



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES "ADVICE ON ADVICE" JANUARY 26, 2009 NOTE.

Introduction: During the transition from one Administration to another, elected officials receive advice and recommendations from many sources on each federal agency, its people and its past decisions.

We have reviewed those given to President Obama's Transition Team concerning the U.S. Forest Service. We will not go into detail on each specific suggestion, but feel it important to identify "First Principles" and "Cautions" so as to be helpful to those who are guiding and overseeing the U.S. Forest Service and who are considering a myriad of recommendations.

### FIRST PRINCIPLES:

1) Set the Administrations agenda, provide resources to achieve this agenda and direct the U.S. Forest Service professionals to provide the leadership and technical expertise to make progress on achieving your objectives. Be open to what is achievable, not all that may be desired is achievable.

The U.S. Forest Service may have already forward looking leadership strategies underway. For example, in the area of climate change, the agency and its scientists/administrators are currently pursuing a number of important strategies. Some agency scientists have received the Nobel Peace Prize recognition for their climate change work.

Another example is the U.S. Forest Service initiative to remove fire prone trees, particularly in western forests. Not only will these management practices provide for protection of forests, watersheds, homes, communities and surrounding communities, but accompanying work by Research and State and Private Forestry mission areas is helping create useful products and energy options.

By removing the hazardous fuels build up of these trees and brush, forests become less of a catastrophic risk to important forest and community values and investments. Removing trees also contributes jobs and income to local and regional economies, contribute to increased long term carbon storage in marketable wood products while providing new alternatives for meeting our Nation's energy security needs.

2) Keep professionals in U.S. Forest Service positions at all organizational levels. They have extensive professional credentials and practical work experiences. As civil servants they will continue to serve you competently, honestly and with respect and openness.

In the U.S. Forest Service, you have a well developed, four tier organizational framework-national, regional, forest and ranger district-which is integrated across all four missions areas; NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEMS; RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT; STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY and

INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY. Our colleagues work and contribute to to mission accomplishment in more than one area or program.

Further this organizational structure is responsive to local conditions while maintaining a national focus.

3) Active management on all National Forest System Units across the full spectrum of multiple use program areas is essential to meeting land stewardship statutes and responsibilities, citizen and community expectations. Forest Service and University research provides a wealth of basic and applied science information and on-the-ground agency implementation experience to guide decisions and their implementation.

You'll hear stories, faulty premises and associated recommendations that only "natural forces" should provide the management function on National Forest System Units; that multiple use is an outdated concept and approach.

With increasing populations and increasing demands on a fixed resource, the challenge of multiple use is greater than ever. This concept has been guided by the principle of managing for "the greatest good, for the greatest number for the long run", It's the context of our Nation, its needs and its resources that change, not the noble purposes of this concept.

#### CAUTIONS:

A) Be careful not to accept, at face value, statements that there is only one way or one approach. Decisions must be based on the best science and professional judgment. Forests, grasslands, watersheds, and communities are very complex, adaptable, dynamic and diverse at local and regional levels. Thus local approaches that meet biological needs, laws and regulations and the need of the people are likely to be best.

B) Do not add in "stand alone" independent, political positions within the U.S. Forest Service organization. In any agency this signals mistrust with the very people you need to trust and depend upon. It's a duplication and adds bureaucracy.

One example of this we reviewed is the recommendation to establish a "science advisor" position. This is not needed. You already have a science organization with many science advisors. And a capable, respected U.S. Forest Service Deputy Chief for Research & Development who serves as the agency's senior science advisor and administrator.

The U.S. Forest Service has carefully guarded its research organization so that it is independent of, but works closely with forest managers inside and outside the agency.

C) Do not try to mico-manage thru the budget process. Rather set your Administrations legislative and operational agenda and fund the agency so it can help make progress and achieve results.