

WASHINGTON, September 9, 2009 - U.S. Forest Service Chief Thomas Tidwell announced the appointment of Leslie Weldon as Regional Forester of the Northern Region of the Forest Service. Weldon will oversee 15 national forests and 4 national grasslands within the states of Montana, Idaho and North Dakota. She is currently the External Affairs Officer for the US Forest Service in Washington, D.C. Weldon will fill the position that Tidwell occupied when he was named Chief.

"Leslie brings a breadth of leadership experience in natural resource management and building public advocacy and partnerships," said Chief Tidwell. "She has an extensive background in managing natural resources across the local and national level. Leslie will be an excellent Regional Forester and an outstanding addition to the national leadership of the Forest Service."

Weldon began her career as a summer hire on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in Washington fighting fire and surveying wildlife. Since then she held biologist positions on the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie, at the National Headquarters, and in the Northern Regional Office. She also served as Stevensville District Ranger on the Bitterroot National Forest, as Liaison to the US Army and as Executive Policy Assistant to former Forest Service Chief Michael Dombeck. Weldon was Forest Supervisor on the Deschutes National Forest from 2000 - 2007.

Weldon holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Virginia Tech. She and her husband Michael Weldon have twin sons who attend Oregon State University.

She will begin her new assignment later this fall.