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What We Believe! What We Advocate!

- Our nation's forests are assets that contribute significantly to the long-term well-being of the American people. They must be protected, maintained, and restored where needed for sustainability, to assure their benefits are available to future generations.
- The National Forests and Grasslands are unique parts of our total forest and rangeland resource. They benefit the whole nation and have particular significance to rural communities within and adjacent to them. Within their statutory mandates, these lands should be managed so they are assets both nationally and to these local communities.
- The long-term management of the National Forest System under the provisions of the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the planning requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 helps to ensure that these lands best meet the needs of the American people.
- Proper protection and management of the National Forests and Grasslands require an adequately financed and staffed, professional, interdisciplinary organization.
- Leadership of the U.S. Forest Service is best served by career professionals with demonstrated natural resource management experience and organizational management skills. This helps to ensure that the Congress, the Administration, and others will receive sound, non-partisan advice on resource management issues.
- The integration of the four principal elements of the Forest Service mission – National Forest System Management, Research, State and Private Forestry, and International Forestry– has a proven record of ensuring that the best scientific and technical information is available to and used by all people involved in the protection and management of our nation's forest and rangeland resources.
- Our nation's forests and rangelands are under pressure from increasing demands for goods and services, increasing development in the wildland-urban interface, and are affected by changing climate. At the same time, forest research in the private sector and at universities is declining. Continued support and expansion of Forest Service research programs are essential to ensuring the scientific foundation needed to respond to these pressures and changes is available.
- Our nation's forests and rangelands are a mix of ownerships across the landscape. The management and use of Federal and State Parks and Forests interact with the management and use of private forest lands and adjacent communities. It is essential that forest management programs, particularly programs for the protection of forests from fire and other threats, be closely integrated. Adequate funding of the State and Private Forestry program helps to ensure that state agencies are adequately financed to meet their responsibilities and to provide the needed integration.
- We live in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. It is essential that land managers and research scientists have the capability to maintain contacts with their counterparts around the world and participate actively in international forestry activities.
- Maintaining an adequate system of roads and trails, and recreation and administrative facilities is essential both to protecting forests and watersheds and to helping provide economic stability and opportunity for local communities, to meeting the American people's needs for outdoor recreation, and for proper protection and management of forests and rangelands.
- Fire has played a role in shaping the characteristics of many of our forests and rangelands. Our climate is changing and is different than that which shaped our forests and rangelands prior to European settlement. A significant portion of our population of 300 million people lives in or near our forests and rangelands and is dependent upon our National Forests for clean water and for other resources. Smoke from wildfires affects air quality

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over wide areas. These factors make return to “natural” fire regimes impracticable in much of the country. Never-the-less, carefully prescribed fire can be a useful tool in the protection and management of our forests and rangelands. Resource managers should use the full range of management tools, including prescribed fire, to establish and protect resilient forests and rangelands that can adapt to changing conditions.

- Given the demands of our growing population and concerns for public health and well-being, the Congress has enacted a vast body of environmental law. Management of wildfires and their consequences must meet the requirements of these laws, particularly, the Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act mandate to maintain the productivity of the land and the requirements of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts to protect the quality of our air and water.
- When fire is used to obtain resources benefits, it is essential that the decision reflect Forest Land Management Plan direction; that it be supported with a sound assessment and balancing of both the anticipated resource benefits and the probable adverse impacts, and be based on a documented judgment that the fire can reasonably be expected to remain within prescription until extinguished.
- Forest Land Management Plans help to ensure that management of National Forest System lands is consistent with statutory direction and responsive to the current needs of the people. Planning efforts have been hindered by continued efforts to re-do planning regulations. As a result, many plans are long overdue for revision. Priority should be given to bringing Land Management Plans up to date.
- Thrifty, resilient forests play an important role in carbon sequestration and should be a part of our Nation’s strategy for addressing climate change. Maintaining the productivity of our forests was one of the purposes for which the National Forests were established. Prompt rehabilitation of damaged watersheds and reforestation with appropriate species is essential to fulfilling these purposes.
- Controlling tree density (stocking) and fuel levels through active management can make forests more resilient and reduce their vulnerability to the otherwise catastrophic effects of insects, disease, and fire. Not every acre needs to be treated, but creating a mix of managed stands across the landscape can contribute significantly to the sustainability of the whole forest.
- Funding for treatment of excess fuels is important, but given the magnitude of the needed work and demands on the federal budget, the only way to get on top of the problem is to utilize the economic values of the material that needs to be removed to help cover the cost of removal. Its use can contribute to meeting our needs for wood products and energy. Research has and can continue to develop economic uses for material not currently marketable. However, needed investments in plants and infrastructure will be forthcoming only if investors believe the National Forests will be a reliable source of supply. Consistent, adequately funded programs are essential for businesses to make the investments to do the work efficiently and thus minimize the cost to the government of doing these restoration treatments.
- The current budget approach for funding fire suppression is seriously disrupting the essential programs of the Forest Service, including management of the National Forest System, Research, State and Private Forestry, and International Forestry. It is reducing the capacity for cooperative programs with other agencies. The costs of suppressing wildfires should be separated from the regular budgets of the Forest Service and other land management agencies.
- ***Caring for the Land and Serving People*** remains a valid and essential role for the U.S. Forest Service.

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees is made up of men and women who spent their careers involved with the management of our Nation’s forests and rangelands. Members believe in the statutory Multiple Use - Sustained Yield mandate for management and use of the National Forest System and they maintain their interest and support for sound, science-based management of our nation’s forest and rangelands.