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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

[20 MARCH 1998]
14th & Independence SW
P. O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1010

Date:

Honorable Philip E. Batt
Office of Governor
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Batt:

Thank you again for taking the time to visit with me on February 10, 1998. I appreciate your directness and candor concerning National Forest issues in Idaho. In the future, my staff and I will make every effort to discuss and inform you of proposals and decisions at the earliest possible time.

During our meeting you brought up the question of the proposed 18-month interim suspension on road construction in roadless areas, and the relationship of the proposal to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem. Both proposals are subject to public comment until March 30, 1998.

We believe that ^{the} new long-term roads policy is necessary to help us work with local communities so that we make more informed decisions on: when and where to build roads; how to decommission unneeded roads; ~~selectively~~ upgrading roads to meet changing public use and ~~rural~~ access needs; and finding sustainable sources of funding for future road management. *left*

Roads are, of course, vital to public lands access and management, but sometimes roads cause adverse ecological impacts, especially with water. The public needs such a transportation system for the safe, affordable, efficient use of forest lands with minimum ecological impacts.

While we develop a long-term roads policy, ^{the Forest Service is} ~~can~~ proposing a "time out" on road construction in roadless areas. This suspension is proposed to be in effect for 18 months or until new analytical tools are developed to help land managers make appropriate decisions about when and if to build roads in roadless areas, which ever comes first.

The proposed long-term road policy and the interim roadless proposal have nothing to do with the proposed reintroduction of grizzly bears in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem under an "experimental non-essential" status as proposed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grizzly bear draft EIS. The need to address roads stems from issues such as lack of funding to maintain the existing road system, water quality, conservation of fish and wildlife resources, costs of construction and long-term maintenance, human health and safety, and access for recreation, and other uses of the National Forests.



Caring for the Land and Serving People

Printed on Recycled Paper



I expect a final EIS on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem, when issued, would discuss the effects of the Forest Service long-term road management policy and the interim proposal. The draft EIS includes an appendix (Appendix 10) which discusses the current forest plan policies for road management. It concludes, "... the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agency biologists reached consensus that current forest plan standards meet or exceed present grizzly bear road density guidelines over much of the Bitterroot Evaluation Area, and therefore are adequate to assure security for grizzly bears within this landscape." It is unlikely that a long-term road policy and interim proposal for the National Forests would change that conclusion.

I hope this information is helpful. I truly appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date: MAR 20 1998

Honorable Philip E. Batt
Office of Governor
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Batt:

Thank you again for taking the time to visit with me on February 10, 1998. I appreciate your directness and candor concerning National Forest issues in Idaho. In the future, my staff and I will make every effort to discuss and inform you of proposals and decisions at the earliest possible time.

During our meeting you brought up the question of the proposed 18-month interim suspension on road construction in roadless areas, and the relationship of the proposal to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem. Both proposals are subject to public comment until March 30, 1998.

We believe that a new long-term roads policy is necessary to help us work with local communities so that we make more informed decisions on: when and where to build roads; how to decommission unneeded roads; selectively upgrading roads to meet changing public use and rural access needs; and finding sustainable sources of funding for future road management.

Roads are, of course, vital to public lands access and management, but sometimes roads cause adverse ecological impacts, especially with water. The public needs such a transportation system for the safe, affordable, efficient use of forest lands with minimum ecological impacts.

While we develop a long-term roads policy I am proposing a "time out" on road construction in roadless areas. This suspension is proposed to be in effect for 18 months or until new analytical tools are developed to help land managers make appropriate decisions about when and if to build roads in roadless areas, whichever comes first.

The need to address roads stems from issues such as lack of funding to maintain the existing road system, water quality, conservation of fish and wildlife resources, costs of construction and long-term maintenance, human health and safety, and access for recreation, and other uses of the National Forests.



I expect a final EIS on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem, when issued, would discuss the effects of the Forest Service long-term road management policy and the interim proposal. The draft EIS includes an appendix (Appendix 10) which discusses the current forest plan policies for road management. It concludes, "... the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agency biologists reached consensus that current forest plan standards meet or exceed present grizzly bear road density guidelines over much of the Bitterroot Evaluation Area, and therefore are adequate to assure security for grizzly bears within this landscape." It is unlikely that a long-term road policy and interim proposal for the National Forests would change that conclusion.

I hope this information is helpful. I truly appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

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

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

DRAFT

The Honorable Philip E. Batt
Office of Governor
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Batt:

Thank you again for taking the time to visit with me on February 10, 1998. I appreciate your directness and candor concerning National Forest issues in Idaho. In the future, my staff and I will make every effort to discuss and inform you of proposals and decisions at the earliest possible time.

During our meeting you brought up the question of the proposed 18-month interim suspension on road construction in roadless areas, and the relationship of the proposal to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem. Both proposals are subject to public comment until March 30, 1998.

We believe that ^anew long-term roads policy is necessary to help us work with local communities so that we make more informed decisions on: when and where to build roads; how to decommission unneeded roads; selectively upgrading roads to meet changing public use and rural access needs; and finding sustainable sources of funding for future road management.

Roads are, of course, vital to public lands access and management, but sometimes roads cause adverse ecological impacts, especially with water. The public needs such a transportation system for the safe, affordable, efficient use of forest lands with minimum ecological impacts.

While we develop a long-term roads policy I am proposing a "time out" on road construction in roadless areas. This suspension is proposed to be in effect for 18 months or until new analytical tools are developed to help land managers make appropriate decisions about when and if to build roads in roadless areas, which ever comes first.

Conservation of fish and wildlife resources

The proposed long-term road policy and the interim roadless proposal have nothing to do with the proposed reintroduction of grizzly bears in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem under a ~~proposed~~ "experimental non-essential" status as proposed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grizzly bear draft EIS. The need to address roads stems from issues such as lack of funding to maintain the existing road system, water quality, costs of construction and long-term maintenance, human health and safety, and access for recreation, and other uses of the National Forests.

I ~~would~~ expect a final EIS on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem, when issued, would discuss the effects of the Forest Service long-term road management policy and the interim proposal. The draft EIS ~~already~~ includes an appendix (Appendix 10) which discusses the current forest plan policies for road management. It concludes, "... the Fish and Wildlife Service and

I expect a final EIS on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem, when issued, would discuss the effects of the Forest Service long-term road management policy and the interim proposal. The draft EIS includes an appendix (Appendix 10) which discusses the current forest plan policies for road management. It concludes, "... the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agency biologists reached consensus that current forest plan standards meet or exceed present grizzly bear road density guidelines over much of the Bitterroot Evaluation Area, and therefore are adequate to assure security for grizzly bears within this landscape." It is unlikely that a long-term road policy and interim proposal for the National Forests would change that conclusion.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ORIGINATING UNIT

DATE

CORRESPONDENCE
CLEARANCE SLIP

AUTHOR

FILE

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this form to route correspondence for clearance and signature. Indicate by "X" the action to be taken by each staff officer listed. Show any special instructions, comments or explanations in the space provided. List attachments to accompany material so they will not be overlooked.

	NAME	ROOM NO.	INITIAL	SIGN	RELEASE
1.	Dackie	4NW	DB		
2.	Chris	"	✓	CW	CW
3.	Leslie	"	✓	P	L
4.	Dona	"	✓		L
5.	Chief	"	✓		Edits
6.					See
7.					note
8.					below
9.					

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS, COMMENTS, ETC.:

[] ATTACHMENTS:

File

Correspondence
Bath's letter 1

Signature

show to
Leslie.Make sure CC &
his copy and send.(Does WIRE need to see?)
Ask Leslie - HUS



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

Honorable Philip E. Batt
Office of Governor
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

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While we develop a long-term roads policy I am proposing a "time out" on road construction in roadless areas. This suspension is proposed to be in effect for 18 months or until new analytical tools are developed to help land managers make appropriate decisions about when and if to build roads in roadless areas, which ever comes first.

The need to address roads stems from issues such as lack of funding to maintain the existing road system, water quality, conservation of fish and wildlife resources, costs of construction and long-term maintenance, human health and safety, and access for recreation, and other uses of the National Forests. ←



other agency biologists reached consensus that current forest plan standards meet or exceed present grizzly bear road density guidelines over much of the Bitterroot Evaluation Area, and therefore are adequate to assure security for grizzly bears within this landscape." ^{It is} ~~Based on that conclusion, it appears~~ unlikely ~~to me~~ that a long-term road policy and interim proposal for the National Forests would ~~not~~ change ~~that~~ results.
Conclusion

I hope this information is helpful. I truly appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

Honorable Philip E. Batt
Office of Governor
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

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We believe that the new long-term roads policy is necessary to help us work with local communities so that we make more informed decisions on: when and where to build roads; how to decommission unneeded roads; upgrading roads to meet changing public use and rural access needs; and finding sustainable sources of funding for future road management.

Roads are, of course, vital to public lands access and management, but sometimes roads cause adverse ecological impacts, especially with water. The public needs such a transportation system for the safe, affordable, efficient use of forest lands with minimum ecological impacts.

While we develop a long-term roads policy, the Forest Service is proposing a "time out" on road construction in roadless areas. This suspension is proposed to be in effect for 18 months or until new analytical tools are developed to help land managers make appropriate decisions about when and if to build roads in roadless areas, which ever comes first.

delete ~~While roadless is not a threat to grizzly bear habitat~~
~~The proposed long-term road policy and the interim roadless proposal have nothing to do with the proposed reintroduction of grizzly bears in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem under an "experimental non-essential" status as proposed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grizzly bear draft EIS. The need to address roads stems from issues such as lack of funding to maintain the existing road system, water quality, conservation of fish and wildlife resources, costs of construction and long-term maintenance, human health and safety, and access for recreation, and other uses of the National Forests.~~

*are unrelated to
not intended
specifically to affect*



I expect a final EIS on grizzly bear recovery in the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem, when issued, would discuss the effects of the Forest Service long-term road management policy and the interim proposal. The draft EIS includes an appendix (Appendix 10) which discusses the current forest plan policies for road management. It concludes, "... the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agency biologists reached consensus that current forest plan standards meet or exceed present grizzly bear road density guidelines over much of the Bitterroot Evaluation Area, and therefore are adequate to assure security for grizzly bears within this landscape." It is unlikely that a long-term road policy and interim proposal for the National Forests would change that conclusion.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1600
Route To:

Date:

MAR 20 1998

Subject: Capitol Holiday Tree 1997

To: Glen McNitt, Black Hills National Forest
Thru: Regional Forester, R-2

This year's 1997 America's Holiday Tree was a wonderful success, from the cutting at Little Spearfish Canyon on the Black Hills National Forest in western South Dakota to the lighting on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol.

That success was due, in large part, to your professionalism and positive attitude. Whether it was helping to deliver trees to Capitol Hill and USDA, working with Congressional staffers to organize the receptions, looking for ways to promote South Dakota, or the many hours of detailed planning--your performance was superior!

You demonstrated the ability to be highly organized, remained flexible under continuously changing and sometimes stressful conditions, worked well with a wide variety of people, and remained cheerful and energetic throughout your detail.

The Forest Service benefits greatly from your skills and ability. It was a pleasure to have you visit Washington, D.C., and participate in the Capitol Holiday Tree events.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1830
Route To: 1830

Date: MAR 20 1998

Subject: Chief's Volunteers Program National Awards--1998

To:

As we celebrate National Volunteer Week, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations on your selection as an awardee for the 1998 Chief's Volunteers Program National Award.

It is impossible to measure or overestimate the importance, usefulness, and value of the volunteer work accomplished and the public service provided by volunteers. In light of the existing budget constraints under which we operate, your personal contribution has added immeasurable benefits to this agency. Your caring, unselfish attitude and dedication have allowed us to provide a quality of service to the public and care for the land that otherwise would never have been possible. Because of your service, we are more readily able to accomplish our mission.

In recognition of your exemplary service, it is my pleasure to present you with the enclosed plaque. Your service is commendable and you exemplify what the Forest Service stands for, "Caring for the Land and Serving People." You can look at your volunteer service with the Forest Service with satisfaction and pride.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1830
Route To: 1830

Date: MAR 20 1998

Subject: Chief's Volunteers Programs National Awards--1998

To:

In celebration of National Volunteer Week, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you for your volunteer service to the Forest Service.

It is impossible to measure or overestimate the importance, usefulness, and value of the volunteer work accomplished and the public service provided by volunteers. In light of the existing budget constraints under which we operate, your personal contribution has added immeasurable benefits to this agency. Your caring, unselfish attitude and dedication have allowed us to provide a quality of service to the public and care for the land that otherwise would never have been possible. Because of your service, we are more readily able to accomplish our mission.

In recognition of your outstanding service, it is my pleasure to present you with the enclosed certificate. Your service is commendable and you exemplify what the Forest Service stands for, "Caring for the Land and Serving People." You can look at your volunteer service with the Forest Service with satisfaction and pride.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date: MAR 20 1998

Honorable Diane Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510-0504

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. Secretary Glickman asked me to respond to your letter. I apologize for the delay in my response.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We agree that open and honest communication is essential to the success of public processes. We appreciate your comments and suggestions. We will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

MAR 20 1998

Honorable Barbara Cubin
U.S. House of Representatives
1114 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-5001

Dear Congresswoman Cubin:

Thank you for your letter regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we have extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We agree that open and honest communication is essential to the success of public processes. We appreciate hearing your comments and suggestions, and we will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date: MAR 20

Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1204

Dear Senator Kempthorne:

Thank you for your letter regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we have extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We agree that open and honest communication is essential to the success of public processes. We appreciate hearing your comments and suggestions, and we will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

MAR 20 1998

Honorable Craig Thomas
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-5003

Dear Senator Thomas:

Thank you for your letter regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we have extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We agree that open and honest communication is essential to the success of public processes. We appreciate hearing your comments and suggestions, and we will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

MAR 20 1998

Honorable Mike Crapo
U.S. House of Representatives
437 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1202

Dear Congressman Crapo:

Thank you for your letters regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We agree that open and honest communication is essential to the success of public processes. We appreciate your comments and suggestions, especially during the recent Resources Committee hearing. We will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
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Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

MAR 20 1998

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

Dear Congressman Doolittle:

Thank you for your letter regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

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

File Code: 1010

Date:

MAR 20 1998

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

Dear Congressman Herger:

Thank you for your letter regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We agree that open and honest communication is essential to the success of public processes. We appreciate your comments and suggestions, especially during the recent Resources Committee hearing. We will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1010

Date: MAR 20 1998

Honorable Michael Enzi
United States Senate
116 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-5004

Dear Senator Enzi:

Thank you for your recent letters regarding management of National Forest System roads and our proposed interim regulation to temporarily suspend road construction in National Forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue about road construction and reconstruction in our National Forests. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion.

As a result of early public and Congressional comment, we have extended the comment period on the interim rule for another 30 days. The new deadline for comments is March 30, 1998. We will also hold a series of public forums across the Nation to assure full public participation in the final development of the roads policy. The dates and locations of the public meetings and the instructions for submission of written or e-mail comments can be found in the *Federal Register* notice published February 27, 1998, or on the Forest Service internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>.

We appreciate the role of Congress in the designation of lands for management as wilderness and for multiple-use management. The proposed interim rule is not intended to limit multiple-use management of National Forest System lands or to create "defacto wilderness." Even though road construction is suspended for 18 months in certain roadless areas, multiple-use management will otherwise continue on the lands released under terms of the 1984 Wyoming Wilderness Act..

In your February 2, 1998, letter you expressed concerns that the interim suspension of road construction and reconstruction in roadless areas would be a violation of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We fully intend to comply with both NFMA and NEPA. Before the final rule is published in the *Federal Register* the environmental analysis will be complete for NEPA purposes. The proposed interim rule in no way alters land allocation decisions in Forest plans. The rule only delays potential road construction and reconstruction projects for an 18 month period; all other activities can proceed, and all aspects of forest plan management prescriptions contained in forest plans are still applicable. Forest plans



permit activities to take place, they do not mandate that any specific activity proceed. We believe that the proposed interim rule is in conformance with both NFMA and NEPA.

We appreciate hearing your comments and suggestions, and will carefully consider them as we work with Congress and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

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

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 6140
Route To: 1010-2

Date: MAR 20 1998

Subject: Response To Your February 10 Memo

To: Juan Palma, Unit Manager, Lake Tahoe Management Unit

Thanks for your recent memo - I appreciate the invitation to return to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit to learn more about on-the-ground work. Last year's "Summit" resulted in good progress in building relationships and in shared stewardship of the Basin. We now need to follow through on the commitments made.

I also appreciate your suggestion that we hold a unit leaders meeting. This idea has been discussed by the Executive Committee and we are close to making a final determination on such a meeting. The Agenda will require each of us to do our best in developing policy, administrative, and workforce strategies for success. Our success, from the district to national levels, depends on our unified agency commitment and support, as well as participation from stakeholders and the public. My hope is that an all managers meeting can stimulate this commitment. As you are aware, I have just announced the Forest Service national resources agenda.

Please keep us informed of your progress with the Lake Tahoe Management Unit goals. Continue to coordinate with the regional office and the NFS Deputy Area to ensure we meet our obligations.

Although I am unable to schedule a visit at this point, I will look for opportunities to return to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Again, thank you for the invitation, and for your leadership.

Best wishes!

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc: Lynn Sprague, R-5
Jim Lyons, NRE



~~Donna~~ or Jessica

Please prepare acknowledgment
for me to sign.

m.

FAX COVER PAGE

Date: Tue Feb 10 14:38:56 GMT 1998

2/19/98 JAW

Destination Fax: +1 202 205 1765

From: J. PALMA

Subject: Invitation for Chief Mike Dombeck

Number of pages: 3
(including cover page(s))

UA-Message ID: BGA-WRBBKT

Addressed To:

fax!202-205-1765

Carbon Copied To:

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Secondly, I know there is a lot of good work going on with regards to setting a long Agency agenda for the future. I think that is good. I have one suggestion, which you folks have probably already have talked about, to sometime this year get all the key Staff and Forest Supervisors together in a large

gathering. I know something like this happened a few years back, but that was before some of us were around. I have not seen any of the work you folks are putting together, but know some good thought process is going on to develop a National Agenda. Such a meeting might be the place for you to unveil it and/or our individual commitments.

Finally, hopefully you have had some good visits with the many visitors from Lake Tahoe that have come up in the last couple of weeks. Please let me know the best way to keep the Chief's office informed on the happenings' here.



United States
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14th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Robert Beschta
Oregon State University
College of Forestry
Corvallis, OR 97331

Dear Dr. Beschta:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

Your work in developing recommendations that better integrates scientific information into planning and decision-making processes is critical to land stewardship. I look forward to our future discussions as we work together in this joint effort.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
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Forest
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Washington
Office

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

MAR 23 1998

Mr. Bob Cunningham
USDA Forest Service
14th and Independence Ave., SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

Dear Mr. Cunningham:

Bob

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

Your work in developing recommendations that better integrates scientific information into planning and decision-making processes is critical to land stewardship. I look forward to our future discussions as we work together in this joint effort.

Sincerely,

Mike

Thanks for your help!

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



Caring for the Land and Serving People





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

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Virginia Dale
Environmental Sciences Division
Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Dear Dr. Dale:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Linda H. Hardesty
Washington State University
Department of Natural Resources Science
Pullman, WA 99164-6410

Dear Dr. Hardesty:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. James Long
Department of Forest Resources
Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322-5215

Dear Dr. Long:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Larry Nielsen
School of Forest Resources
Pennsylvania State University
113 Ferguson Building
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Dr. Nielsen:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Barry Noon
Colorado State University
Department of Fish and Wildlife Biology
Fort Collins, CO 80523

Dear Dr. Noon:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Roger Sedjo
Resources for the Future
1616 P Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Dr. Sedjo:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Margaret A. Shannon
Department of Public Administration
Center for Environmental Policy and Administration
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY 13210

Dear Dr. Shannon:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Ronald Trosper
College of Ecosystem Science and Management
School of Forestry
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear Dr. Trosper:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Mr. Charles Wilkinson
University of Colorado
School of Law
Campus Box 401
Boulder, CO 80309

Dear Mr. Wilkinson:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

MAR 23 1998

Dr. Julia M. Wondolleck
School of Natural Resources and Environment
The University of Michigan
403 East University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1115

Dear Dr. Wondolleck:

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Committee of Scientists. I am happy to enclose a copy of the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda delivered to employees on March 2, 1998. I am also enclosing a copy of "*Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*." I hope these documents provide information that adds to our discussions on natural resource priorities for the National forests.

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Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



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P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

March 23, 1998

Dear Friends and Partners:

I am delighted to extend hearty congratulations to the National Forest Recreation Association as you celebrate your 50th anniversary. I wish you even more successes over the next fifty years.

Americans love our national forests. We turn to them nearly one billion times annually for the physical and mental benefits derived from fishing and hiking, skiing and camping, boating and biking, rafting and wildlife-watching and so many other activities. In fact, recreation has become so significant that the Forest Service has made it an agency priority, in conjunction with watershed health and restoration, sustainable forest management, and forest roads.

Together, members of NFRA and employees of the Forest Service enhance outdoor recreation visits – and we can do so even more successfully in the future. We can do this through better coordination of our efforts, through use of new skills and technologies and through a better understanding of our customers' motivations and satisfaction levels. But make no mistake; succeeding will be an extraordinary challenge in light of increasing numbers of visitors, the diversity of the experiences they seek and changes in the way we live. We must put a new focus on quality and on protecting the health of our shared resources. Today, nearly half of this year's recreation visitors to the forests will encounter a facility or a service below Forest Service standards. This must change.

It is important that our two organizations, and others who share an appreciation for the legacy of our national forests, share a vision and a sense of priorities. I have invited the Forest Service family to review my own agenda and its four key areas of focus:

- watershed health and restoration
- sustainable forest ecosystem management
- forest roads
- recreation

I am enclosing a copy of my "Natural Resource Agenda for the 21st Century." I invite your comments and your help in keeping the national forests close to the hearts and minds of Americans for many generations still to come. I invite NFRA members to use my speech as a topic for meetings with the Forest Service employees with whom they work on a daily basis – and then share with me the ideas that result!

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



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

File Code: 1900

Date: MAR 23 1998

Subject: Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda

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

REPLY DUE MARCH 26, 1998

On March 2, 1998, I sent a letter to Forest Service Leadership describing the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda. In that letter I requested that Regional Foresters, Station Directors, the Area Director and the IITF Director collaboratively provide me with "...a short description of ... project(s)" that I might visit in the ensuing months in support of the agenda. The **reply due date was March 13**. To date I have received nine responses from the eighteen units receiving the letter.

I thank those of you who have responded, but a fifty percent response rate is unacceptable. I expect to have the remaining nine proposals into this office by **March 26**. As per the original letter, please send your proposals to my office, attention Leslie Weldon.

The units for which we have received proposals include:

North Central Forest Experiment Station
Northeastern Forest Experiment Station
Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station
International Institute of Tropical Forestry
Forest Products Laboratory
Northeastern Area
Northern Region
Southwestern Region
Eastern Region

If your unit has submitted a proposal but is not listed here, please resubmit your proposal.

I have enclosed the original March 2 letter for your use.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure





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

File Code:

Date: **MAR 23 1998**

Mr. G. Lynn Sprague
Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

Dear Lynn:

This letter is followup to our discussion by phone on February 13 and our meeting on February 18 in Denver. Region 5 has always been a challenging region to manage and has become increasingly so in recent years. The issues you face reflect the complexity and diversity of interests and values of the State of California, and the outcome of those issues are important both to the State and to the nation. I am aware that these issues often wind up in the political arena, given the volatile nature of politics in California.

Through your strong leadership, you have been able to work through many of these issues and have made a positive difference in the outcome. Of particular note was the success of the Presidential Forum at Lake Tahoe last July. The designation of the Region as a Reinvention Lab, through a charter signed by Vice President Gore and me, is the result of your innovation in management. The partnership model and relationship between the Region and Pacific Southwest Station, which you and Station Director Salwasser have crafted, is very important in bringing science more completely into resource management. This partnership is recognized as the foundation for your strategy to resolve the Sierra Nevada issue.

Lynn, I want to acknowledge that meeting these issues head on has required a great deal of extra effort and personal sacrifice from you. I appreciate it very much. I want to assure you that I have full confidence in you, and you can count on my support for your continuing leadership in Region 5.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
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Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1700
Route To:

Date: MAR 23 1998

Subject: Chief's Multicultural Organization Award

To: James G. Bradley, R-3 (Retired)

Congratulations on being selected for the 1997 Chief's Multicultural Organization Award. You were nominated along with nine other outstanding individuals and groups for this award.

I want you to know that I value your civil rights contributions and the many activities in which you participated as a representative of the Southwestern Regional Office and the Forest Service.

This award, accompanied by an inscribed trophy, will be presented at a ceremony during the National Leadership Conference on June 30 - July 1, 1998 in Washington, DC. I am inviting you to attend the ceremony to receive your award. We will provide you with more information as soon as details of the ceremony are confirmed.

Building a diverse, multicultural Forest Service organization for the 21st century continues to be one of my top priorities. The work you have done for this Agency will go a long way in helping me accomplish this goal.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
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Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1920

Date: MAR 25 1998

Honorable Helen Chenoweth
Chairman, Subcommittee on Forests
and Forest Health
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Chairman Chenoweth:

Thank you for your letter of February 20, 1998. Like you, I am deeply committed to the wise and careful management of our national forests for the use and benefit of present and future generations. Your letter recognizes that achieving this objective can sometimes be controversial. As our first Chief, Gifford Pinchot, stated over 100 years ago, management of the national forests involves "many great interests, which sometimes conflict a bit."

Your letter implies that the mission of the Forest Service has somehow changed, presumably because of the decrease in commercial timber harvest. As a consequence, you suggest the Forest Service has taken on a "custodial" role in management of the national forests and the Agency's budget and funding should be reduced. I take a different view.

I believe that the reduction in timber harvest and the dramatic increases in use and demand of the national forests for other values such as recreation, drinking water production, and fish and wildlife habitat does not translate to a changed mission for the Agency. Rather, it speaks to the increased importance of national forests to the lives of all Americans. Certainly, timber harvest and the production of other commodities will continue on national forests. But these activities must take place within the context of maintaining and restoring watershed health and sustainability.

Indeed, the use and management of national forests has changed significantly in recent years. Such change is inevitable as we respond to different social values, new scientific knowledge, and renew our commitment to ensuring the long-term health, diversity, and productivity of the land. These changes do not reflect a "new mission." In fact, over 100 years ago, Congress wisely defined the mission of national forests to go far beyond timber and other commodity production. In 1897, Congress defined the purpose of the national forests through the Organic Act:

[To] improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purposes of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of the citizens of the United States.

The three primary goals of the Organic Act, protecting the forest, protecting watersheds, and providing sustainable supplies of timber, parallel the Forest Service's recently announced natural



resource agenda for the 21st century. The natural resource agenda focuses on four key areas: watershed health and restoration, sustainable forest ecosystem management, forest roads, and recreation. The agenda was developed by my leadership team and, I believe, is squarely in line with both Congress' goals in establishing the national forests and the conservation values of mainstream America.

Our agenda, the Strategic Plan we are developing under the Government Performance and Results Act, and our 1999 budget request reflect a vigorous program of active management of the national forests. In the coming years, we look forward to working with you and your colleagues, local communities, and all who use and care for national forests to further refine and implement our agenda. We do not believe that the American people would expect, or deserve, any less.

Our answers to your specific questions are enclosed. I have sent an identical response to Chairmen Murkowski, Craig, and Young and a copy to each of the respective ranking Democratic members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dombek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "D".

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Maurice D. Hinchey (with enclosure)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1920

Date: MAR 25 1998

Honorable Larry E. Craig
Chairman, Subcommittee on Forests
and Public Land Management
United States Senate
364 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Dear Chairman Craig:

Thank you for your letter of February 20, 1998. Like you, I am deeply committed to the wise and careful management of our national forests for the use and benefit of present and future generations. Your letter recognizes that achieving this objective can sometimes be controversial. As our first Chief, Gifford Pinchot, stated over 100 years ago, management of the national forests involves "many great interests, which sometimes conflict a bit."

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resource agenda for the 21st century. The natural resource agenda focuses on four key areas: watershed health and restoration, sustainable forest ecosystem management, forest roads, and recreation. The agenda was developed by my leadership team and, I believe, is squarely in line with both Congress' goals in establishing the national forests and the conservation values of mainstream America.

Our agenda, the Strategic Plan we are developing under the Government Performance and Results Act, and our 1999 budget request reflect a vigorous program of active management of the national forests. In the coming years, we look forward to working with you and your colleagues, local communities, and all who use and care for national forests to further refine and implement our agenda. We do not believe that the American people would expect, or deserve, any less.

Our answers to your specific questions are enclosed. I have sent an identical response to Chairmen Murkowski, Young, and Chenoweth and a copy to each of the respective ranking Democratic members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mike Dombeck". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "M" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Byron L. Dorgan (with enclosure)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1920

Date: MAR 25 1998

Honorable Frank H. Murkowski
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
364 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Dear Chairman Murkowski:

Thank you for your letter of February 20, 1998. Like you, I am deeply committed to the wise and careful management of our national forests for the use and benefit of present and future generations. Your letter recognizes that achieving this objective can sometimes be controversial. As our first Chief, Gifford Pinchot, stated over 100 years ago, management of the national forests involves "many great interests, which sometimes conflict a bit."

Your letter implies that the mission of the Forest Service has somehow changed, presumably because of the decrease in commercial timber harvest. As a consequence, you suggest the Forest Service has taken on a "custodial" role in management of the national forests and the Agency's budget and funding should be reduced. I take a different view.

I believe that the reduction in timber harvest and the dramatic increases in use and demand of the national forests for other values such as recreation, drinking water production, and fish and wildlife habitat does not translate to a changed mission for the Agency. Rather, it speaks to the increased importance of national forests to the lives of all Americans. Certainly, timber harvest and the production of other commodities will continue on national forests. But these activities must take place within the context of maintaining and restoring watershed health and sustainability.

Indeed, the use and management of national forests has changed significantly in recent years. Such change is inevitable as we respond to different social values, new scientific knowledge, and renew our commitment to ensuring the long-term health, diversity, and productivity of the land. These changes do not reflect a "new mission." In fact, over 100 years ago, Congress wisely defined the mission of national forests to go far beyond timber and other commodity production. In 1897, Congress defined the purpose of the national forests through the Organic Act:

[To] improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purposes of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of the citizens of the United States.

The three primary goals of the Organic Act, protecting the forest, protecting watersheds, and providing sustainable supplies of timber, parallel the Forest Service's recently announced natural



resource agenda for the 21st century. The natural resource agenda focuses on four key areas: watershed health and restoration, sustainable forest ecosystem management, forest roads, and recreation. The agenda was developed by my leadership team and, I believe, is squarely in line with both Congress' goals in establishing the national forests and the conservation values of mainstream America.

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Our answers to your specific questions are enclosed. I have sent an identical response to Chairmen Craig, Young, and Chenoweth and a copy to each of the respective ranking Democratic members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dombeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Dombeck" clearly distinguishable.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Dale Bumpers (with enclosure)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1920

Date: MAR 25 1998

Honorable Don Young
Chairman, Committee on Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Chairman Young:

Thank you for your letter of February 20, 1998. Like you, I am deeply committed to the wise and careful management of our national forests for the use and benefit of present and future generations. Your letter recognizes that achieving this objective can sometimes be controversial. As our first Chief, Gifford Pinchot, stated over 100 years ago, management of the national forests involves "many great interests, which sometimes conflict a bit."

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dombek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure

cc: Honorable George Miller (with enclosure)



United States
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Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

March 25, 1998

Mr. Jim Furnish
Forest Supervisor
Siuslaw National Forest
4077 Research Way
Corvallis, OR 97333

Dear Jim:

I recently read the remarks you made to employees at your Diversity Day last autumn. Thank you for sharing your experiences and insight as we strive as an agency and a Nation to fully value the richness of our diversity.

Your remarks exemplify the sincerity and commitment that all of our leaders must demonstrate as we move together towards these goals.

Again, I appreciate your leadership, your support of workforce diversity, and the Forest Service Agenda. I thank you and your employees for all their hard work on the Siuslaw National Forest.

Sincerely,

Mike

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

*Thanks for the note of
support of the Agenda.*



Caring for the Land and Serving People





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

March 25, 1998

Mr. Evan DeBloois
USDA Forest Service
Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Evan:

I have enclosed a copy of a letter from Deputy Undersecretary, Tom Hebert, which describes your accomplishments in providing USDA review of the proposed revision of the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 regulation.

I would like to add my thanks for your help in developing comments and recommendations for improving this proposal, which will hopefully streamline field level section 106 compliance in the Forest Service and other USDA units.

I realize that special assignments such as these can impact your daily workload and I appreciate your willingness to apply your expertise to this national effort. Keep up the great work and best of luck to you in your new assignment!

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



Caring for the Land and Serving People





DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

FEB 13 1998

Mike Dombeck
Chief, Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Auditors Building, 201 14th Street, S.W., Rm. 4051S
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Dombeck:

This letter is to express appreciation and thanks to Evan DeBloois on your Washington, D.C. staff for their work in providing agency views in formulating USDA comments on the proposed National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 regulation revision. These comments and suggestions were forwarded to Office of Management & Budget (OMB) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and are a center piece of continued discussion on rectifying federal agency concerns. Because of this work we expect that the draft regulations will be further refined to reflect a more efficient Section 106 compliance process that will be more "user friendly" to our USDA customers.

Our ability to provide unified USDA comments, with input from your agency, is making a difference and that is a solid reflection of the team spirit and dedication of the employee involved. Again thanks.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Hebert
Deputy Undersecretary
Natural Resources and Environment
USDA

Attachment [USDA comments]



United States
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Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

March 25, 1998

Ms. Judith Propper
USDA Forest Service
Southwestern Region
Federal Building
517 Gold Avenue
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Judith:

I have enclosed a copy of a letter from Deputy Undersecretary, Tom Hebert, which describes your accomplishments in providing USDA review of the proposed revision of the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 regulation.

I would like to add my thanks for your help in developing comments and recommendations for improving this proposal, which will hopefully streamline field level section 106 compliance in the Forest Service and other USDA units.

I realize that special assignments such as these can impact your daily workload and I appreciate your willingness to apply your expertise to this national effort. Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



Caring for the Land and Serving People





DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

FEB 13 1998

Mike Dombeck
Chief, Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Auditors Building, 201 14th Street, S.W., Rm. 4051S
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Dombeck:

This letter is to express appreciation and thanks to Judith Propper on your Region 3, Albuquerque, NM staff for their work in providing agency views in formulating USDA comments on the proposed National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 regulation revision. These comments and suggestions were forwarded to Office of Management & Budget (OMB) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and are a center piece of continued discussion on rectifying federal agency concerns. Because of this work we expect that the draft regulations will be further refined to reflect a more efficient Section 106 compliance process that will be more "user friendly" to our USDA customers.

Our ability to provide unified USDA comments, with input from your agency, is making a difference and that is a solid reflection of the team spirit and dedication of the employee involved. Again thanks.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Hebert
Deputy Undersecretary
Natural Resources and Environment
USDA

Attachment [USDA comments]



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Forest
Service

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

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

FROM: Pearlie S. Reed
Chief
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Robert Lewis, Jr.
Acting Associate Chief
Forest Service

MAR 27 1998

SUBJECT: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Report and
Forest Service (FS) Monthly Report for March

ISSUE:

Attached are the combined NRCS and FS Regional and Monthly Reports.

DISCUSSION:

The NRCS and the FS are involved in the Nation's most important conservation and environmental issues. The NRCS Regional Conservationists and the FS Deputy Chiefs, Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and Northeastern Area Directors report in this combined document on current operations and the benefits to people and the environment.

SUMMARY:

The NRCS and the FS February Regional and Monthly Reports are combined in this report.

Attachments

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES R. LYONS, Under Secretary, NRE

THROUGH: Robert Lewis, Jr.
Acting Associate Chief

FROM: Denver James
Acting Director, Office of Communication

SUBJECT: Monthly Report for March 1998

MAR 27 1998

NATIONAL NEWS

Forest Service Announces Natural Resource Agenda

On March 2, Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck announced the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda for the 21st Century in a speech to Forest Service employees. The agenda works significantly to increase watershed health improvements, promote sustainable forest management, enhance outdoor recreation, and develop a forest road policy that meets people's needs and protects the environment. The President's fiscal year 1999 budget reflects Chief Dombeck's priorities. For example, the budget includes a \$60 million Clean Water and Watershed Restoration Initiative that provides funds for watershed improvements, road maintenance and reconstruction, rangeland restoration, forest vegetation management, cooperative forestry, research, and other programs.

Council of Environmental Quality Approves Emergency Removal of Dead and Damaged Trees on the National Forests of Texas

On March 10, the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) approved the Forest Service's formal request for alternative arrangements to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act for emergency removal of dead and damaged trees from 103,000 acres on the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. The removal is necessary to prevent a possible second disaster this spring and summer from wildfires and bark beetle attack, further damaging habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and bald eagle, and to protect adjacent private property. This action must be completed by March 31, 1998, to avoid disturbance during the red-cockaded woodpecker breeding season. This is the first time the CEQ has approved alternative arrangements for the sale of timber to handle an emergency.

Extended Public Comment Period on Road Suspension Rule Ends March 30

On February 27, the Forest Service extended the comment period until March 30 on its proposal to temporarily suspend some road construction in roadless areas within the national forest system. After the public comments have been analyzed and the environmental assessment is completed, the final interim rule will be issued. Under the current proposal, this rule will remain in effect until any suspended road construction can be evaluated using the new analytical tools being developed, but no longer than 18 months from the effective date of the interim rule. Over twenty-five public meetings have been held throughout the Nation. The comment period on the proposal, first published in the Federal Register on January 28, had originally been scheduled to end on February 27.

Emergency Relief for the Northeast and Other Forests and Areas Hit by Natural Disaster

President's Task Force Report Released. On March 4, the President's Long-Term Recovery Task Force, reactivated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the direction of the President after the January 1998 ice storm in the Northeast, released its report "Blueprint for Action," outlining a strategy for recovery in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. In the report the President directed the Forest Service to take the lead in forming an integrated partnership between Federal and State agencies to develop a restoration strategy for the rural and urban trees, forests, and forest ecosystems damaged by the ice storm.

House and Senate Appropriations Committee Markup of Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill. On March 24, the House Appropriations Committee marked up the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill, recommending \$48 million for State and Private Forestry. These funds will assist in disaster relief efforts and management of forest resources on State, local government, and private lands affected by the January 1998 ice storms in the Northeast as well as other natural disasters. Of the total amount \$28 million is designed as an emergency requirement (contingency). Also, as proposed by the Administration, the Committee recommends \$10,461,000 for the National Forest System to respond to the January 1998 ice storms in the Northeast and other natural disasters. This matches the Administration's proposal of \$10 million plus \$461,000 for damage on the Daniel Boone National Forest (KY). This amount includes funds for trail and recreation area cleanup of national forests. Of the total amount, \$5,461,000 is designated as an emergency requirement (contingency). All Senate floor business, with the exception of a floor vote to pass the supplemental bill, was completed on March 26. The Senate bill provides \$66.2 million in response to the Northeast January ice storms and other natural disasters (all funds designated as emergency requirement). The funding includes \$12,391,000 in National Forest System appropriation, \$48,430,000 in the State and Private Forestry appropriation, \$1,214,000 in reconstruction/construction appropriation, \$2,165,000 in Forest and Rangeland Research appropriation, and \$2,000,000 in the wildland fire appropriation. House floor action is expected the week of March 30. When the House bill is passed, the Senate bill will also be deemed passed. Conference action is expected to occur after Congress reconvenes from the Easter recess.

Congressmen Express Interest in National Research Council's Report on NonFederal Forests

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies Chairman Ralph Regula and Ranking Minority Member Sidney Yates asked the Secretary of Agriculture March 2 to direct Forest Service Chief Dombeck to provide a cost estimate of the State and Private Forestry program that reflects the recommendations in the National Research Council's report, "Forested Landscapes in Perspectives: Prospects and Opportunities for Sustainable Management of America's Nonfederal Forests," released November 5, 1997. State and Private Forestry expects to complete its response to this request in mid-April. State and Private Forestry also expects to complete developing its action strategy for State and Private Forestry services in mid-April.

Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee

On March 19, the House Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing on the Forest Service FY 1999 budget. Secretary Dan Glickman and Chief Mike Dombeck, witnesses at the hearing, were complimented on their work. Most of the questions raised by subcommittee members were on roads and the proposed road construction moratorium in roadless areas, payments to States, and the maintenance backlog. The subcommittee members will reconvene the hearing on March 31.

National Media Interest on Road Construction Moratorium and Natural Resource Agenda

National media interest in Forest Service actions and policies seems to be increasing as a result of recent articles, editorials, and Congressional hearings on the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda and the forest road-transportation policy proposals.

- o **Time Magazine.** Time Magazine tentatively plans to publish an article, possibly the first part of April, on the differences of viewpoint between members of Congress and the Administration over the Forest Service proposed road construction moratorium in roadless areas.
- o **U.S. News and World Report.** U.S. News and World Report is planning an extended article on forest management changes.
- o **National Media Attention Expected at Hearing.** Reporters for The Washington Post, U.S. News and World Report, The Oregonian, Associated Press and others covered the House Oversight Committee hearing on management of the Forest Service scheduled for March 26.

Conferees Meeting on Research Title to the Farm Bill

Conferees met March 20 and 23 to resolve the differences between House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill. Still at issue is House language (Sec. 251) amending the Forest and Rangelands Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978. The House language provides new research program priorities consistent with the 1990 Natural Resources Council Report, "Forestry Research: A Mandate for Change" and calls for changes in the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program. The House language requires written authorization from private forestland owners before collecting FIA data on their property. Under current policy, researchers obtain oral permission to collect data; refusal rates are less than 2 percent. Obtaining written permission would be more costly, time-consuming, and potentially reduce the number of plots measured with no additional privacy protection for the landowner. The Senate version of the bill makes no changes to the 1978 Act.

Report Released by the Second Blue Ribbon Panel on Forest Inventory

On March 24, the Second Blue Ribbon Panel on Forest Inventory, composed of representatives from a broad cross-section of the natural resource community, including environmental groups, professional and scientific societies, and industry representatives, released its report on forest inventory and analysis to the Forest Service. Major recommendations include elevating the priority of the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program within the Department of Agriculture, shifting to annual forest inventories instead of the periodic inventories currently used, fulfilling the FIA legislative mandate by reporting information for public as well as private lands, and expanding the core set of data collected to add more ecological variables.

House Resources, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee Hearing

On March 24, the House Resources, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Helen Chenoweth, held a hearing on the following bills:

- o H.R. 2886, to authorize a demonstration project on the Stanislaus National Forest (CA)
- o H.R. 1021, to provide for a land exchange on the Routt National Forest (WY)
- o H.R. 3381, to direct a land exchange with Big Sky Lumber
- o H.R. 3467, the California Spotted Owl Interim Protection Act of 1998

Deputy Chief for National Forest System Bob Joslin and Director of Lands Ellie Towns testified.

Senate Energy Committee on Forests and Public Lands Management

On March 25, the Senate Energy Committee on Forests and Public Lands Management, chaired by Sen. Larry Craig, held a hearing on the following bills:

- o S.R. 1638, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over part of the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area from the Department of the Interior Secretary to the Department of Agriculture Secretary for inclusion in the Wenatchee National Forest (WA)
- o H.R. 1439, to facilitate the sale of certain land in Tahoe National Forest (CA)
- o S.R. 1469, to provide for the expansion of the historic community cemetery of El Rito, New Mexico, through special designation of 5 acres of Carson National Forest (NM)
- o S.R. 1468, to provide for the conveyance of 1 acre of land from Santa Fe National Forest (CA) to the Village of Jemez Springs, New Mexico, as the site of a fire sub-station
- o S.R. 1510, to direct the Department of the Interior Secretary and the Department of Agriculture Secretary to convey certain lands to the county of Rio Arriba, New Mexico
- o S.R. 1562, to authorize an exchange of land among the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, and Big Sky Lumber Company
- o S.R. 1009, to make minor adjustments in the exterior boundary of the Devils Backbone Wilderness in the Mark Twain National Forest (MO) to exclude a small parcel of land containing improvements
- o S. R. 890, to dispose of certain Federal properties located in Dutch John, Utah, to assist the local government in the interim delivery of basic services to the Dutch John community, and for other purposes
- o S. R. 1663, to clarify the intent of Congress in P.L. 93-632 to require the Department of Agriculture Secretary to continue to provide for the maintenance of 18 concrete dams and weirs that are located in the Emigrant Wilderness

Director of Lands Ellie Towns testified.

Joint House Oversight Hearing

On March 26, a joint House Oversight hearing on the management of the Forest Service was held before the Budget Committee, the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies of the Appropriations Committee, and the House Resources Committee. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck and USDA Inspector General Roger Viadero were witnesses. Chief Dombeck answered questions on roads policy, employee issues, payments to States, charging fees at fair market value to generate revenues, and the impact of appeals and litigation on Forest Service management. Barry Hill of the Government Accounting Office testified on Forest Service financial management.

Fifth New Patent Issued to the Forest Service

On February 24, the U.S. Patent Office and Trademark Office issued the Forest Service a patent for "Localized Notch Reinforcement of Wooden Beams," the fifth patent awarded in the first 5 months of FY 1998. Wooden beams used in new construction to span horizontal distances are often notched for end bearing at supports or for clearances for mechanical or electrical services. The notches create stress concentrations that result in tension perpendicular to grain stresses (the weakest property of wood) and greatly reduce the load-carrying capacity of the beam. The new technique for which the patent was issued significantly increases beam strength by adding a small high tensile strength reinforcement to the notch area. This technology can also be used in existing structures where notches have been made such as in remodeling. Last fiscal year, seven patents were awarded to the Forest Service.

National African-American Strategy Group Meeting

On March 4, the National African-American Strategy Group met in the Forest Service Washington Office to discuss issues and develop strategies to assist the agency in becoming a more multicultural organization and improving the working environment for African-American employees. The group met with Natural Resources and Environment Deputy Under Secretary Brian Burke and Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck and Civil Rights Director Luther Burse to discuss the memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the Forest Service, National Black Farmers Association, and the USDA Coalition of Minority Employees. The MOU provides outreach to the National Black Farmers Association for better program delivery. The discussion panel included Black Farmers Association President John Boyd, USDA Coalition of Minority Employees President Lawrence Lucas, and USDA Outreach Program Director Sam Thornton. The panel also discussed potential opportunities to partner with the African-American Strategy Group to fully implement the recently signed MOU.

Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study

The final report for Phase III of the Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study, to be delivered to the Fire and Aviation Staff by the contractor on March 30, 1998, specifies over 250 safety change recommendations for 85 goals developed in Phases I and II of the study. Phase I, a landmark study, assessed the wildland fire workforce. Phase II appraised the goals for changing the safety culture of the wildland firefighter. Phase III recommendations are targeted to change the safety culture of the wildland firefighter workforce. Over 300 firefighters provided input for the study through interviews or focus groups. Approximately 716 firefighters and managers completed questionnaires in the summer of 1996. Phase IV will include monitoring and evaluation of safety changes. Phase III of the Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study may attract media interest when released.

National Interagency Fire Meeting

Representatives to the annual National Interagency Fire Meeting, held March 11 in Portland, Oregon, discussed 1998 fire preparedness, safety accountability across agency lines, status of the implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Policy, and an update on Phase III of the Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study. Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Director Mary Jo Lavin and other agency employees attended the meeting along with representatives from the National Association of State Foresters, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Weather Service.

Management Alert Issued on Historic Aircraft Exchange Program

In 1992, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued an audit report concerning the Forest Service Historic Aircraft Exchange Program. The remaining outstanding issue concerning this audit is the ownership of the exchanged aircraft. On March 3, the Department of Justice recommended to the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), who concurred, that Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment James Lyons have the Forest Service take contractual action to assert ownership of the exchanged C-130 and P-3 aircraft. This recommendation would have significant implications for the agency's ability to meet its aerial firefighting responsibilities. The Fire and Aviation and Acquisition Management Staffs in cooperation with OGC and OIG and other appropriate agencies are working to develop alternative actions and consequences.

Global Climate Change Initiative

As part of the President's Global Climate Change Initiative, the Urban Forestry Department of Southern University and the Forest Service hosted a Global Climate Change Workshop on February 25-27. The workshop discussions focused on climate change issues relevant to the Gulf Coast region and included climate change issues affecting farming, forestry, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and estuaries. The results of this and other workshops scheduled this year will help design the future of Global Climate Change Initiatives and Global Climate Change Research Program.

Payments to States

During the month of March, Forest Service Unit Managers have been contacting local elected officials for informational briefings on the proposal to stabilize payments to States. That proposal is included in the Administration's budget proposal for FY 1999.

Tree Disease Eradication Project Underway in Nation's Capital

As part of the President's Initiative to assist the District of Columbia improve the health and beauty of its urban environment, the Forest Service Northeastern Area for State and Private Forestry, National Park Service National Capital Area, and the District of Columbia Department of Public Works are working to stop an outbreak of Dutch elm disease in the District of Columbia. The Northeastern Area will provide \$300,000 to the project to remove or prune the diseased elms. The Northeastern Area and the National Park Service will assist the District of Columbia with surveying and evaluating the condition of the trees. These efforts will help revitalize the District's Dutch elm disease management program and lead to better health for the urban forest in the Nation's Capital.

Memorandum of Understanding To Be Highlighted at the National Hispanic Sustainable Energy and Environmental Conference

On March 15-17, the Forest Service participated in the Third Annual National Hispanic Sustainable Energy and Environmental Conference (NHEC) in Oakland, California. The conference is designed to educate the Hispanic community about environmental issues and to showcase the environment as a major growth area for jobs and businesses. A memorandum of understanding was signed in January 1998 between the Forest Service and NHEC to provide a framework for cooperation to promote outreach and career opportunities as well as environmental education in forestry and in soil and natural resource conservation.

REGIONAL NEWS

NORTHERN REGION (Region 1): Idaho and Montana

Nothing to report.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION (Region 2): Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming

Club 20 Invites Forest Service to Annual General Meeting

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison Forest Supervisor Bob Storch addressed a crowd of 250--including 18 Colorado state legislators--at Club 20's Annual General Meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado, March 7. Supervisor Storch explained the value of and need to use all available tools to manage national forests. The meeting focused on forest health and industry's role in forest management. Club 20 is a consortium of business, community, and political interests in 22 western Colorado counties.

Colorado Governor To Host Forest Health Reception

Colorado Governor Roy Romer (D) will host April 1 at the Colorado executive mansion a reception for about 200 state legislators, influence group leaders, and reporters to focus attention on forest health and promote more intensive timber management. At the reception Club 20, a coalition of business, economic, and political interest representing Colorado's western slope, will release a white paper, "Decline of the Aspen," calling for more aggressive aspen management. The whitepaper relies heavily on material provided by Forest Service researchers. Regional Forester Lyle Laverty and other agency leaders plan to attend the reception.

SOUTHWESTERN REGION (Region 3): Arizona and New Mexico

Nothing to report.

INTERMOUNTAIN REGION (Region 4): Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming

Interagency Prescribed Burn Planned in Idaho

At a press conference March 6, the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests (ID), the Bureau of Land Management, and the Idaho Department of Lands announced plans for the largest prescribed burning program in southwestern Idaho. The 60,000-acre project, planned to begin in late March and continue through June for the spring burning window and from late August through November for the fall--depending on weather conditions--is notable for its size and interagency cooperation. The prescribed burning will improve wildlife habitat, protect watersheds by reducing potential for erosion, and reduce fuels supporting high intensity wildfires.

Road Approval in Boise Roadless Area Challenged

On March 4, the Idaho Sporting Congress filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Boise, Idaho, regarding the approval of an access road in the Snowbank Mountain Roadless Area. Boise National Forest (ID) officials report they had approved as a result of a map error, the construction of a road running 0.8 of a mile through the area. Approximately 315 acres of the 35,660-acre Snowbank Roadless area near Cascades, Idaho, was included in the Squaw Pole timber sale. The forest supervisor has requested a regional-level team review the road approval. The Idaho Statesman published a news story on the road approval February 27. Media attention is expected to continue.

Comment Period Extended on Middle Fork

On March 3, in response to Congressional and general public concern regarding proposed changes in use levels for the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, the public comment period on the draft environmental impact statement was extended from April 24 until December 1, 1998.

1998 U.S. Alpine National Ski Championships

From March 17-25, the 1998 U.S. Alpine National Ski Championships was held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The Bridger-Teton National Forest was a major participant in organizing and planning this event. Under Secretary James Lyons attended.

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION (Region 5): California

National Forest Planning Process Meeting

Pacific Southwest Regional Forester Lynn Sprague and a small group of Forest Supervisors met on March 4 in Sacramento, California, with the Committee of Scientists, who are advising Chief Dombeck and Secretary Glickman on improvements to the National Forest planning process.

Northwest Forest Plan Topic of 2-Day Meeting

The Klamath, Northwest Sacramento and California Coastal Provincial Advisory Committees (PAC) and members of the State Community Economic Revitalization Team (SCERT) met March 5-6, in Redding, California, to discuss the issues involved in implementing the Northwest Forest Plan. The PAC and SCERT members worked together to further define implementation issues and individual PACs developed strategies for solutions to the issues. The group also reviewed accomplishments from the past 4 years. Public comment periods are scheduled throughout the 2-day session.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION (Region 6): Oregon and Washington

Huckleberry Land Exchange

On March 6, the Forest Service and Weyerhaeuser Company exchanged deeds for the Huckleberry Land Exchange western Washington. In the exchange, the Weyerhaeuser Company received 4,362 acres of public land managed by the Forest Service on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests (WA) in exchange for 30,253 acres of Weyerhaeuser-owned land. Weyerhaeuser also donated 2,000 acres of forestland, half of which were added to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. As a result, 246 miles of rivers and streams, 7,900 acres of riparian reserves, and 225 acres of wetlands were added to the public domain under national forest management. Participants will celebrate the exchange on April 7. Under Secretary Jim Lyons and Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck have been invited to attend.

Land Exchange in Central Oregon Consolidates Ownerships

The legal notice for the Forest Service and Crown Pacific Limited Partnership Land Exchange of 31,256 acres of National Forest System lands for 34,319 acres of Crown Pacific lands in central Oregon was published March 25 in the Bend Bulletin and the Klamath Falls Herald News, newspapers of record for the Deschutes, Fremont, and Winema National Forests, the forests where land was exchanged. The purpose of the exchange is to consolidate land ownership and enhance long-term resource conservation and management. Forest supervisors for the Deschutes, Fremont, and Winema National Forests signed a record of decision for the exchange on February 27. The decision may be appealed for 45 days from publication of the legal notice.

Employee Receives Award

Recently, Gifford Pinchot National Forest (WA) fisheries biologist Brian Bair received the Clark-Skamania Flyfishers 1997 Stream Guardian Award. The group recognized Bair for his outstanding contribution to the recovery of the Trout Creek watershed through the use of cooperative work and funding from a variety of Federal, State, county, and private groups.

Summit Fire Recovery Project

The Draft Supplement for the Summit Fire Recovery Project Environmental Impact Statement will be made available for public comment on March 27. The Malheur National forest supervisor withdrew the original decision for the salvage of 1996 fire-damaged timber from the Forest on January 8 to reexamine issues brought up by the public. Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith, Congressman Bob Smith, and Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber have expressed interest in seeing this project expedited. Of major concern is timber supply for three Grant County lumber mills, three major employers in the county, almost entirely dependent on Federal timber. Currently less than 20 million board feet (mmbf) are under contract while mill capacity is 127 mmbf. Another 30 mmbf is not available because of ongoing litigation. The proposed Summit Fire Recovery Project would salvage approximately 60 mmbf. The Forest Service is granting exemption from automatic stay of implementation during the appeals process to expedite the salvage operations.

SOUTHERN REGION (Region 8): Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia

Coordinator Position Created for Forest Inventory and Analysis Program

In seven southern States, the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program is shifting from the traditional system, where data are collected every 7 or 8 years in a State, to an annualized system, through which some data are collected every year in each State. A successful transition to the new annualized FIA process requires increased collaboration with State agencies and forest industry partners. To aid this transition, the Southern Research Station has established and filled a coordinator position to lead development of improved collaboration, with special focus on field crew logistics, data processing, and data analyses.

EASTERN REGION (Region 9): Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin

Conference on Riparian Management in Forests

The Northeastern Station sponsored a conference on Riparian Management in Forests of the Continental Eastern U.S. on March 23-25 in Columbus, Ohio. The conference was part of the Northeastern Station's commemoration of 75 years as a Forest Service Experiment Station. Topics discussed at the conference included: defining and classifying riparian ecosystems, hydrologic function, organic contributions, enhancing biodiversity, and riparian ecosystem values and benefits. Other sponsors for this conference were Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The website address for the conference is www.ncfes.umn.edu/riparian/

Urban Forestry Cooperators Encourage Emphasis on Urban Forest Health

The State and Private Northeastern Area published during the second week in March, "Urban Forest Health Needs Assessment Survey: Results and Recommendations," summarizing survey results of urban forestry professionals on managing the health of the urban forests of the Northeast. The survey found that less than 25 percent of the respondents rated the general health of the urban forests in their State or city "good to excellent." Less than half of the respondents reported that forest health is emphasized in their local programs; yet 99 percent believed that it should be. Long-lived urban forests are essential for healthy watersheds; yet most urban trees, which reach their maximum potential for environmental benefit at age 30 survive only 10 years.

REGION (Region 10): Alaska

FY 98 Interior Appropriations Act

The Alaska Region's workload study and workforce plan, drafted as directed by the Fiscal Year 1998 Interior Appropriations Act, was submitted to Congress March 11. Under the draft plan, the Tongass National Forest is unified under one forest supervisor with two deputies (previously three forest supervisors), the regional office remains in Juneau, and the number of full-time-equivalent positions for the region shows a downward trend to the year 2000.

Agreement Signed to Protect Fish Habitat

On March 16, the Alaska Regional Forester and the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game signed a Supplemental Memorandum of Understanding to protect fish habitat in Alaska. The signing of the agreement serves as a formal commitment between the two agencies to protect, maintain, and enhance the fish resources on 22 million acres of National Forest System lands in Alaska and to continue a longstanding cooperative relationship between the two.



United States
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Forest
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Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1700

Date: MAR 30 1998

Subject: USDA/HACU Summer Professional Work Experience Program

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

The Department of Agriculture is participating in the 1998 National Hispanic Internship Program, sponsored by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). This is a 10 week program beginning June 1, 1998 and ending August 7, 1998. All interns will attend an orientation session in Washington, DC and report to their respective work assignments on June 3.

The Forest Service has always taken a leadership role with this program and has been one of its strongest supporters. Last year we hosted 28 students throughout the agency. These students were assigned to National Forests, Research Stations and the Washington Office. Our goal for 1998 is to host 50 students. We expect to place the majority of these students at field units to ensure that they receive the best exposure to the unique work of the Forest Service. Such placements have proven to be successful and beneficial to both the students and the field units.

Over the years, feedback from this program has been extremely positive. I am confident that this will continue. Again, this year the Washington Office Civil Rights Staff will provide limited matching opportunities for units interested in multiple placements. I strongly encourage your participation in this very worthy outreach program. We should look at these students as our future employees and encourage them to explore potential careers with the Forest Service.

Please use the enclosed form to indicate your participation and direct it to the Washington Office Civil Rights Staff. If you have any questions, you may call (202) 205-0558.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1700

Date: MAR 30 1998

Subject: Chief's Multicultural Organization Award

To: Forest Supervisor, Mendocino National Forest

Congratulations to your Fire and Aviation Staff on being selected for the 1997 Chief's Multicultural Organization Award. This team was nominated along with nine other outstanding groups and individuals for this award.

Please let the members of this group know that I value their civil rights contributions to the Agency's vision of creating a multicultural organization. You can be proud of them as representatives of the Pacific Southwest Region and the Forest Service.

This award, accompanied by an inscribed trophy, will be presented at a ceremony during the National Leadership Conference on July 1, 1998, in Washington, DC. I am inviting the Team Leader or one other person from the team to attend the ceremony to receive the award. We will provide more information as soon as details of the ceremony are confirmed.

Building a diverse, multicultural Forest Service organization for the 21st century continues to be one of my top priorities. The work your Fire and Aviation Staff has done will go a long way in helping me accomplish this goal.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

cc:
Regional Forester, Region 5





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 6140
Route To: 1930

Date: **MAR 30 1998**

Subject: Fiscal Year 1998 Senior Executive Service Performance Elements and Standards

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

Enclosed are the fiscal year (FY) 1998 Senior Executive Service (SES) performance elements and standards. These include a revised Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights element (Element 4), and Indicators of Performance established from the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) for the Delivery of Program and/or Functions (Element 2). All performance elements are designated as "Critical."

For Performance Element 2 - Delivery of Programs and/or Functions, there are 43 trackable items from our GPRA Performance Plan that will be used to evaluate performance. This shorter list (our plan has 133 indicators) was reviewed and refined by the field, WO Staffs, and Deputy Chiefs to ensure that the agency's base functions and priorities were represented. We are also exploring the idea of reporting by exception if accomplishments are outside of a specified range (e.g., +/-5 percent). Quantifiable indicators associated with the research part of the "Generation of Knowledge" GPRA objective will not be used to evaluate Station Directors. Their evaluation will be based on the quality, relevance, and productivity of the research and development workload completed and feedback from their customers and partners.

Please review the performance standards and prepare your performance plan worksheet, AD-435A, for your upcoming midyear review. Note that not each Indicator of Performance is applicable to you; please refer to the appropriate check under responsible manager on the continuation page for Element 2. At the end of your midyear review, you will be asked to sign these revised standards and prepare them for your final rating at the end of the FY.

Like last year, the GPRA Indicators in Performance Element 2 should be used to evaluate FY 1998 performance of Forest Supervisors and, where appropriate, other line officers who report to you. An equivalent element in each Forest Supervisor's AD-435A, should reflect these standards.

Questions concerning the SES performance standards should be addressed to Denise Howell Parker, Human Resources Management, (703) 235-8102, extension 3051; questions about the GPRA indicators should be addressed to Rick Ullrich, Program Development and Budget, (202) 205-1176

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures

cc: Assoc Deputy Chiefs (OPS/P&L)

J.Lopez

T.Leeper

R.Ullrich

D.HowellParker

DHowellParker:3/6/98

IConcur:JTLeeper:3/9/98

IConcur:MPagan:3/9/98

IConcur:JGLopez:Acting Director for HRM:3/9/98

REVISED:DHowellParker:3/12/98

IConcur:JGLopez:3/13/98:Acting Director for HRM

CP

3/18/98

C

3/20/98

Part 1

TO: ops / wo

CC: rullrich

Part 2

I have concurred on the document

/tmp/axm/OM02602c/SES_perf_stds_fy98.aw

and it is ready for your review and action.

CP
3/18/98

From: **To:** 09/30/98

Series/Grade:

Agency/Division: USDA-Forest Service

Element

and Description: DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF PROGRAMS AND POLICY

The executive effectively develops programs to be administered, and designs and/or effectively supports the Administration and Department policy underlying programs.

- Makes recommendations and contributions which are generally accepted because they are based on and demonstrated sound judgement, cost effectiveness, and sensitivity to the effects on overall policy; and are supported by sound analysis and rationale.

-- Demonstrates innovative and creative thinking which results in progress toward resolving difficult issues, improving management or capitalizing on emerging opportunities.

-- Takes affirmative steps to support, provide, promote, and carry out Administration and Department policy, and interprets, effectively supports, and communicates such policy.

-- Keeps superiors informed of sensitive, controversial emerging issues, as well as problems and challenges which arise in the implementation and administration of Department programs.

-- Demonstrates ability to adapt to changing priorities, and meets established schedules and deadlines for development of programs and policy.

4.	Element Rating Levels (check one) and Documentation, if required	Exceeds []	Fully Successful []	Does Not Meet []
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5. Acknowledgment of Development and Receipt of Performance Plan Signatures
on this document certify discussion with employee and receipt of plan which
reflects current position description.

A. Employee's Sig. | Date | B. Supervisor's Sig. | Date | C. Reviewer's Sig. | Date

6. Progress Reviews (at least one must be completed)

A. Employee's Initials and Date | **B. Supervisor's Initials and Date**

[illegible]

From: **To:** 09/30/98

Series/Grade:

Agency/Division: USDA-Forest Service

Critical [X]

Non-Critical []

No. 2

The executive effectively directs and supervises the accomplishment of program or service functions by his/her agency or organizational unit.

- Implements strategies to achieve agency priorities as reflected in GPRA Strategic Plan objectives and annual performance plan goals (where applicable, see attached continuation page for Element 2).
- Completes assigned actions to develop, refine and integrate the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Criteria and Indicators (C&I) into agency planning, inventory, and monitoring activities (see Generation of Knowledge heading).

Exceeds []

Fully Successful []

Does Not Meet []

one) and Documentation, if required

A. Employee's Sig. | Date | B. Supervisor's Sig. | Date | C. Reviewer's Sig. | Date

6. Progress Reviews (at least one must be completed)

A. Employee's Initials and Date

B. Supervisor's Initials and Date

Continuation of Performance Element 2 - In subsequent years this list will be further refined to focus on a smaller set of core indicators based on the Natural Resource Agenda to improve our efforts to measure quality over quantity.

<u>Indicators of Performance</u>	<u>MAR #</u>	<u>Responsible Manager</u>			
	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>RF</u>	<u>AD</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>DC</u>
<u>Healthy aquatic ecosystems:</u>					
Streams and lakes restored or enhanced					
a) stream miles	68.3/70.3	X			
b) lake acres	68.4/70.4	X			
Soil and water resource improvements	13.0	X			
Roads obliterated	91.3	X			
<u>Healthy forest ecosystems:</u>					
Forest health surveys and evaluations	SPFAR	X	X		
Terrestrial wildlife habitat restored or enhanced	66.2	X			
Hazardous fuels reduction	16.2/16.3	X			
Stewardship Management Plans	SPFAR	X	X		
Forestlands maintained/improved by TSI	REF/TSI Rpt	X			
Reforestation	19.0	X			
Lands restored by commercial tree removal	Silva/Tracs	X			
<u>Healthy Rangeland ecosystems:</u>					
Noxious weeds treated	9.0	X			
Non-structural range improvements	29.0	X			
Insect and disease prevention/suppression	SPFAR	X	X		
<u>Hazardous Substance Response</u>					
Hazardous substance sites - response actions	USDA acc. report	X			
<u>Conserve TE&S Species:</u>					
Aquatic/Terrestrial TE&S habitat restored	72.4-6	X			
<u>Quality Recreation Experiences</u>					
Seasonal capacity available (PAOT-days)	26.0	X			
<u>Wilderness:</u>					
Class 1 airsheds with affirmative protection of air quality	81.2	X			
PSD air quality permit applications reviewed	81.1	X			
<u>Healthy Urban and Rural Communities:</u>					
Assisted urban communities	SPFAR	X	X		
Communities using community-based measurement systems	SPFAR	X	X		
<u>Sustainable Yield of Forest Products</u>					
Timber volume offered	77.4-5	X			
<u>Sustainable forage:</u>					
Range structural improvements	30.0	X			
Allotments administered to standard	75.1	X			
Grazing allotments analyzed/NEPA decisions implemented	75.3	X			
<u>Generation of Knowledge:</u>					
Prepare plan through Inventory & Monitoring Institute for developing protocols for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)	--				X (1)
SFM indicators monitored in FIA or FHM surveys	--				X (2)
Lands covered by Forest Health Monitoring	SPFAR	X	X		
Forest Plan revisions completed and underway	61.1/11.3	X			
<u>Protected land resources:</u>					
FERC license renewals	FLUR	X			
Lands Acquired in meeting LWCF targets	31.0/32.1-2	X			
<u>Efficient and effective infrastructure:</u>					
Roads maintained to standard (% of total)	91.2	X			
Buildings maintained to minimum legal standards (%)	Infra	X	X	X	
Roads reconstructed - appropriated funds	92.3	X			

(1) Responsibility of the EM Director and participating staffs through the Deputy Chiefs.

(2) Responsibility of the SPPI Director through Research and FHP Director through the S&PF Deputy Chief.

**United States Department of Agriculture
Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal Worksheet**

Page 3 of 4

1. Name:

Appraisal Period

From: To: 09/30/98

Position Title:

Series/Grade:

Agency/Division: USDA-Forest Service

2. Performance

Critical [X]

Non-Critical []

Element

No. 3**and Description:** MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

The executive effectively manages all resources, including financial resources, property, equipment, and human resources, in a manner which assures accomplishment of assigned responsibilities.

3. Standards(s):

- Establishes clear performance expectations and objectives in partnership with each employee and or group, and provides additional clarification of expectations and objectives, as necessary. Evaluates and rewards individual/group as appropriate.
- Values diversity - seeks and uses a broad range of experiences, backgrounds and points of view to achieve organizational goals, which supports everyone's success, while holding employees accountable for desired results, work place conduct, and cooperation.
- Successfully manages assigned program, operations, and resources of the unit, utilizing accepted managerial skills to develop and implement plans, operational procedures, and sound budget formulation and control methodology.
- Provides effective leadership and timely actions to assure that quality financial information is available in accordance with Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act and USDA financial standards and is integrated into the agency decisionmaking process.
- Supports the agency implementation activity for improving our financial health through improving current information and conversion to the new USDA financial system with improved knowledge and skills in place to maintain unqualified audit opinions of our financial statements and ensure funds are properly expended to meet congressional intent and the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act requirements.
- Maintains low accident frequency rates (personal injury, motor vehicle, and aircraft) not to exceed the average of all regions; or are on a downward trend; or evidence of strong action being taken to improve overall safety record.
- Takes action to monitor OWCP program effectiveness, to assure employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities, and given an opportunity to return to productive work while controlling costs.

[illegible]

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**United States Department of Agriculture
Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal Worksheet**

Page 4 of 4

1. Name: Position Title: Series/Grade:	Appraisal Period From: To: 09/30/98 Agency/Division: USDA-Forest Service
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2. Performance	Critical [X]	Non-Critical []
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Element**No. 4****and Description:** EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/CIVIL RIGHTS

The executive provides leadership to develop and implement strategic plans for civil right; enforces all civil rights; enforces all civil rights laws, rules, regulations, and executive orders; ensures that sufficient resources are available, hold all managers and supervisors accountable for achieving measurable civil rights goals and objectives in all employment, program delivery, and procurement activities.

3. Standards(s):

- Provides evidence of outreach efforts to serve underrepresented populations.
- Makes progress in developing a diverse work force by training and placing women and minorities into key Forest Service positions. Also, during the performance period there is a positive movement to narrow the gaps in PATCO among the average grades for non-minority females, minority females, minority males, and non-minority males (excluding entry level positions).
- Provides training and other developmental opportunities in EO/CR to meet regulatory requirements and organizational needs.
- Ensures timely submission, implementation and effective monitoring of unit EO/CR plans, initiated timely responsive corrective action, and monitors and seek to resolve employment and program complaints.
- Implements and enforces all applicable policies, regulations, rules, memorandums, etc., in compliance with or as a result of the USDA Civil Rights Action Team Report.
- Utilizes Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) results, early intervention program and other approaches to improve unit work environment.

4. Element Rating	Exceeds []	Fully Successful []	Does Not Meet []
Levels (check one) and Documentation, if required			

5. Acknowledgment of Development and Receipt of Performance Plan Signatures
 on this document certify discussion with employee and receipt of plan which reflects current position description.



United States
Department of
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Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date:

APR 1 1998

The Honorable J.D. Hayworth
United States House of Representative
1023 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hayworth:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

You have requested that the Forest Service present to the members of the Club a clear and succinct statement of all actions required to reopen the Club's target range or to develop another site on National Forest System lands as well as procedural information, precise details of the improvements that the Club would be expected to undertake, and the timetable for the environmental assessment.

Forest Supervisor McGee's letter to the Club, dated February 17, 1998, which is enclosed, describes in detail the information needed in order for the Forest Service to proceed with analyzing the Club's proposal as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is not appropriate for the Forest Service to prescribe precise design details or other actions that a permittee such as the Club would need to undertake to mitigate safety and environmental concerns. The Club is responsible for preparing a proposal which includes precise design details and an operating plan and which is consistent with the Club's financial and technical capability. Forest Supervisor McGee is proceeding with the environmental assessment based on the information he has received from the Club; a timeline for completion of the environmental assessment will be available shortly. If additional sites are proposed, analysis of those sites may extend the time needed to assess the proposals.

Forest Supervisor McGee's letter to the Club dated March 20, 1998 is also enclosed. This letter describes what has happened to date, reviews the information provided by the Club, and describes the NEPA and CERCLA processes underway. The letter also provides specific timelines.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, the proposed design and any alternatives must be analyzed in a public forum to disclose the environmental and social effects. Our primary concern is the potential harm to people and property from bullets leaving the target range, both directly and from ricochets.



In addition, we are concerned about lead and other hazardous substance contamination at the target range. The solution to the safety concerns is a well planned and comprehensive range design that contains bullets within the permitted area and that can be operated safely.

You may be aware of our efforts to listen to the concerns of the Club and to respond to the investigation by the House Committee on Resources. On the afternoon of January 20, 1998, Bob Joslin, Deputy Chief for the National Forest System and staff from the USDA Office of the General Counsel and the Coronado National Forest visited the range with Duane Gibson, staff to the House Committee on Resources. The next morning, Mr. Joslin met again with Mr. Gibson and members of the Club to listen to their concerns. In addition, 2 days prior to the February 12, 1998, hearing about this issue before the House Committee on Resources, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee, at the request of the Committee on Resources staff, Mr. Joslin met with the Committee staff and representatives of the Club. The next day the Committee staff and the Club presented Mr. Joslin with a proposed settlement agreement that was rejected because it contained unacceptable provisions. There was an additional visit to the Coronado National Forest by the Committee's staff on February 20, 1998 to visit the range as well as the area known as Redington Pass.

The House Committee on Resources issued subpoenas for the Chief of the Forest Service, Forest Supervisor McGee, and Caroline Holbrook, Assistant Director for Recreation for the Southwest Region to testify at the February 12, hearing. Enclosed are copies of testimony given by Bob Joslin and the Chief at that hearing. The testimony describes the sequence of events and the reasons why Forest Supervisor McGee temporarily suspended operations at the Club, as well as generally describing the process for resolving the safety and environmental issues connected with the range. We have provided to the House Committee on Resources, by letters and briefings, numerous documents relating to the Club, including documents from the administrative record in the litigation. We are currently endeavouring to respond to the Committee's extensive request for all records reflecting the Committee's investigation regarding the Club and safety and closure policies for target ranges on National Forest System lands.

While the Coronado National Forest has related its concerns orally and in writing to the Club over the past several months as noted above, a meeting between Forest Supervisor McGee and the Club would be helpful to improve communications on this issue.

We appreciate your interest in issues relating to the Club's permit and share your desire for a fair and timely resolution. The present target range presents health and safety problems. We do not want to be responsible for someone's injury or death because of design and safety deficiencies at the range. Forest Supervisor McGee is continuing the NEPA process to identify and analyze all viable alternatives to the current situation. We will be sure to keep you informed as we proceed. Identical letters have been sent to the signatories of your February 4, 1998 letter.

Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date: APR 1 1998

The Honorable Jim Kolbe
United States House of Representative
205 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kolbe:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

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Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date: APR 1 1998

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
Senate Hart 241
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

You have requested that the Forest Service present to the members of the Club a clear and succinct statement of all actions required to reopen the Club's target range or to develop another site on National Forest System lands as well as procedural information, precise details of the improvements that the Club would be expected to undertake, and the timetable for the environmental assessment.

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Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date:

APR 1 1998

The Honorable Ed Pastor
United States House of Representative
2456 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pastor:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

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Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date:

APR 1 1998

The Honorable Matt Salmon
United States House of Representative
115 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Salmon:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

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Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date: APR 1 1998

The Honorable John Shadegg
United States House of Representative
430 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Shadegg:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

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Sincerely,



MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1510

Date: APR 1 1998

The Honorable Bob Stump
United States House of Representative
430 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Stump:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 1998, regarding the Sabino Canyon target range operated by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club (the Club) under a permit issued by the Forest Service in the Coronado National Forest. The Club's permit was temporarily suspended immediately by Forest Supervisor John McGee on March 10, 1997, because of significant public safety concerns. The Club sued the Forest Service, seeking to declare the suspension unlawful and to enjoin its enforcement. In its amended complaint filed on December 18, 1997, the Club also sued Forest Supervisor McGee in his individual capacity and is seeking actual and punitive damages from both the agency and Mr. McGee personally. In addition, the agency's actions have been the subject of an ongoing Congressional investigation.

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MIKE DOMBECK

Chief

Enclosures



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 2600/2300
Route To:

Date: APR 1 1998

Subject: Maintaining Successful Conservation Partnerships

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

Ten years ago, some far-sighted outdoor enthusiasts joined in partnership with the Forest Service to improve habitat for wildlife and fish on some of our national forests. That initial effort took root and blossomed. Programs such as **Get Wild!**, **Rise to the Future**, **Bring Back the Natives**, **Every Species Counts**, and **NatureWatch** are the essence of collaborative stewardship. Conservation groups, industry, local communities, corporations, educational institutes, and other government agencies join with us to improve and restore habitat for wildlife and fish, and to recover and conserve rare species of plants and animals.

Since 1986, the Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants Challenge Cost-Share program has raised over \$150 million in partner dollars to match \$112 million in Forest Service expenditures to help restore wildlife and fish habitat. These partnerships make both fiscal and ecological sense. Partnerships are a critical tool in our effort to maintain the ecosystems essential for supporting healthy populations of salamanders and elk, turkeys and neotropical migratory birds, cutthroat trout and endangered suckers, Douglas-fir and prairie fringed orchids.

Similarly, the Forest Service Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources program has active partnerships with State and local agencies, interpretive associations and a broad range of interest groups. In FY 1997 alone, these cooperators leveraged \$10.4 million of Forest Service funds into over \$30 million for activities such as developing heritage sites, maintaining trails, and constructing recreational facilities.

Sometimes, we forget to value our partners for their efforts and contributions, yet partnerships are absolutely essential to making progress in our four priority areas: watershed health and restoration; sustainable forest management; and recreation. Maintaining successful partnerships requires a two-way commitment to working together in a way that brings not only results on-the-ground, but also a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction on the part of all involved. The enclosed bookmarks titled *A Guide to Maintaining Successful Partnerships: 10 Easy Steps*, provide 10 simple yet effective methods for nurturing and maintaining successful partnerships. Please share these bookmarks with your personnel and encourage them to employ these principles when engaged in cooperative relationships. By remembering to value our partners, we succeed in being not only good stewards of the land, but in being good stewards of the human spirit.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1550/6140

Date: APR 1 1998

Dr. Roger M. Rowell
Forest Products Laboratory
Forest Service, USDA
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Roger:

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you as the recipient of the 1998 Chief's International Forestry Award. This award was established to recognize contributions which exceed normal job responsibilities to promote the global mission of the Forest Service and the foreign policy objectives of the United States.

You are being recognized for your extraordinary skill and perseverance in contributing to the Forest Service mission globally by extending forest resources through development of technology to protect wood in adverse conditions. You exemplify the spirit and determination which will lead this agency to the forefront of the world's conservation organizations as we enter the 21st century. On behalf of the Forest Service, we thank you for your continued diligence and dedication especially under the difficult circumstances related to international communication and understanding.

Your work directly contributes to the Forest Service mission and you deserve international recognition for what you have accomplished.

You will soon receive a letter from the Office of International Programs giving you details about the Awards Ceremony to be held in Washington, DC, on July 1.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief



Caring for the Land and Serving People





File Code: 1700

Date:

APR 1 1998

Subject: Employment Discrimination Complaint Accountability

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

Recapping our conference call on the EEO Complaint Backlog Initiative, I wish to restate my commitment never to have another backlog of EEO complaints. My goals are to improve our system of accountability and to ensure that allegations of discrimination are addressed in a timely manner.

Through the Backlog Initiative we have made a significant step toward this goal. There are systems and resources available to help us continue this effort. I expect our new efforts to foster an environment where employees and managers are able to discuss concerns openly without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

I further expect you and the managers you supervise:

- to work with Civil Rights and the Employment Complaints Program staff to develop a positive, interest-based problem solving approach to handling employment discrimination complaints,
- to work with the counselor/mediators to develop reasonable offers to resolve issues based on facts developed during the informal inquiry, and
- to work at understanding the underlying causes of complaints thereby increasing our chances of preventing future complaints.

As we transition from the Backlog Initiative, there will be some adjusting to new systems and approaches to addressing this vital issue. The Civil Rights and Human Resources Management staffs are available for your use. If we use them effectively and remain committed and focused, I am confident that we will achieve the goals that I have set.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

April 2, 1998

Honorable Larry E. Craig
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Craig,

I have reviewed your letter of March 4, 1998, in which you question several personnel changes I have made at the Forest Service since the beginning of my tenure as Chief. I certainly appreciate your sincere interest in the management of the Forest Service. I also appreciate our conversations about personnel and your attempts to resist entreaties to become involved in micro-managing personnel decisions.

When I became Chief, there was wide agreement that Forest Service management was not what it should be. The deficiencies in Forest Service business management were discussed in reports from the General Accounting Office and the Office of the Inspector General. The need to improve management was also the subject of Congressional hearings and several private conversations with various individual members of Congress. When I accepted the job, the Secretary charged me with instilling new managerial vigor and accountability in the Forest Service. In order to accomplish this task, it was important for me to be able to have a team of senior agency managers who understood the need for change and would be able to act decisively and confidently to change the course of the agency.

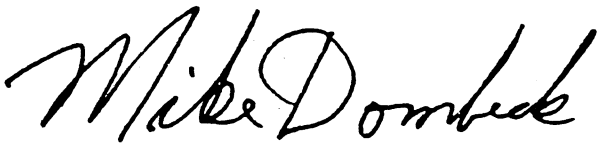
I took the Secretary's charge and the many criticisms seriously and immediately began the long, difficult and controversial process of changing the senior management of the Forest Service. My intent in taking these steps was to create a team of highly experienced resource and business professionals that could meet the challenge head on. The team I now have in place has over a century of combined natural resource and business management experience. I also expect to fill remaining vacancies as soon as possible.



As you know, it is often difficult for members of a large organization such as the Forest Service to accept change in the substance and style of management. It is inevitable that as the changes took place, some employees would feel dissatisfied and would feel the need to express their dissatisfaction to you and other members of Congress. The expressions of dissatisfaction are unfortunate. But the existence of dissatisfaction cannot prevent me from carrying out the much needed and often requested changes to the management structure of the Forest Service. In the long run I am confident that the millions of people who use our National Forests each day, as well as Congress, will discover that the management changes have resulted in a more efficient and effective organization, healthier and safer forests, and cleaner, more bountiful streams throughout the country.

Specific answers to your questions follow.

Sincerely,

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

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the Chief
Financial Officer

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW

Washington, DC
20250

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: Sally Thompson
Chief Financial Officer

Mike Dombeck
Chief
Forest Service

APR 2 1998

SUBJECT: Financial Foundation Information System (FFIS) Progress Report

ISSUE:

As you are aware, the Financial Foundation Information System (FFIS) has had serious difficulties associated with its implementation. The system has not been working properly and has attracted criticism from the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), General Accounting Office (GAO), and two independent contractors, Coopers & Lybrand and LMI. We are not sure that we can implement the previous commitment to install for all of Forest Service (FS) and RMA (Risk Management Assessment) for FY 1999.

DISCUSSION:

We are working together to address these issues. The task is complex because it implicates complicated linkages of systems development, operations, accounting and financial management. These problems can only be resolved by the strong, personal involvement of the senior management at the OCFO and FS. In fact, FFIS relationship with the FS has the potential to define the Department's reputation in regard to Financial Information Systems Vision and Strategy (FISVIS), and that responsibility has warranted the attention of a focused group of leaders from all involved areas.

With the assistance of Janet Potts from your office, the OCFO, FS, OIG, Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA) and the Chief Information Officer (CIO) have met twice since an initial March 2 conference. This process has allowed all involved agencies to express their concern and offer their input on proposed efforts to address this situation. Your office has assigned the CFO the task of leading this group, and, working in conjunction with all agency heads, she intends to maintain sustained senior management attention. Senior management of the OCFO and FS will meet twice each month to monitor progress and make critical decisions on implementation. A working group established by the team will meet at least weekly to review recommendations, analyze advancements, discuss shortfalls and build consensus on new items of importance. More importantly, this process requires managers of the FS and OCFO to develop ownership meeting the challenges we face together.

SUMMARY:

The attached report sets out the key steps and major decisions we face over the next 30 days. By that time, we will be positioned to make a final decision as to whether we can proceed to implement FFIS for the entire FS for FY 99. This document reflects an evolving process and provides you with our vision of what should be accomplished by October 1 and will be updated each month or more frequently if necessary.

We realize that difficult decisions lie ahead. We will keep you informed of our progress. The OCFO and FS share a critical role in this Department's quest to enhance its financial management measures through implementing FFIS, and that's a responsibility we will meet.

Attachment

cc: Francis Pandolfi
Forest Service

Roger Viadero
Inspector General

Ann Reed
Chief Information Officer

Steve Dewhurst
Office of Budget and Program Analysis

Janet Potts
Office of the Secretary

Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foundation Financial Information System

As of April 1, 1998

CURRENT STATUS:

The Financial Information Systems Vision and Strategy (FISVIS) is an initiative designed to implement a single integrated financial information system in USDA. Successful implementation of FISVIS will enable USDA to achieve an unqualified opinion on the USDA financial statements and achieve conformance with the requirements of the Federal Manager's Fiscal Integrity Act (FMFIA). More importantly, the implementation of FISVIS will provide policy, program and operating personnel with timely, reliable, consistent, accurate financial information when and where they need it.

FISVIS has a number of components, including the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS). FFIS is a new accounting system based on American Management System's (the contractor) Federal Financial System (FFS), commercial off-the-shelf software (COTS).

This report gives a current status of the implementation of the FFIS project. It identifies major management issues that must be addressed, and includes a schedule of operational tasks to be accomplished and management decisions to be made in the next 30 days. This report will be updated on a monthly basis and will include both long-term and short-term plans and milestones.

The need for a new financial information system is particularly pronounced in the Forest Service (FS). The FS is in the midst of a multi-year, complete reinvention of its overall financial management systems, activities, and personnel (the Financial Health project). FFIS is a key component of that project. Thus, even though FS is USDA's most complex agency, the FS was selected as the pilot to begin implementation of FFIS.

In October 1997, two regions and a research station of the Forest Service were implemented into the FFIS. Problems were anticipated with this complex implementation, but not to the extent encountered. Major milestones for system completion have not been met due to underestimating the complexity of the FS accounting processes called management code retroactive distribution and the volume of transactions these processes create. The decisions to accommodate these needs and create unique systems lengthened development time and cut short testing time for the October 1, 1997 implementation date. There has not been adequate project management of responsibilities and a disciplined approach at NFC, FS and the contractor. Management did not adequately assess staffing

skills and experience needed to develop and implement this complex financial system. Knowledge levels of the meaningful use of financial management information also were not adequate. The COTS contractor experienced excessive turnover and relied on inexperienced staff. These problems have been detailed in internal USDA reports and in external reports prepared by the General Accounting Office (GAO), the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and two outside contractors, Coopers & Lybrand and LMI.

While the initial implementation experienced greater problems than originally anticipated, we are acting aggressively to stabilize the system operation. Despite these difficulties, it is important to emphasize that vendors and employees are being paid on time, routine balancing and daily operations reports are being prepared and used, accounting transactions are being generated and accumulated, and personnel at both NFC and the Forest Service are becoming more familiar with the system.

We must continue to ensure sustained senior-level management attention from the Department, OCFO and FS for timely decision-making and support for the FFIS implementation effort. In the next 30 days, we will finalize the project management reorganization plan, strengthen project control mechanisms, and complete an accurate time line for decisions to be made for the next six months. This precise schedule will include action steps to be taken, completion dates, responsibilities, consequences if dates are not met and contingency plans. The plan, when completed next month, will also provide a year-to-date cost analysis, an estimate of necessary resources for future alternatives, and a recommendation to initiate an ongoing independent review by an outside contractor. In addition, the plan also will address the recommendations made in the reports of the IG, GAO and independent contractor.

Attached to this report is a schedule of these management issues that will be promptly addressed within the next 30 days to complete the FS initial implementation for FY98. Alternatives have to be considered for the next stage of implementation of additional FS regions as well as other USDA agencies by October 1, 1998.

FUTURE STEPS TO STABILIZE OPERATIONS (Short Term)

Management Reports/Business Process Reengineering

The single largest obstacle to stable operations has been trying to process the large volume of transactions created by the long-standing FS process of reallocation of expenditures between funds as more accurate information is obtained. This process is called management code retroactive redistribution. In the last several weeks the management of FS and the OCFO have discussed and agreed to discontinue this process for the FY98 data. This decision will require that the pilot units that established their management codes and budgets assuming this process would be in place to revise the process involved in computing the changes made to management code redistribution as final budgets are received and other conditions are changed for final reallocation of expenditures

between funds must identify a comparable replacement for this process. The FS has agreed to immediately identify alternative processes for the pilot entities and for the remainder of the Forest Service, so it can be implemented into FFIS in FY 99.

In addition, the FS will continue to clean up source data in other regions and stations in preparation for conversion, continue the training strategy to prepare financial personnel and others for an October 1 implementation date.

FY 97 Conversion -- Completion of the FY 97 Conversion process is dependent on running FS Management Code Distribution and FS Management Code Redistribution balances against ending FY 97 balances. These balances are necessary to provide beginning balances for FS reports for midyear review and regular internal financial reports. In late February, a different strategy was adopted to successfully run FS management code retroactive distribution for FY97 ending balances. This process is targeted for completion on April 15. This will set the stage for completion of FY 97 conversion by May 31. This task must be completed on time if we are to have any expectation of bringing the entire FS onto FFIS for FY 99.

Reporting-- FS originally identified 84 reports, which were required for validating balances, management reporting and the midyear review process. As of March 15, FS had agreed to limit requirements to 17 reports for this fiscal year. These reports will be available by May 1. FS anticipates that all internal reports will be tested by June 10. A few additional reports may be required for year-end processing. These reports will be used for the entire FS if we bring it on the FFIS in FY 99. If we meet this deadline, other reports may be needed next year as FS gains experience with the system.

Year 2000 (Y2K) -- The version of the contractor's FFS software currently installed at NFC is not Year 2000 compliant. The Year 2000 compliance problem can be corrected by moving from our current version of FFS to a Year 2000 compliant version. This is a priority project and all indications are that we are on schedule and will complete the conversion by June 30. The Y2K compliant version will then be used for all future FFIS processing. In order to ensure that the compliant version is fully reliable, date forward testing will commence in July and continue on the "time machine" into the fall of 1998.

Year-End Closing -- In October 1998, we will make the effort to close a fiscal year for the Forest Service with FFIS. A test closing is scheduled for June 1998; after evaluation, this test will provide time for adjustments prior to ensure success at the year's end.

Systems Capacity -- The contractor's COTS package and the need for better accounting information and more easily followed audit trails make FFIS a computer resource intense system. FFIS is taxing the current NFC computer hardware configuration and is even pressing the limits of the underlying IBM system software. However, we are assessing what additional hardware will be required to implement the entire FS. Due to procurement procedures and testing demands, we must make this decision and begin the procurement process by June 15, if we are to retain the option of implementing the entire FS or other agencies for FY 99.

The decision by FS to abandon FY 98 management code retroactive distribution greatly reduces computer hardware requirements and should solve the majority of the current system's capacity issues. Until the existing system is stabilized, we cannot collect meaningful metrics. In addition, the telecommunications capability for the FS and the NFC must be evaluated. This assessment could be done by an independent party through a joint effort between the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), OCFO and FS. We must obtain the necessary requirements and cost information in sufficient time to procure any necessary hardware and software, tentatively by June 1998.

Testing -- The IG, GAO and outside contractors have expressed concerns regarding the testing strategy for FFIS. The initial strategy addressed testing each piece of software as it is created. The pilot system's operation has become the de facto comprehensive integrated test for the FS implementation of software completed. We believe comprehensive integrated testing is needed in a controlled data environment in order to ensure the entire system works together. Such a plan will be developed by June 30 and must be implemented by August 30 if we want to retain the option of implementing the entire FS for FY 99.

Systems Enhancements -- The FFIS, as initially implemented, lacks features that both FS and OCFO/NFC need for efficient operations. The lessons learned during the first five months of operation have highlighted the need for basic features that will make this system more functional and efficient to operate. For example, the many "screen images" needed to do an inquiry on a procurement need to be unified into a single image. As currently implemented, inquiries are tedious and time consuming.

Difficulties in implementing and stabilizing the pilot FS regions/station have prevented us from focusing adequately on this issue. We are revising the implications of earlier implementation decisions in light of this current situation. We are working to achieve a consensus on what components must be added as we move forward.

Contingency Plan -- The FS has been positioning for future implementation October 1. Extensive training in the area of financial management concepts as well as the use of the new FFIS system is currently underway. This training is scheduled to continue through the end of the fiscal year. Whatever decisions are reached in the next 30 to 60 days, we must develop contingency plans to continue operations for FS. Further, if necessary, a plan for parallel systems operations must be developed, which would retain the data in the old system while the new system runs simultaneously. If FFIS is not ready for further implementation by October 1, FS will continue to operate the pilot units in FFIS and keep the rest of FS in CAS for one more year. The importance of contingency planning is a recovery plan in the case that we do implement October 1 and for whatever reason it is not feasible and we must go back to CAS.

FUTURE ALTERNATIVES:

FFIS implementation is encountering serious, but possibly insurmountable, problems. While we address the current obstacles, we are examining alternatives for the next stage of FFIS

implementation. The OCFO, in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary, the Forest Service, the OIG, and the OCIO, is considering the following alternatives for the next stage of implementation of FFIS (defined as that which will take place as of 10/1/98):

- Continue to operate the currently implemented FS units, but implement no new entities
- Implement a limited number of additional FS units
- Implement all of the remainder of the FS
- Implement another small USDA agency and continue to operate the currently implemented FS regions.

The effort and resources required for the remainder of FY 1998 and the implementation schedule for the remainder of USDA will be affected by the alternative selected. At this time there is not sufficient information to make a decision; we have to complete and evaluate the activities identified in this report. This information will be used to put together a strategy for the remainder of the year, and by definition, for future years.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS TO ENSURE FFIS PROJECT COMPLETION

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>	<u>RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED</u>
Sustained senior-level management attention	Ongoing	Office of the Secretary (OSEC) OCFO FS	
Management Reports/Business Process Reengineering	(DATE)	FS	TBD
Project Management Reorganization	4/30/98	OSEC OCFO FS	TBD
Design Project Control Plan	4/30/98	FS OCFO	TBD
Determine staffing skills, experience and knowledge levels required for project advancement	5/30/98	FS OCFO OCIO	Contractor funding needed.
Evaluate outside vendor's performance	4/30/98	FS OCFO OCIO	None
Incorporate into project plan recommendations from independent reports	4/30/98	OCFO FS	None
Verify cost-to-date of FFIS implementation	4/30/98	OCFO	TBD

Estimate completion costs of future FFIS implementation

6/30/98

OCFO
FS
OCIO

TBD

Decision on future implementation for 10/1/98

5/7/98

OSEC
OCFO
FS

None



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

Cg. April 1998
14th & Independence SW
P. O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1700
Route To: 6100

Date:

Subject: Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP)

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

Enclosed you will find the 1998-2002 Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP). Please use the document to plan your outreach and recruitment activities, as we continue our efforts to increase the diversity of our workforce.

Please contact Linda LeBlanc at (202) 205-0816 if you have questions or comments.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosures





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 6140-5/5300

Date: APR 6 1998

Mr. David Griffel
Zone Special Agent, LE&I
Uinta National Forest
88 West 100 North
Provo, Utah 84660

Dear Agent Griffel:

It is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to receive the Chief's Award for 1997 as the Forest Service Special Agent of the Year. I am proud to honor you for your outstanding continuing performance as the Zone Special Agent serving several National Forests in Utah. However, this award also honors you for your investigative excellence in the investigation, coordination, and prosecution of the Polar Mesa archeological resource damage case; one of the largest and most successful ARPA prosecutions in history. You are a fine example of the key role our Law Enforcement and Investigations program plays in the protection of our nation's National Forest resources.

I would like to ask that you join the national Management Committee, myself, and the Director of Law Enforcement and Investigations on July 1, 1998, in Washington, D.C., so we may present your award. The Special Agent of the Year award includes a \$2500 cash award, and other special recognition items. You will be receiving additional information on the specifics of the awards ceremony in the near future.

Again, I offer my sincere congratulations and thanks on this well deserved honor.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 6140-5/5300

Date: APR 6 1998

Mr. James Kendel Culbertson
Law Enforcement Officer, LE&I
Daniel Boone National Forest
705 W. College Avenue
Stanton, Kentucky 40380

Dear Officer Culbertson:

It is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to receive the Chief's Award for 1997 as the Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. I am proud to honor you for your outstanding continuing performance as a K-9 Officer on the Daniel Boone National Forest. However, this award also honors you for your outstanding professional accomplishments in search and rescue, including your June 1997 heroic rappell rescue of a visitor who had fallen off of a cliff thereby saving his life. Your extraordinary accomplishments in drug enforcement, including numerous seizures and prosecutions with your K-9 "DEA", community drug prevention activities, marijuana surveillance, and arrest activities leading to 89 convictions in 4 years, also sets an excellent example for our drug enforcement program. You are a fine example of the key role our Law Enforcement and Investigations program plays in the protection of our nation's National Forest resources.

I would like to ask that you join the national Management Committee, myself, and the Director of Law Enforcement and Investigations on July 1, 1998, in Washington, D.C., so that we may present your award. The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award includes a \$2500 cash award, and other special recognition items. You will be receiving additional information on the specifics of the awards ceremony in the near future.

Again, I offer my sincere congratulations and thanks on this well deserved honor.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

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

File Code: 1900-1

Date: APR 14 1998

Honorable Alan G. Lance
Attorney General
State of Idaho
Boise, Idaho 83720-0034

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

Thank you for your letter regarding our proposed interim regulation for national forest roadless areas. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The intent of our proposed interim rule is to provide a suspension on road construction and reconstruction in some roadless areas on National Forest System lands during which Congress, the Administration, and the American people can engage in a dialogue. After we published the proposed interim rule in the *Federal Register* on January 28, 1998, we heard from many citizens and elected officials that the 30-day comment period was too short to permit full participation of those interested in the proposed rule. In addition, many who wrote and called asked that we host public meetings around the Nation to further facilitate public input and discussion. We did extend the public comment period to March 30, 1998, and have held a series of public meetings throughout the Nation.

I believe that this rule can be implemented consistent with the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP). I support the ICBEMP and believe its success is in great part due to the involvement and commitment of the states and local governments. I appreciate the supporting documents you provided and take your comments and attachments very seriously. We will carefully consider your concerns and comments as we work with you and the American public to improve management of roads on National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

