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Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710

Chief Urges Restoration of Land Health Legacy

In a major address on "Protecting and Restoring a Nation's Land Health Legacy," FS Chief Mike Dombeck challenged FS employees to "ensure that the incentives that drive all aspects of our program promote ecological sustainability. And "we must bring a greater accountability, more public scrutiny, and transparency, to all our processes," he added.

The Chief's address, delivered on Feb. 3, in Missoula, Mont., "is the most articulate, mature explanation of the Forest Service's natural resource agenda I have seen to date," says Station Director Hal Salwasser. "There is a strong role for FS research and development both described and implied by the speech. And this role applies to public as well as private lands."

"At PSW, we are strongly aligned with the Natural Resource Agenda and will continue to use its themes to improve our capacity to deliver quality science products to our customers," said Hal. He urged all Station employees to read the speech and "give some thought to how well your individual and unit work is positioned to further the worthy aims of this bold policy agenda."

Because of the significance of the Chief's remarks, *FYI* is publishing in this issue, below, and its next two issues major excerpts (readers can find the full text on the Internet at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/intro/speech/19990203a.html>).

A few months ago, I met with the senior leadership of the Forest Service at Grey Towers, the home of Gifford Pinchot. Surrounded by so much history and tradition, it was impossible not to be impressed by 100 years of Pinchot's rich legacy.

How will the decisions we make on the land today influence what we are remembered for one hundred years from now? That should be the question that guides every decision we make. What made Pinchot's young Forest Service unique was a set of conservation values that were not necessarily popular but were always made in the long-term interest of land health. For decades, the Forest Service followed those conservation values and argued, for example, against wasteful clearcutting practices that devastated the watersheds of the Appalachians, and northeastern and Great Lakes area forests.

Following World War II, another set of values came to the forefront - helping to fulfill the national dream of providing families with single family homes - good and important values. Our timber harvests escalated for nearly a quarter of a century. Along the way, social values changed. Many people ceased viewing national forests and grasslands as a warehouse of *outputs* to be brought to market and instead began assigning greater value to the positive *outcomes* of forest management. Wildlife and fish habitat, recreation, and clean water, wilderness, and

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Office Shuffle Abounds at Albany Headquarters

Moving vans were a common sight at the West Annex Building location of PSW headquarters at Albany this month as units continue to either move in or move out. Earlier, the Library unit shifted to its new location at the FS Region 5's offices at Mare Island, in Vallejo. Then the following week, the FS Washington Office Civil Rights Staff Employee Complaints Group moved out to join the Library unit at Mare Island.

These two shifts had to dovetail with a move to relocate PSW scientists on the second floor of the West Annex Building to the first floor, so that the space, including unused laboratories, could be made available to USDA Agricultural Research Service scientists interested in renting more space. Also moving to the first floor this month will be a few personnel management specialists from the FS Region 5 who are not moving to Mare Island with the rest of the regional personnel staff.

Scheduled to move into space vacated by the Library are scientists from the Institute of Forest Genetics Research Unit, Urban Forestry Research Unit, and a number of Albany-based scientists from other units.

FS Regional Office Operational at Mare Island

Today was the FS Region 5 headquarters' first fully operational day, with full staff on board at Mare Island, off Vallejo. Its new address is 1323 Club Drive Vallejo, CA 94592, and new telephone number for general public inquiries is: (707) 562-8737. Employees are being assigned their own phone number extensions, all of which will have the 707 area code and a 562 prefix. The R-5 Regional Office had been located in San Francisco since 1908, and since 1944 at 630 Sansome Street. An estimated 300 FS employees relocated in stages between Feb. 2 and 14. Mare Island was an active naval base from 1854 until its closure in 1996. The Regional Office occupies a completely renovated building that formerly housed a naval training facility.

Station Celebrates Black History Month

PSW employees this month are observing Black America History Month, with its theme of "The Legacy of African-American Leadership for the Present and the Future." The theme expresses the rich legacy of African-American leadership during the past two centuries. At Albany headquarters and at field sites, programs have been scheduled, including displays, video presentations, and book readings. Station Director Hal Salwasser urges all employees to "recognize and celebrate all the ways in which African Americans have enhanced our Nation and strengthened our communities."

(Chief's address, continued)

cultural and spiritual values became more and more important as national goals.

The result is that today, we often find ourselves caught in the middle between competing interests. Some look to Congress to “fix” our organic mandate. Others push to limit the number of citizen appeals. Still others ask courts to resolve land use policies through litigation. Too often we find ourselves waiting for someone else to resolve our issues for us.

The fact is that the roadless areas, wilderness, recreation and old-growth issues of today are no different than the 100-year-old debate over clearcutting. Our obligation is to exercise leadership over the most vital conservation issues of our generation.

Pinchot himself said, “we must everywhere always prefer results to routine.” No support exists for a process-oriented and labor intensive bureaucracy. History is replete with agencies and businesses that could not, or would not, adjust to changing times and consequently became obsolete. The giants such as Pinchot, Leopold, Bob Marshall, Carson, and Arthur Carhart set another far higher, far more memorable and far more forward thinking standard—helping communities develop a more harmonious relationship with the land and water that sustain us. Our challenge is to measure up to their legacy.

We are making progress.

* We articulated and are implementing a common sense and science-based natural resource agenda.

* Our financial management reforms are on track, and we have greatly reduced our long-standing backlog of civil rights complaints.

* The Committee of Scientists recommendations on draft planning regulations will soon be released and draft regulations will follow.

* Our interim roadless proposal will soon be finalized and we are developing a long-term forest roads policy.

We must accelerate the pace. Society demands clean water, species conservation, more outdoor recreation opportunities, conservation education, eradication of non-native invasive

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species, landowner and community assistance programs, and new research and technologies on forest inventory and analysis, wood conservation and more efficient wood utilization.

Incentives and Challenges

Our challenge today is to ensure that the incentives that drive all aspects of our programs promote ecological sustainability. We have proposals, and a few successes that, with the funding of Congress, will help ensure that future forest management decisions are driven by the long-term interests of the land and the people that depend on it.

We must bring greater accountability, more public scrutiny, and transparency to all our processes. For example, we are financing a significant percentage of our costs through timber related “trust funds” that are not subject to annual appropriations or public scrutiny. Given that timber production on national forests has declined by 70 pct in less than a decade, such an approach is unsustainable. This year, we will begin to implement administrative reforms to our trust funds while we consider more permanent legislative solutions.

Historically, the agency’s success was often measured, and consequently funded, by outputs from the national forest system such as board feet of timber produced or the amount of grazing on forests and grasslands. This year we will develop and begin to implement new land health performance measures that evaluate such things as clean water, wildlife and fish habitat, forest ecosystem health, and soil productivity and stability. We will still track traditional outputs of goods and services but they will be accomplished within the ecological sideboards imposed by land health.

(To be continued in the next FYI issue)

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