Flyfishing Championship and Conservation Symposium, national forest lands were chosen. I would hope that this speaks to our success in meeting our mission of "caring for the land and serving people."

I am humbled, not only because of the enormous fishing skill of the people here today but because of all of your lifetime commitments to conservation. I'm thinking about people such as:

- Ed Oppler, the Team USA Captain;
- Joe Humphries, who actually taught fly fishing at Penn State for 19 years – what a job!
- Whit Fosburgh of that great fisheries' conservation organization, Trout Unlimited;
- Elizabeth Storer-Fasset of the Wyoming Outdoor Council; and
- Other members and Team USA volunteers.

We wouldn't be here today were it not for the largess of corporate sponsors such as PHIPS-MOUCHÉ, Mitsubishi, Halliburton, Merrill Lynch, Union Pacific Railroad, DHL Worldwide Express, Omega World Travel, and Columbia Sportswear. Not only are these corporations captains of industry, the environmental ethics that led them to sponsor these events set a standard other corporation should aspire to.

I was told that several of the competing nation's were reluctant to participate in a fly fishing event that did not supplement a native fishery with hatchery fish. Their concern was that a native fishery could not possibly produce enough fish to support an international competition. Well, I think we proved them wrong, no?

As I stood on the banks of the Greys River staring up at the mountains and down through the canyons below, I thought of a favorite quote from A Flyfisherman's Blue Ridge, by Christopher Camuto. It reads:

If the mountains can be said to have a consciousness it is to be found in these trout – brilliant glacial vestiges finning up-current into the cold, well-oxygenated water of higher

elevations. They are an old sign. The rivers erode the mountains. The mountains become soil and vegetation, become insects and forage fish, become trout. The trout are the mountains' final idea. Hence their elaborate, indescribable color, for which even the stoic passion of spawning cannot account.

Although the Blue Ridge Mountains are in the southeastern United States, the author's words, as I think you all would attest after this week, resonate no matter where we fish, no matter where we live.

Fish are the ultimate indicator of a healthy watershed. And what Camuto's wonderful passage describes is how a watershed functions. Watersheds catch, store and safely release water.

We all live within a watershed. And though he speaks specifically of fish, he just as easily could have reminded us that healthy watersheds produce sustainable supplies of wood products, clean water, recreational opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitats.

Healthy watersheds retain historic flows and are resilient in the face of natural events such as floods, fire, and drought and more capable of absorbing the effects of human-induced disturbances. They connect headwaters to downstream areas, wetlands and riparian areas to uplands, and subsurface to surface flows. Floods may then dissipate across floodplains increasing soil fertility and minimizing damage to lives, property, and the stream itself.

The point I'm trying to make is simple. We simply cannot meet the needs of people if we do not first secure the health of our watersheds.

This point is borne out by the experience of the Snake River Project here in Wyoming. For 20 years, the Forest Service has worked with the Department of Game and Fish, the Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation groups such as Trout Unlimited, and most importantly, private landowners to restore native populations of fine spotted cutthroat trout.

For example, several large ranches in the area have changed seasons of use, timing, and duration of grazing on private lands to protect the spring creeks that flow into the Snake. Since 1988, these and other collaborative conservation efforts have helped to increase by six-fold the number of fine spotted cutthroat redds.

This message of the good that we can do when corporations such as those that sponsored this event, public and state agencies, academia, and conservation interests come together is repeated over and over again in *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices* (due for release by the American Fisheries Society in 1997).

This book, co-edited by Jack Williams of the Bureau of Land Management, Chris Wood of the Forest Service, and myself, documents thirteen case-studies here people came together to conserve and restore the health of the land that sustains us all.

Most of these efforts developed locally; all involve local landowners, farmers, and ranchers working in partnership with scientists, environmentalists, government agencies, and a host of local citizens.

Two case studies are illustrative. Three thousand miles separate the heavily urbanized Anacostia River watershed – much of which lays in the nation’s capital – from the more rural Mattole watershed in northern California. The Anacostia has been called one of the most polluted rivers in the country; the ecosystem robbed of its most basic functions by channelization, riparian and wetland loss, forest removal, sewer overflows, and other pollution.

The headwaters of the Mattole begin among stands of coastal redwoods and flow through Douglas fir-hardwood forests before emptying into the Pacific Ocean near Petrolia, California. Following World War II, more than 90% of the watershed’s old growth coniferous forests were logged and an extensive road network developed. Moreover little reforestation was attempted. As a result, by 1980, erosion rates in the watershed exceeded the typical rate of soil formation by more than two orders of magnitude.

The fact that land use practices and past management actions have degraded the two river systems is not unusual. Fewer than 2% of the rivers and streams in the contiguous 48 states remain in a “high quality state.” What links the Mattole and the Anacostia is that restoration efforts in both watersheds are bringing people together to restore their lands and waters, and through the process of restoration are rebuilding their surrounding communities.

The author Barry Lopez has a wonderful quote that I think perfectly captures both the social and ecological values of restoration. He says:

Restoration work is not fixing beautiful machinery, replacing stolen parts, adding fresh lubricants, cobbling and welding and rewiring. It is accepting an abandoned responsibility. It is a humble and often joyful mending of biological ties, with a hope clearly recognized. That working from this foundation we might, too, begin to mend human society.

Collaborative watershed approaches – such as the Snake River project and those depicted in *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices* – are not a panacea to resolving difficult resource issues. Three principles are critical to the success of any successful community-based project or resource coalition.

First, community-based watershed groups must be balanced among the full array of users and diversity of interests.

Second, they should immediately identify a shared vision or a collective goal for conserving or restoring healthy watersheds.

Third, collaboration is a process not an outcome. It should never be used to abrogate decisionmaking responsibilities – whether they rest with federal, state or even private landowners. The measure of success of any community-based approach is better decisions on

the land and improved working relationships among interests. Effective, long and short-term monitoring is essential.

As Lopez reminds us, equally important to the ecological benefits of restoration is the fact that like the barn raisings of old, it helps to reunite communities and reconnect people to the health of the land that sustains them.

Our collective efforts to restore the health of our lands and waters reflects our inherent optimism – a belief that ours is a way of life worth passing on, that we respect the gifts of those who came before, and that we are leaving a better place for those we know will follow. These are the essence of watershed restoration, and as a former Forest Service employee, Aldo Leopold, might have said, a basic requirement of membership in the land community.

[27 JULY 1997]

## CHIEF'S CLOSING THOUGHTS

As I said in my opening, what we are proposing here today is not the unveiling of something new to us as human beings. It is basic stuff. It is about doing better at the people side of what we are about. We need to take the time to make this work for the Forest Service. As discussed before, there are many recommendations which have been or will be put into action by implementation teams. You and I must work to deliver, integrate, and communicate these ideas to our people proactively and positively. I expect things to be different because of this effort.

- Our employees will expect a consistent and strong commitment to civil rights from the leaders of the Forest Service every single day.
- People will know that the Forest Service is an agency with a commitment to assuring that they are treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.

- Through agency-wide training and clear communication of civil rights policies, everyone in the Forest Service will understand the importance of valuing diversity and, again, treating others fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
- As an agency, we will reach out to people and communities we have not focused on in the past.
- We will build strong relationships internally and externally.
- We will seek to communicate better and assure that we put special effort into connecting with everyone who can benefit from our services.
- We must be willing to listen to people's concerns and deal with issues early on.
- We must make sure that unacceptable behavior or actions are stopped immediately.

- We will all be held accountable for meeting all of our responsibilities in civil rights and through monitoring and self-evaluation will know how we are doing.
- You, as leaders, must set the example for others to follow.

Every employee in the Forest Service must understand the critical importance of the people side of our mission. Every employee must treat every co-worker and customer fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect. This is very simple, and it is also very important. It is the right thing to do and will make us more effective. Working for the Forest Service should be a special experience for all of us. It should be personally fulfilling and professionally rewarding.

In closing, I want to thank you for being here, for listening, and for your leadership of this agency. I want you also to recognize the many people who have contributed and continue to work directly on this effort. Please take time when you go back to seek these folks out at all levels of the organization -- from the Regions, Stations, the Area and Institute, and the Washington Office and tell them we appreciate their efforts.

There have been many folks involved on Department teams and on our own teams on CRAT implementation and unit assessments, as well as the ongoing work by our civil rights and human resource staffs throughout the organization. There have been many days of work by these people and their energy has been concentrated on how we can become a better, more caring organization. Thanks to those who helped!

## CHIEF'S EXPECTATION, OUR CHALLENGE

Our work as stewards of much of this country's natural resources requires that we be very good at business management, people management, and resource management. We're here today to talk about civil rights - which is a major part of the people side -, but in reality all three are woven together and interconnected.

Managing natural resources, especially in the public sector, requires us to be open and fair, to appreciate different values and ideas, and to listen and have the ability to compromise. Management of our people requires no less. Fairness is key!

Fair treatment is not new to the Forest Service. Our first Chief, Gifford Pinchot, recognized this and held strong beliefs on human rights issues. Both he and his wife, Cornelia, were known for their leadership and commitment to treating all people fairly. He wrote in *Breaking New Ground* in 1946 that:

The rightful use and purpose of our natural resources is to make all the people strong and well, able and wise, well-taught, well-clothed, well-housed, full of knowledge and initiative, with equal opportunity for all and special privilege for none.

The agency is going through some of our greatest challenges in managing resources and having credibility with the people we serve. We have similar challenges with our own people.

What we do, or want to do, in managing forests and grasslands is questioned harder than we have ever experienced by interests from all sides, by many of our publics, by the Administration, and by the Congress. Likewise, there are questions from our employees about what we do, or what we want to do, in management of the organization.

We find ourselves struggling with the complexities of managing a workforce that, while not yet at parity, more closely resembles the world in which we live. Sometimes the workforce appears to be splintered with groups competing for

position and favor. Discrimination complaints have increased and resolution has become more difficult as sorting out "who is right" is not all that clear.

These are challenging times, but they are also times for great changes and taking advantage of the moment. These are times that offer us great chances to be true leaders of the Forest Service. It is a time for leadership. I think this is the first time a Chief has spoken directly with so many of you in leadership roles throughout the country about an issue as important to us as civil rights and I am pleased that you are here.

Just as our success, in working with communities as stewards of public land rests on our willingness to respect one another's perspectives, so to does our success on the people side rest with our ability to work together.

That working together, or collaboration, requires that we understand one another, that we care about one another, that we help one another, and that we respect one another. This is true for all of us who share offices, who work on crews together, who bring our individuality to teams, and who communicate constantly in person or on the net. It is also true of those we serve---our

partners, our permittees and contractors, and those who trust and depend on us as an agency.

Some of the most perplexing problems we face are those internal ones that we probably have the greatest potential to turn around on our own without outside help. The work and findings of the Department of Agriculture's review of civil rights, released by the Secretary earlier this year, makes it clear that perhaps the most important task we face is to significantly improve in civil rights. No matter where we have been, what we have intended, or what else we do, we need major improvements in our civil rights program.

I am here today because it is essential that each and everyone of us understand the importance of civil rights, reconnect with what we stand for, and remember who we, in the Forest Service, represent. It is essential to our leadership's success. This week as I meet with Forest Service leaders in resources, administration, State and Private, and Research from the west to the east and from the north to the south, it is critical that we all understand the importance of adjusting and accepting a different level of responsibility for the changes that need to take place. We are being asked, and you personally are

being asked by me, to demonstrate we indeed are leaders in civil rights as well.

Everyone of you need to realize that this message is for you. It is not for someone else, not just for a few, not for just the civil rights staffs, not just line officers. This is about you and me---each and every one of us. We each have responsibility for the civil rights program and we need to own it together. We must ignite a spirit and energy to capture the many diverse talents, skills, and unique opportunities that a diverse, and highly valued, workforce has to offer.

This meeting is not about blaming, finding fault, or pointing fingers. As John F. Kennedy once said, "Our task now is not to fix blame for the past, but to fix the course for the future." It is about some soul searching and about straight talk. We have all had plenty of opportunity to listen to or read the Secretary's recent Civil Rights Action Team report. It would be easy to read about the problems which it spoke to and look to other places, to other agencies, and to other parts of the country and say to ourselves, "it isn't, wasn't, couldn't be, us." But I think we need to recognize that it is about us and we need to get beyond the defensiveness and move on to the acceptance that things aren't

always what they should be---and now is a time to begin making those things right.

The Secretary has set the example and has expressed his commitment and desire to make big changes in how we treat one another. These changes in USDA policy and direction affect what all agencies will do and how we will do it. The Forest Service is the largest agency in the Department of Agriculture and how well we make this transition and adjust to it will determine how successful our agency and Department will be in the years ahead.

We need to objectively look at the past in order to chart a course for the future. Our challenge is to learn from the past. Our past actions reflect on what we are as the USDA-Forest Service. Listening and reading what people have to say about us leaves no doubt that we're not necessarily viewed by others as we see ourselves.

The Secretary of Agriculture learned from employees and the public that discrimination was occurring in USDA agencies. The Secretary heard the

Forest Service described as one of those USDA agencies that discriminates openly, without accountability or consequence.

- The backlog of EEO complaints can be used to some extent as a measure of how we are doing or where we need to concentrate our energies. We hope that in the future we will be able to resolve issues earlier, expedite processes, fairly and equitably deal with complaints about civil rights and never have to mobilize another complaint backlog team again.
- Sexual harassment still occurs too often in the workplace. We will not tolerate this.
- Our workforce does not yet reflect the diversity of our society or of the public we serve. We need to continue to aggressively move ahead with our efforts to eliminate the underrepresentation which that exists.
- Work environment and employee trust are viewed by some as having declined as we have gone through major adjustments in programs and

downsizing governmentwide. These were some of our past strengths and we must rekindle the atmosphere which many of us remember well.

- Too many of our recreation and administrative facilities remain inaccessible to people with disabilities. No one should be denied access to the information and services we provide.
- We have been remiss in providing minority communities with information that would encourage their participation in our agency's programs.
- There have been many allegations of reprisals against employees and even one actual instance of this is too many.

These are but some examples of how we are judged, how others see us, or what we need to change.

In reflecting on the past, we must also reflect on our successes. There are many, many positive things happening that need to keep happening. I know there are many Forest Service units who are reaching out to minority and underserved communities; ensuring decisions are not discriminatory; working hard to remove physical barriers to public access. As an agency, we have not done a good job at highlighting what we're doing well. We take pride in our "can do" legacy. The Forest Service developed the "Toward a Multicultural Organization" report in 1991. It was clearly a very progressive approach and we need to still use it as our framework for becoming a multicultural organization. We must keep working from that framework.

The Continuous Improvement Process, which was started as a result of the "Toward a Multicultural Organization" work, is now in its second year and we have made improvements which will allow us to better take our organization's pulse. In many areas, I believe the Forest Service has been a leader in Civil

Rights. Likewise, there are many of you and many of your employees who have been leaders in demonstrating the principles and ideals we seek.

However, I do not believe we have done all we could or should do. We've lost our edge on being perceived as a "caring organization" by some. It's time that we reconnect with ourselves and others because I know, and you know, that we do care, and that it's the right thing to do.

We must strengthen relationships to change the negative opinion that our employees and the public have of us. We must communicate with them; that means listen, listen, listen. We must accept feedback as an opportunity to improve and not react to it defensively. Trust is the cornerstone of these relationships. Trust is developed when we do what we say we are going to do.

We have chosen the theme "new direction **and** new opportunities" to describe the improvements we want to make in how we meet our civil rights responsibilities. We will view USDA's new direction as a new opportunity to improve our work environment and to serve the public better in many different ways.

We have opportunities to:

- Demonstrate our commitment by our actions
- Communicate clearly and meaningfully
- Re-focus long-standing principles of building relationships based on dignity and mutual respect
- Reconnect with our employees and customers
- Work strategically on the big picture of the future and not just implement isolated recommendations

- Expand our competencies
- Listen---to learn, and to lead
- Integrate civil rights into all programs, and
- Know that we will be held accountable for achieving results, for our actions---and our inactions.

I ask you to embrace these opportunities. Doing so will make us a more competitive, more effective, and more efficient workforce. Forest Service credibility, and ultimately, our future as an agency are on the line. Today we begin to build a work environment that will make us stronger than ever.

Now let me stop so you can hear from some other folks about our specific recommendations.