

1/12/95

USDA Forest Service Briefing Book



January 1995

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Program Overview	1
Priorities for Secretary Involvement	2
Current Issues	2
USDA Forest Service Overview	3
Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future	3
Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles	4
Our Course to the Future	4
Long-Term Strategic Plan	5
History, Organization, and Authorities	5
Evolution of Forest Service Programs	5
Organizational Structure	6
Major Statutory Authorities	6
Description of Programs	7
Forest Research	7
State and Private Forestry	7
Management of the National Forests and Grasslands	10
International Forestry	10
Human Resources	10
Staffings and Budget	10
Priorities for Secretarial Involvement	13
The Draft 1995 RPA Program	13
Implement Ecosystem Management	14
Improve Forest Health	15
Increase USDA's Profile on Natural Resource Issues	17
Review and Revise Existing Legislative Authorities	17
Facilitate Forest Service Reorganization	18
Enhance Assistance to Private Forest Landowners	19
Enhance Rangeland Management	20
Pass 1995 Farm Bill	21
Current Issues	23
Water Resources	23
The Endangered Species Act (ESA)	23
PACFISH	23
Tongass Land Management Plan Revision	23
President's Pacific Northwest Forest Plan	23
RPA Program for 1995	24
Budget Rescissions	24
Forest Legacy	24
AmeriCorps	24
Timber Sale Program	24
Timber Sale Budget	24

Cancellation of Timber Sales for Environmental Reasons	24
Ski Area Permit Fees	25
Mining Law Reform	25
Landless Natives	25
American Indian/Native American Relationships	25
Undocumented Workers	25
Job Corps Program Reorganization	25
Firefighter Safety	25
Air Tankers	26
Financial Integrity	26
Status of Audit Implementation	26
States' Rights	26
County Supremacy Movement	26

Executive Summary

Program Overview

Our land ethic is to promote the sustainability of ecosystems by ensuring their health, diversity, and productivity. Our ethic includes the active use of ecosystems, through both preservation and manipulation, to gain these benefits—as long as this use does not unduly impact ecosystem sustainability.

Our service ethic is to tell the truth, obey the law, work collaboratively, and use appropriate scientific information in caring for the land and serving people.

We live our ethics through ecosystem management by focusing our priorities through the four elements of our “Ethics and Course to the Future”: protect ecosystems, restore deteriorated ecosystems, provide multiple benefits for people within the capabilities of ecosystems, and ensure organizational effectiveness.

Two key principles underlie the Forest Service’s organizational structure. The first is decentralization, which keeps the decisions as close to the natural resources and customers as possible. The second principle is separation of the research and management programs of the Forest Service. This ensures research results are as objective as possible.

The Forest Service is the largest of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, employing just over 35,000 full-time employees and 17,000 other category employees, for a total of 40,612 full-time equivalents (FTE’s). About 98 percent of the total work force works outside Washington, DC, and about 85 percent works west of the Mississippi River.

The Forest Service has a broad array of programs to achieve its mission, including:

Forest Research: The Forest Service has the largest forestry research organization in the world that provides the scientific foundation for sustainable forest development in the United States and other regions of the world.

State and Private Forestry (S&PF): Assistance, not regulatory control, is provided to State and private landowners. About 59 percent of the Nation’s commercial forests are owned and managed by nonindustrial private owners.

National Forests and Grasslands: The Forest Service manages about 191 million acres of public land, which comprise 8.5 percent of the total land area in the United States. These public lands are some of the Nation’s greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and special significance for all Americans.

International Forestry (IF): The Forest Service has an ongoing program of international forestry assistance and exchange that was expanded in the International Forestry Cooperation Act and 1990 Farm Bill.

Human Resources: The Forest Service participates in a number of special human resource programs that employ, train, or educate specific groups of people. Examples include AmeriCorps, Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and Youth Conservation Corps.

Priorities for Secretary Involvement

Many changes have been initiated over the last 2 years to more fully integrate ecosystem management into all Forest Service programs and to implement other administration priorities. The Secretary's Office needs to be involved to complete these actions. Involvement might be in the issuance of regulations, such as the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) regulations; in gaining funding support for the FY 1996 budget, for example for assistance to State and private landowners, and in working with other Departments, such as approving process reengineering. Top priorities for Secretary involvement include:

1. Development of recommended 1995 RPA program.
2. Implement ecosystem management.
3. Improve forest health.
4. Increase USDA's profile on natural resource issues.
5. Review and revise existing legislative authorities.
6. Facilitate Forest Service reorganization.
7. Enhance assistance to private forest landowners.
8. Enhance rangeland management.
9. Include forestry considerations in the 1995 Farm Bill.

Current Issues

The Secretary's Office is likely to face several issues during the next 6 months that will be raised by any number of parties outside of the Department. Given the breadth of Forest Service programs and their wide geographic distribution, these issues could arise from a number of places, especially during these tight budgetary times.

Topics that could be raised include water resource issues in many Western states, funding for the Forest Legacy program, implementation of the President's Pacific Northwest Forest Plan, soundness of Forest Service financial statements, undocumented workers hired by contractors, Job Corps Program reorganization, timber budget reductions, and State and county rights that affect the management of Federal land.

USDA Forest Service Overview

The phrase "Caring for the Land and Serving People" captures the spirit of the Forest Service mission. The Forest Service mission is to achieve quality land management under sustainable multiple use management concepts to meet the diverse needs of the people.

The Forest Service, provides leadership in the management, protection, and use of the Nation's forests and rangelands. The Forest Service has embraced ecosystem management as its operating philosophy. The Agency takes an ecological approach to the implementation of multiple use management, providing sustained yields of renewable resources such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation.

The Forest Service is responsible for the 191-million-acre National Forest System (NFS), with its 156 national forests (NF's) and 19 national grasslands (NG's), in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. In cooperation with State and local governments, the Agency's S&PF program provides professional and financial assistance to Tribal governments, rural landowners, and communities on forestry and economic development. The IF program of the Forest Service enables the Agency to share its technical expertise and managerial skills with other nations. The research program of the Forest Service conducts extensive research to enhance and protect productivity on all of America's forests and rangelands, with special attention to long-term natural resource issues having national and international scope.

Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future

The Forest Service draws passion and commitment in its mission from its land and service ethics.

"Our land ethic is to promote the sustainability of ecosystems by ensuring their health, diversity, and productivity."

Growing understanding of the complexity of ecosystems has expanded thinking on sustainability—from emphasis on sustained product yields to sustaining the ecosystems that provide a variety of benefits.

Through ecosystem sustainability, present and future generations will reap the benefits that healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems provide. Our ethic includes the active use of ecosystems, through both preservation and manipulation, to gain these benefits—as long as this use does not unduly impact ecosystem sustainability.

"Our service ethic is to tell the truth, obey the law, work collaboratively, and use appropriate scientific information in caring for the land and serving people."

Maintaining public trust requires living our service ethic while balancing responsiveness, representativeness, and efficiency. The Forest Service was created by and for the people. Hence, we communicate with and listen to the public and their elected representatives. We consistently obey the law and tell the truth. We work collaboratively to integrate science and public participation into management.

We represent society by maintaining a work force that reflects the diversity of the American public, ensuring that this work force includes the professional disciplines required to successfully execute ecosystem management, and expanding our recognized public to include more segments of the population and to consider future generations.

Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

Our ethics provide the foundation and our mission and guiding principles the framework for our actions. The phrase "Caring for the Land and Serving People" captures the spirit of our mission. We envision the Forest Service as an efficient, productive, multicultural, and multidisciplinary organization that is recognized for national and international leadership in natural resource conservation.

Our Course to the Future

We live our land and service ethics and achieve our mission through the development and practice of ecosystem management. Ecosystem management is the means by which the Forest Service will achieve the goal of sustainability. Simply stated, ecosystem management means the integration of ecological, economic, and social factors to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment to best meet current and future needs.

Our Course to the Future describes the management context and helps focus our priorities on providing sustainable benefits to the American people and to the world. The four elements of our course and brief descriptions of each follow.

1. Protect ecosystems.

The Forest Service will work to ensure the health and diversity of ecosystems while meeting people's needs. Special care for fragile or rare ecosystem components will be instituted on NFS lands and encouraged on other lands.

2. Restore deteriorated ecosystems.

The Forest Service will improve deteriorated ecosystems on NFS lands. We will develop scientific understanding and technologies needed for effective restoration. Domestic and international assistance programs will encourage ecosystem restoration. These efforts will improve the likelihood that diversity, long-term sustainability, and future options are maintained.

3. Provide multiple benefits for people within the capabilities of ecosystems.

Within the limitations of maintaining ecosystem health and diversity, forests and rangelands must meet people's needs for uses, values, products, and services. Forest Service programs will focus on providing benefits to people from these lands, emphasizing those that the NF's and NG's have special advantages to provide. We will offer assistance to owners and managers on other forests and rangelands to help them fulfill their objectives in an ecologically sound manner.

4. Ensure organizational effectiveness.

The Forest Service will improve organizational effectiveness by creating and maintaining an atmosphere where people are respected, trusted, and valued, and where expertise and professionalism are rewarded. Our work force will be multicultural and multidisciplinary. Forest Service employees will be empowered to carry out the Agency's mission and will be accountable for achieving negotiated objectives.

Listening to, learning about, and collaborating with the citizens of the United States—the owners of public land—is a continuous process. The Agency will use appropriate scientific information in decision-making processes, and will involve diverse communities of interest in decisions. Partnerships and collaboration with an expanding array of groups will characterize Forest Service operations.

The three primary outcomes of the Forest Service Course to the Future will be healthy ecosystems, vital communities, and an effective, multidisciplinary, multicultural organization.

Long-Term Strategic Plan

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974 requires USDA to prepare an assessment of renewable resources on all lands every 10 years. Building upon that base of resource information, a recommended program for Forest Service activities is prepared every 5 years. This program is designed to serve as the long-term national strategic plan for the Forest Service, and guides Forest Service planning and program priorities.

History, Organization, and Authorities

Evolution of Forest Service Programs

The Forest Service has a long tradition of professional land management, research, and professional assistance to others on forestry. Established in the infancy of the conservation movement, it has been led by trained, professional career land managers since its inception.

Legislation in the 1960's and 1970's such as the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and

the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) have provided new mandates for management of the NFS, and have created many more avenues for public participation in management decisions.

These new laws reflect increased public interest in the management of NF's. This increased interest has intensified conflict regarding the proper balance of multiple uses and benefits, particularly between people who value amenities and those whose livelihood is dependent on use of NF commodity resources. The current controversy regarding timber harvest levels and protection of old-growth forests in the Northwest is a good example of this conflict.

Legislation during this period has also given the Forest Service a much broader role in technical and financial assistance for management of State and private forest lands, community forestry, and rural community economic assistance. It has also greatly expanded responsibilities in international forestry.

Organizational Structure Two key principles underlie the Forest Service's overall organizational structure. The first is decentralization. Agency leaders have always strongly believed that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level, consistent with ensuring effective managerial control and compliance with relevant laws, Executive Orders, and USDA regulations. Local line officers, such as the 630 District Rangers and 122 Forest Supervisors, are delegated broad authority to make decisions on the ground.

The second principle is separation of the Forest Service's research and management programs. This ensures research results that are unbiased and reflect the best science available.

Major Statutory Authorities Many statutes provide the legislative mandate for Forest Service programs. Most of the statutes fall into one of the three major categories described here. Example statutes are listed for each category.

1. Statutes providing broad authority for Forest Service programs:

- The Organic Act of 1897
- The Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960
- The RPA of 1974
- The NFMA of 1976
- The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, as amended.
- The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978
- International Forestry Cooperation Act of 1990
- The 1990 Farm Bill

2. Procedural and environmental statutes affecting all federal programs
 - The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
 - The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973
 - The Clean Water Amendments Act of 1972
 - The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977
3. Statutes allocating NFS lands to specific management regimes
 - The Wilderness Act of 1964
 - The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

A complete compilation of statutes is found in "The Principal Laws Relating to Forest Service Activities."

Description of Programs

The Forest Service carries out its mission through integrated program areas: research, S&PF, management of the NFS, IF, and management of human resources. Figure 1 shows the overall organization of the Forest Service.

Forest Research

The Forest Service has the largest forestry research organization in the world. It serves society by providing the scientific foundation for sustainable forest development in the United States and other regions of the world. It provides information and technology needed to assure the health, diversity, and productivity of the Earth's forest and grassland ecosystems. The program includes cooperative planning and studies with other public research agencies, universities, and private research organizations. It works for and with users, policy makers, natural resource managers, educators, industries, and other producers who represent people and their needs. The map in figure 3 shows the location of Forest Service Research Stations across the Nation.

State and Private Forestry

The Forest Service provides professional and financial assistance to the range of non-Federal forest landowners. Assistance is non-regulatory and voluntary, most often in cooperation with State and local governments.

About 48 percent of the Nation's forest lands (and 59 percent of commercial forest lands) are owned and managed by approximately 8 million nonindustrial private owners. Decisions made by State, local, and Tribal governments and private landowners affect conditions of almost two-thirds of America's forest estate. Proper management of these lands is essential to the welfare of our nation.

The Forest Service provides assistance to, not regulatory control over, landowners, communities, and Tribal governments to help them protect forests and rangelands from fire, insects, and disease; monitor the health of the Nation's forests; and assist others with improving the management of their lands. Urban forestry programs are focused on the 70 million

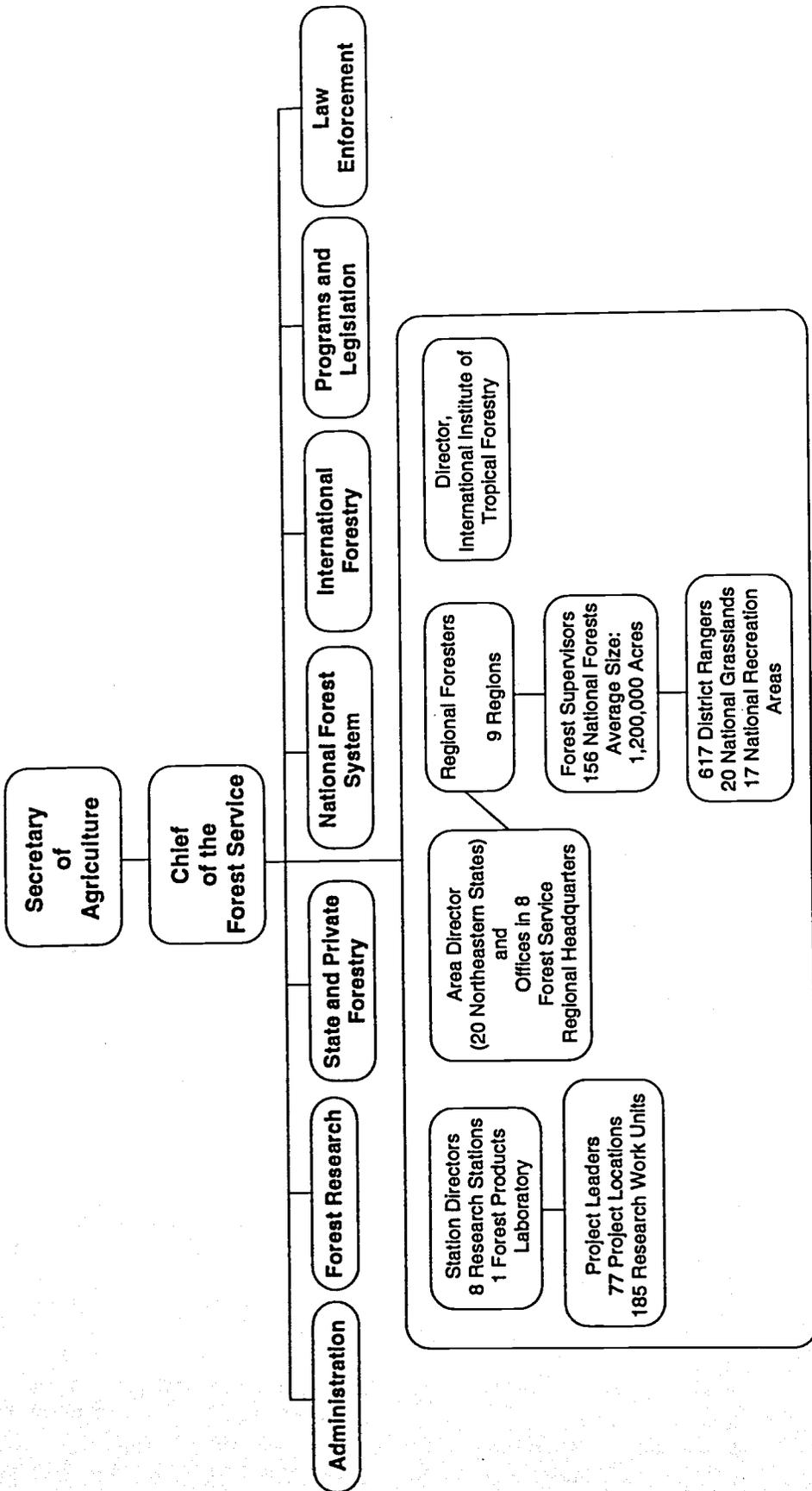
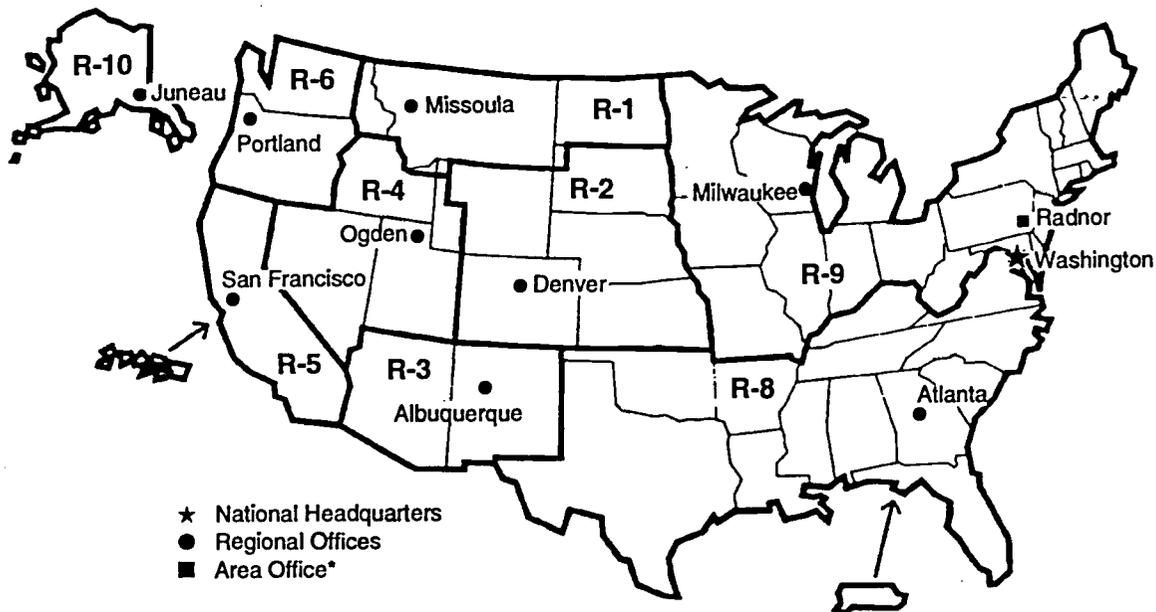


Figure 1

**National Forest System Regional Offices
State and Private Forestry Area Office***



* In other regions, State and Private Forestry activities are directed from Regional Offices.

● Regional Offices

**Forest Service, USDA
Northern Region (R-1)**
Federal Building
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807
406-329-3511

**Forest Service, USDA
Rocky Mountain Region (R-2)**
740 Simms Street
P.O. Box 25127
Golden, CO 80401
303-275-5350

**Forest Service, USDA
Southwestern Region (R-3)**
Federal Building
517 Gold Avenue, S.W.
Albuquerque, NM 87102
505-842-3292

**Forest Service, USDA
Intermountain Region (R-4)**
Federal Building
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401
801-625-5352

**Forest Service, USDA
Pacific Southwest Region (R-5)**
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-705-2874

**Forest Service, USDA
Pacific Northwest Region (R-6)**
333 S.W. 1st Avenue
P.O. Box 3623 (97208-3623)
Portland, OR 97204
503-326-2971

**Forest Service, USDA
Southern Region (R-8)**
1720 Peachtree Road, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30367
404-347-2384

**Forest Service, USDA
Eastern Region (R-9)**
310 West Wisconsin Ave.,
Rm. 500
Milwaukee, WI 53203
414-297-3693

**Forest Service, USDA
Alaska Region (R-10)**
Federal Building
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628
907-586-8863

■ Area Office

**Forest Service, USDA
Northeastern Area—S&PF**
5 Radnor Corporate Center
100 Matsonford Rd., Suite 200
P.O. Box 6775
Radnor, PA 19087-4585
610-975-4111

Figure 2

acres of urban and community forests in 56,000 of the Nation's communities. Additionally, S&PF leads an Agencywide effort to help States and communities wisely use forests to promote rural economic development and a quality rural environment. Figure 2 shows the location of S&PF offices across the United States.

Management of the National Forests and Grasslands

The Forest Service manages about 191 million acres of public land in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, comprising 8.5 percent of the total land area in the United States. These public lands, known collectively as the National Forest System, encompass 156 NF's, 20 NG's, and 10 land utilization projects. The natural resources on these lands are some of the Nation's greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and special significance for all Americans.

International Forestry

Since 1980, the Forest Service has had an ongoing program in technology transfer to tropical countries. The IF program was focused and expanded by provisions in the International Forestry Cooperation Act of 1990 and the 1990 Farm Bill, which also authorized a position for a separate Deputy Chief for IF. In keeping with this mandate, the Forest Service will continue to increase its international activities to meet global environmental challenges, and respond to requests for assistance from other U.S. Government Agencies and international organizations.

Forest Service IF activities include technical assistance in natural resource management and protection to other countries, assisting in response to natural disasters abroad, cooperative research and technical exchange with other countries, support to international organizations, and assistance in the development of U.S. and global natural resource policies.

Human Resources

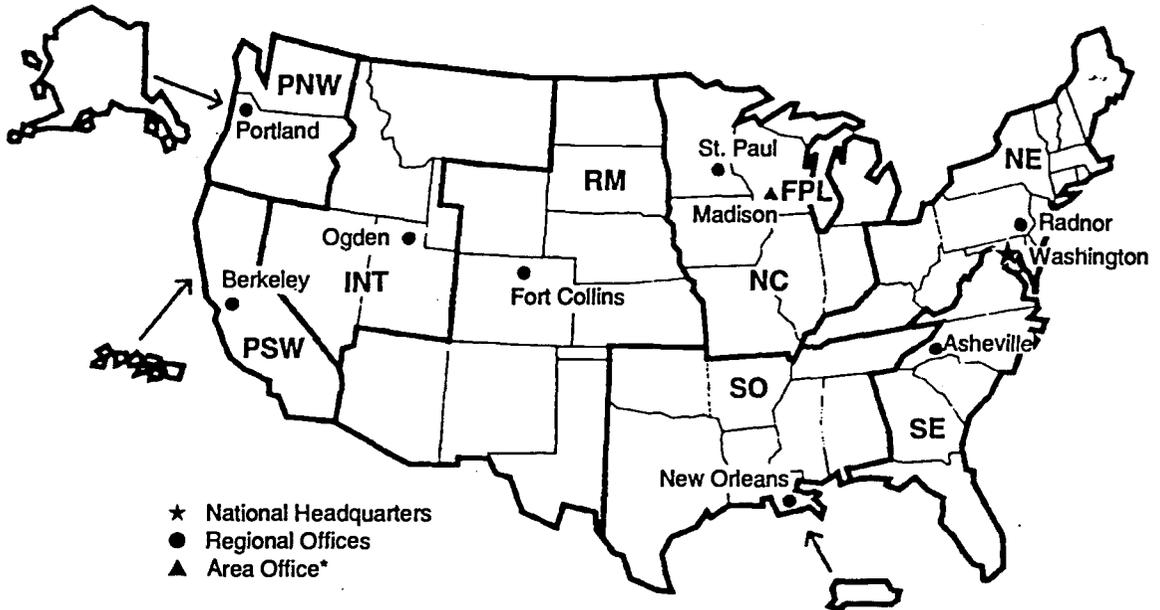
The Forest Service employs a professional and diverse permanent work force and participates in a number of special human resource programs (HRP's) that employ, train, or educate specific groups of people. Some of the programs the Agency has initiated or participates in include Americorps, Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, Youth Conservation Corps, Volunteers in the National Forests, Touch America Program, and Take Pride in America. These programs directly support all other Agency programs.

Staffings and Budget

The Forest Service is the largest of the USDA agencies, employing just over 35,000 full-time employees and 17,000 other category employees, for a total of 40,612 full-time equivalents (FTE's). About 98 percent of the total work force works outside Washington, DC, and about 85 percent works west of the Mississippi River.

The 1995 total appropriation was about 3 percent smaller than the Agency's 1994 budget (before inflation when the emergency firefighting fund amounts are not included). The 1994 and 1995 Appropriation Acts continued the Agency's commitment to multiple use, as expressed in the Mission and Vision Statement, with a strong emphasis on

Research



- ★ National Headquarters
- Regional Offices
- ▲ Area Office*

● **Research Station Headquarters**

Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station (INT)
 Federal Building
 324 25th Street
 Ogden, UT 84401
 801-625-5412

North Central Forest Experiment Station (NC)
 1992 Folwell Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55108
 612-649-5000

Northeastern Forest Experiment Station (NE)
 5 Radnor Corporate Center
 100 Matsonford Rd., Suite 200
 P.O. Box 6775
 Radnor, PA 19087-4585
 610-975-4222

Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station (PNW)
 333 S.W. 1st Avenue
 P.O. Box 3890 (97208-3890)
 Portland, OR 97204
 503-326-5640

Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station (PSW)
 800 Buchanan Street
 Albany, CA 94710
 P.O. Box 245
 Berkeley, CA 94701
 510-559-6300

Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station (RM)
 240 West Prospect Road
 Fort Collins, CO 80526-2098
 303-498-1100

Southeastern Forest Experiment Station (SE)
 200 Weaver Blvd.
 P.O. Box 2680
 Asheville, NC 28802
 704-257-4390

Southern Forest Experiment Station (SO)
 U.S. Postal Service Building
 701 Loyola Avenue, Room T-10210
 New Orleans, LA 70113
 504-589-6800

▲ **Forest Products Laboratory (FPL)**
 One Gifford Pinchot Drive
 Madison, WI 53705-2398
 608-231-9200

★ **National Headquarters**

Send all mail except Express Mail to this address:
Forest Service—USDA
 14th & Independence Ave., S.W.
 P.O. Box 96090
 Washington, DC 20090-6090
 202-205-1760

Send Express Mail and parcels to:
Chief, Forest Service
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 14th & Independence Ave., S.W.
 201 14th Street, S.W.
 Washington, DC 20250

Figure 3

implementation of the 1990 RPA program themes (see the Strategic Planning section). Funding for the Forest Service in FY 1995 has continued the shift in the balance among commodity and noncommodity outputs, strengthened some aspects of the S&PF programs, and continued a strong research program.

Approximately 52 percent of the \$2.6 billion Forest Service appropriation for FY 1995 has been earmarked for management of NFS, about 8 percent for Forest Research, and almost 6 percent for S&PF programs. Appropriations for construction (8 percent), fire protection (16 percent), emergency firefighting (17 percent), and land acquisition (3 percent) make up the rest of the budget.

Within the NFS, almost 16 percent of its FY 1995 budget of \$1.3 billion is designated for recreation use management, and about 13 percent is for timber sales. Approximately 7 percent of the budget is for wildlife and fish programs, while over 4 percent will be used for soil, water, and air activities.

An overview of historic budgets for 1993-1995 is shown in the following table:

Forest Service Budget Overview (in millions of actual dollars)

Description (appropriation)	1993 Final	1994 Final	1995 Appn. Act.
Research (excludes GA/const)	182.7	193.1	199.7
S&PF (emergency pest suppression)*	164.7	165.3	161.0 (17.0)
NFS@	1318.9	1308.8	1342.5
International Forestry#	(7.5)	(7.0)	7.0
Construction (incl. Research)	251.6	252.8	202.8
Other approp. accounts	68.3	70.3	71.5
Firefighting**	361.1	563.4	585.5
Total appropriated	2362.0	2573.0	2570.0

* An emergency pest suppression fund of \$26 million was authorized for FY 1993 as a substitute for additional appropriated funds in S&PF.

@ FY 1993 and FY 1994 amounts are the actual amounts requested and used; FY 1995 amount is anticipated need and nonadditive.

Includes S&PF/Research general administration funds.

** 1993 data reflects total funding for IF activities, including Washington Office multi-financing from other Deputy Areas. Numbers in parentheses are nonadditive IF numbers for 1995. The Office of Management Budget (OMB) approved an IF appropriation for FY 1994.

** The FY 1995 Interior and Related Agencies Act contains \$200 million for expenses for the FY 1994 fire suppression activities.

Priorities for Secretarial Involvement

Many changes have been initiated to more fully integrate ecosystem management into all Forest Service programs and to implement other administration priorities over the last 2 years. In many cases, additional steps must be taken over the next 2 years to ensure that these initiatives are fully accomplished. This section describes these priority concerns and identifies specific actions for Secretarial consideration.

The Draft 1995 RPA Program

Significance: The RPA Program is the strategic plan for future Forest Service programs. A requirement under the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974, the RPA Program is updated every 5 years. The Draft Program will soon be available for public review. It proposes a course to the future for the Forest Service, including overarching goals and priorities for management action. Following revisions in response to public comments, the 1995 RPA Program will provide national program and policy guidance for all Forest Service actions.

The Draft 1995 RPA Program is organized around "The Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future," with substantial attention to future actions needed to protect and restore ecosystems, to provide benefits for people, and to ensure organizational effectiveness. Forest Service activities are described, as well as anticipated resource conditions, outputs, and program implementation costs. The development of the program is supported by nationwide forest and rangeland assessments, published on a 10-year cycle and updated more frequently, and by information from numerous other sources.

Interested Parties: President, Congress, other Federal Agencies, States, Tribal governments, foreign governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), private industry, and individuals.

Actions to Date:

- Early public and employee involvement in the development of the Draft Program, through workshops and nationwide focus group sessions.
- Context established by the Chief's publication of "The Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future."
- The product of cooperation with the Office of the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, the content and structure of the Draft Program reflect a progressive perspective of resource management goals and responsibilities for the future.

- Prerelease discussions are in progress with Under Secretary James Lyons, Deputy Secretary Rominger, and representatives from the Office of Management and Budget.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Expedite release of the Draft RPA Program for public review, to pave the way for development of the Secretary's recommended Program.
- Support the development of the Secretary's recommended 1995 RPA Program and the associated President's Statement of Policy with target for completion being the end of FY 1995.
- Support "The Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future," as it provides a sound basis for conservation leadership.
- Support the priority management actions identified in the Draft Program, using them to guide near-term policy and program decisions.

**Implement
Ecosystem
Management**

Significance: Ecosystem management means using an ecological approach to achieve the multiple use management of NF's and NG's. This approach blends the needs of people and environmental values in such a way that NF's and NG's represent diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystems. In addition, the principles of ecology and other biological sciences are factored into the technical assistance offered to private landowners on a voluntary basis so that they may meet their management objectives in an environmentally sound manner.

Monitoring and evaluation are key elements of ecosystem management. Partnerships among Federal Agencies, State and local governments, Tribal entities, and other interested parties are vital to implementation.

Large-scale assessments (e.g., FEMAT, Columbia River Basin assessment, Eastside Study, and Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Study) determine the condition of the Nation's ecosystems and provide the foundation for implementation plans.

Interested Parties: President, Congress, other Federal Agencies, State governments, user groups, interested organizations, and individuals. Congressional members who have shown a particular interest in this topic include: Sen. Craig (R-ID), Sen. Daschle (D-SD), Sen. Hatfield (R-OR), Sen. Leahy (D-VT), and Sen. Lugar (R-IN). Congressional House members include Rep. Miller (D-CA), Rep. Regular (R-OH), Rep. Vento (D-MN), and Rep. Young (R-AK).

Actions to Date:

- Announced the ecosystem management framework for management.
- Adopted an ecological unit framework for classification and mapping.
- Conducted numerous experiments, demonstrations, and pilot efforts evaluating practices and activities that support an ecosystem management approach.
- Participating in White House Interagency Ecosystem Management Initiative.
- Working with Natural Resource Conservation Service to coordinate data systems.
- Working to institutionalize ecosystem management through ecological assessments, etc.

Additional Actions For Secretarial Consideration:

- Support the concepts of ecosystem management as set forth in the 1995 RPA Program.
- Facilitate issuance of the new streamlined NFMA regulations to guide the revision of land and resource management plans for the NF's and NG's.
- Support implementation of the President's plan to restore deteriorated ecosystems, protect threatened and endangered species, and revitalize rural communities in the Pacific Northwest.
- Ensure that a strong research program is maintained to provide the scientific foundation needed to implement ecosystem management.
- Support establishment of innovative partnerships and collaborative relationships that will facilitate attainment of ecosystem management objectives in mixed ownership settings.

Improve Forest Health

Significance: The dynamic nature of forested ecosystems, combined with human interactions, provide a vast array of challenges to our goal of maintaining healthy forest ecosystems. Although not all forests are unhealthy, restoration of forest health is a national priority for the Forest Service.

Because of past fire suppression efforts, many forest stands, especially in the West, have the potential for catastrophic fires. While forest health

concerns are most apparent currently in the West, southern pine forests in the East are increasingly susceptible to southern pine beetle. The continuous spread of introduced pests such as gypsy moth and hemlock woolly adelgid affects other forests.

In Pennsylvania, attacks by gypsy moth and elm span worm last year caused extensive defoliation. In south-central Alaska, declining forest health has resulted in a loss of old-growth values and economic potential from tourism and the timber industry, and creation of catastrophic fire potential. The largest spruce beetle infestation in North America is on the Kenai Peninsula.

Also of concern is the potential danger to people and property because of new homes that are built among dense forest stands immediately adjacent to NF's without the necessary supporting infrastructure such as accessibility to emergency vehicles. The health of the ecosystem is also at risk if large and very intense wild fires burn where heavy fuels have accumulated.

Interested Parties: White House, Congress, States, Tribal governments, NGO's, and private industry. Congressional interest in this topic is high. Sen. Craig (R-ID) and others are concerned about finding ways to expedite salvage sales to remove dead trees.

Actions to Date:

- In 1992, five congressional hearings focused on how to restore forest health and prevent future damage.
- In 1993, the forest health strategic plan "Healthy Forests for America's Future," which guides forest health activities, was issued. The plan addresses exotic pests, problems in the urban-wildland interface, prevention, and restoration.
- In 1994, major policy hearings on health and productivity of fire adapted forests in the Western United States and fire and forest health issues were held.
- In 1994, the Chief of the Forest Service chartered a Western Forest Health Initiative (WFHI), which recommended accelerating actions needed to improve western forest ecosystem health and forest health monitoring.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Help to remove barriers to the timely accomplishment of forest health objectives, such as supporting proposals for change in existing laws or new statutory authority that removes barriers to implement sound forest health actions.

Increase USDA's Profile on Natural Resource Issues

- Support funding increases for forest health contained in the President's FY 1996 Budget.
- Maintain a strong research program to provide the scientific knowledge needed to deal effectively with forest health threats.

Significance: There is a need for USDA to lead and coordinate activities with USDI and EPA on issues that directly affect the ability of the Forest Service to accomplish its programs (e.g., interagency fire policy review, consultation on endangered species, research programs, rangeland reform, and mining law reform).

Interested Parties: Environmental groups, commodity groups, and USDA employees.

Actions to Date:

- USDA and USDI are cooperating on a review of national fire management policy. They published a notice calling for public comment in the January 3 issue of the *Federal Register*. Comments are due by February 2, 1995.
- USDA and USDI coordination in development of approach to revision of laws and regulations affecting range management and mining.
- USDA and USDI cooperated extensively in the development of the President's Northwest Forest Plan and are also cooperating on the development of rangeland reform proposals.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Recognize that USDA has an extremely important role to play in the natural resources arena.
- Represent USDA and natural resource areas to ensure that USDA plays a role in the shaping of important natural resource related policies that are commensurate with its responsibilities and expertise in these areas.

* } Review and Revise Existing Legislative Authorities

Significance: Legislation governing the management of NFS lands has increased dramatically both in number and complexity since the 1970's. Some provisions of these laws conflict, or appear to conflict, creating confusion for field managers. One prominent example is the biodiversity conservation standards that are included in NFMA and ESA. Another good example is the public participation provisions of NFMA and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The latter has been interpreted to preclude involvement by Tribal, State, and local governments in

O.K.

Federal decision-making efforts, yet the eventual success of many natural resource management efforts is contingent on Government Agencies working together and in cooperation with stockholders.

Interested Parties: White House, Congress, Tribal, State, and local governments; environmental groups, commodity interest groups; and Forest Service employees.

Actions to Date:

- Initiation of a study to identify areas of conflict in forest management laws and develop possible corrective actions and/or proposed legislation.
- Discussion with interagency ESA group.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Support efforts to identify and resolve conflicts in existing legislative authorities, including proposal of appropriate legislative remedies if needed.

Facilitate Forest Service Reorganization

Significance: For some years the public has been concerned with the growth of the Federal bureaucracy, with perceived inefficiency in the delivery of Government programs, and with burgeoning costs. In response to these concerns, the Forest Service has been seeking ways to streamline its organizational structure without compromising its ability to deliver essential services and to facilitate implementation of ecosystem management. Planned changes will also go well beyond adjustments in organizational structure. To meet the goals set forth in the National Performance Review and to align the Forest Service to meet its mission, they entail adopting a new work culture that emphasizes increased teamwork, shared leadership, multiculturalism, and continual upgrading of peoples' skills.

Interested Parties: Congress, environmental groups, commodity groups, State and county officials, and Forest Service employees. Congressional interest in this subject peaked with release of the Agency's reinvention proposal. On the Senate side, members who have shown a particular interest in this topic include Sen. Baucus (D-MT), Sen. Burns (R-MT), Sen. Campbell (R-CO), Sen. Craig (R-ID), Sen. Feinstein (D-CA), Sen. Murkowski (R-AK), and Sen. Stevens (R-AK). On the House side, interested members include Rep. Miller (D-CA), Rep. Williams (D-MT), and Rep. Young (R-AK).

Actions to Date:

- Conducted detailed study of existing field structure during fiscal years 1991 and 1992. This study was conducted in cooperation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

- Developed streamlining plans to meet reduced staffing goals, reduced budgets, and increased supervisor/employee ratios.
- Consolidated and co-located administrative sites with other Forest Service units and other Federal Agencies.
- Eliminated or reengineered some administrative tasks.
- Completed proposal to "reinvent" the Forest Service along lines that would facilitate implementation of ecosystem management and improve efficiency in delivery of programs. This proposal is described in the 1994 report "Reinvention of the Forest Service: The Change Begins."
- Initiated project to restructure national office with completion of plan scheduled for March 1995.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Secure support for the Forest Service's reinvention proposals.
- Secure Congressional approval to restructure the Washington Office and field organization along lines suggested in the 1994 report "Reinvention of the Forest Service: The Change Begins."
- Determine the most appropriate approach to performance and consolidation of administrative services and help secure Congressional approval for desired changes.
- Work within the Department and the administration to ensure that streamlining aggressively reduces administrative and policy layers without reducing program delivery capability.
- Facilitate implementation of an integrated information management framework and ongoing efforts to update current computing capabilities to include support for geographic information systems (GIS's) and image processing (Project 615).

Enhance Assistance to Private Forest Landowners

Significance: The Forest Service provides assistance to, not regulatory control over, landowners to help them protect forests and rangelands from fire, insects, and disease; monitor the health of the Nation's forests; and assist others with improving the management of their lands. A specific issue is timber harvesting. Timber harvest on Federal lands is declining and nonindustrial private forest lands are coming under increasing pressure to provide more of the Nation's wood supply. Nonindustrial private forests comprise 48 percent of the Nation's 737 million acres of forest, account for 59 percent of the Nation's 490 million acres of commercial timberland, and provide 49 percent of the annual domestic timber harvest. Within the last few years, the rate of harvest on nonindustrial private forest lands in the South, Lake States, and Northwest

has increased dramatically. Most harvesting occurs without the benefit of professional forestry advice in preharvest planning. At the same time, Americans want more protection and management of these lands for environmental benefits (e.g., threatened and endangered species habitat, wetlands and riparian protection, and water quality).

Forty-two million acres (16 percent) of the Nation's nonindustrial private forest lands are in poor condition because of overharvesting, which has left these lands in a depleted condition. These acres are important environmentally and for future wood supplies and for carbon sequestration. To maintain the productivity of these lands and to assure a sustainable domestic supply of timber and wood products, it is important to ensure adequate preharvest planning, reforestation, and the use of multiple-resource stewardship practices by private landowners.

Interested Parties: Private landowners, forest industry, consultants, environmental and conservation groups, and State and local governments.

Actions to Date:

- Passage of Forest Stewardship, Stewardship Incentives, and Forest Legacy Programs in the 1990 Farm Bill.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Support funding for cooperative forestry programs contained in the President's FY 1996 Budget.
- Support maintenance of a strong research program that addresses the major concerns of private forest and rangeland owners.

Enhance Rangeland Management

Significance: About two-thirds of all NFS lands are rangelands. People derive many values from rangelands, such as scenic vistas, forage for livestock and wildlife, hunting, fishing, and camping. Just as important, rangelands serve critical ecological, economic, and cultural roles.

Both the 1989 Assessment and the 1991 Government Accounting Office (GAO) Report on U.S. Rangelands identified the need for agency action to improve the health of rangeland ecosystems. Nearly 50 percent (4,300) of all Forest Service term grazing permits expire in 1995, and insufficient personnel are available to complete required NEPA documentation prior to permit reissuance. Additionally, the entire grazing program in the Southwestern Region (Arizona and New Mexico) is threatened by a 60-day notice of intent to sue related to adequate compliance with the ESA and NEPA.

Livestock grazing serves a demonstrated, positive role in the ecology and dynamics of those ecosystems where it is permitted. However, the Forest

Service must manage patterns and intensity of grazing and seasons of use in a manner that improves or sustains the health of rangeland ecosystems. The primary purpose of new range regulations proposed last year is to improve processes for planning and grazing permit issuance.

Interested Parties: Livestock industry, National Cattlemen's Association, American Farm Bureau, Public Lands Council, and environmental groups such as the National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council.

Actions to Date:

- Issuance of proposed rule on grazing regulations and distribution of final environmental impact statement (EIS).
- Cooperated with USDI in the development of rangeland reform draft and final EIS.
- Jointly conducted and analyzed over 38,000 comments.
- Jointly held 45 field hearings.
- The Forest Service has developed, in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel, a guide to expedite NEPA compliance relative to permit issuance. The guide will improve the efficiency of current processes but cannot remedy situations where significant resource conflicts exist. The guide is expected to be implemented this month.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Support the funding contained in the FY 1996 budget to ensure timely revision of existing allotment management plans and to achieve high-priority ecosystem protection and restoration objectives.
- Continue to work with the Secretary of the Interior to finalize the proposed rules on new grazing regulations that were released for public review and comment last year.

Pass 1995 Farm Bill

Significance: 1990 was the first time a Forestry Title was part of a Farm Bill, establishing a broad array of permanent authorities including the Forest Stewardship Program, Stewardship Incentive Program, Forest Legacy Program, and expanded authority for Urban and Community Forestry Assistance, and Global Climate Change Program, and IF direction.

Forestry issues also cross over into both the Conservation and Rural Development Titles. The 1990 Farm Bill Rural Development Title created authority to assist NF dependent communities.

Market pressures to cut private forests are increasing due in part to the reduction of Federal timber harvesting.

Failure to properly manage private forest lands, especially following timber harvesting, has serious effects on soil and water resources, the sustainability of forest resources, and a reliable supply of forest products for future harvests.

Interested Parties: Forest industry, the National Association of State Foresters, private forest landowners, environmental organizations, conservation organizations, some urban and rural community leaders, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCs, EPA, and DOI.

Actions to Date:

- The Secretary's 1995 Farm Bill Task Force has drafted issue papers related to forestry. Public forums were held during the summer of 1994 in several locations.

Additional Actions for Secretarial Consideration:

- Integrate forestry issues into the 1995 Farm Bill deliberations, not only in the Forestry Title, but also in the Conservation, Rural Development, and Research Titles. Emphasize sustainable development of resources, communities, and local economies, along with recycling in rural and urban communities.
- Reauthorize the IF funding authority.

Current Issues

The Secretary is likely to face the issues discussed here during the next 6 months. Most likely they will be raised from outside the Department. More detailed information on these issues is available upon request.

Water Resources

Judicial decisions are pending in State courts of eight Western States over tens of thousands of claims to water filed by the U.S. Department of Justice on behalf of Federal agencies, including the Forest Service. Besides riparian ecosystem protection, these claims include uses such as drinking water, livestock watering, irrigation, and in-stream uses (recreational boating, channel maintenance, and fish habitat).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA)

ESA is up for reauthorization this year. The administration has not stated a position on the ESA legislation. The Secretary of the Interior has the lead for the administration for this reauthorization and the Department and the Forest Service are cooperating in implementation of the act. The act has major implication for USDA programs.

PACFISH

The draft Alaska Region-Pacific Northwest Research Station's Anadromous Fish Habitat Assessment documents are scheduled to be delivered to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior and Related Agencies, Authorizing Committees, and the Alaska delegation during the middle of January. The Alaska Congressional Delegation will be concerned with the recommendations in the report to examine additional habitat protection measures during the revision of the Tongass Land Management Plan because that could lead to significant reductions in timber harvest.

Tongass Land Management Plan Revision

The Alaska Region and the Pacific Northwest Research Station have formed a partnership to complete the Tongass Land Management Plan revision. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service, and EPA make this an interagency effort. Our purpose is to produce a revision in early 1996 that is scientifically based, legally supportable, and sustainable for all resources. Significant issues include producing a sustainable timber supply, assurance of species viability, and old-growth dependent species that meet legal mandates and consideration of alternatives to clear-cutting.

President's Pacific Northwest Forest Plan

Concerns about the timber sale volume are likely to rise from the timber industry's interest and the Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations. Funding from the President's Forest Plan Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative began reaching communities in early summer. As part of the "Jobs in the Woods" program, displaced timber workers were employed on 550 watershed restoration contracts. This required a Secretarial Waiver to limit advertising of these contracts to the affected communities. A Secretarial Waiver will be needed again in 1995.

RPA Program for 1995	The Draft 1995 RPA Program is being prepared as a precursor to the Secretary's Recommended 1995 RPA Program. This draft will be used to elicit comments from the public and employees during a 90-day comment period. Key messages that will be discussed in the Draft 1995 RPA Program are protection and restoration of ecosystems, providing multiple benefits, and ensuring organizational effectiveness.
Budget Rescission	Congress is considering a reduction in Federal spending in 1995.
Forest Legacy	The Forest Legacy program is active in 17 states and one territory, with four completed conservation easement acquisition projects totalling over 5,000 acres. Implementation has not progressed as rapidly as anticipated and a review to streamline the program and accelerate purchase of perpetual conservation easements to conserve forests is underway. Parts of this program may be targeted for rescission.
AmeriCorps	AmeriCorps, President Clinton's National service initiative, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country by addressing the Nation's critical education, human, public safety, and environmental needs at the community level and earn education awards in return. Funds in 1995 for AmeriCorps were reallocated from other programs, a priority shift that may draw criticism.
Timber Sale Program	The amount of timber sold from NF's in FY 1994 has declined to about 3 billion board feet, compared with over 10 billion board feet through most of the 1980's. Harvest levels, which lag a couple years, have also fallen to 4.8 billion board feet, compared with harvests of 11-12 billion board feet in the 1980's. Environmental concerns have increased, challenging both proposed and existing sales and increasing the proposed cancellation or suspension of a large number of sales. The low timber sale level will continue to affect many rural communities adversely.
Timber Sale Budget	In 1994, Congressional staffs and community groups in States with NF's, particularly in the Northeast, were concerned about the lowered 1995 projected timber target. Public groups, particularly in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Missouri, and Wisconsin, are now objecting to the process outlined in the recent issued instructions as limiting forest level leadership in determining the mix of programs. The same concerns are expected to surface during 1996 budget deliberations.
Cancellation of Timber Sales for Environmental Reasons	To ensure compliance with various environment laws, the Forest Service will be required to suspend and cancel some timber sale contracts in the years ahead. These cancellations could require payments of as much as \$100 million in FY 1995 and \$500 million over the next several years.

Ski Area Permit Fees

The Forest Service is immersed in a 2-year reevaluation and extensive public involvement process to find a better method for determining ski fees that reflects a fair market value and guarantees a fair return to the taxpayer for the use of their public lands. The old process of determining ski area permit fees was vulnerable to procedural and legal challenges.

Mining Law Reform

For several years the environmental community has focused major efforts on revision of the U.S. Mining Law of 1872, which gave American citizens and corporations a statutory right to access available public lands for exploration and development of minerals. At issue are access, self-initiation, security of tenure, larger royalty fees to the U.S. Treasury, price for fee title, and environmental standards.

Landless Natives

A bill was introduced late in the last session of Congress to give Alaska native rights similar to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. (ANCSA provided that each native born on or before December 18, 1971, would receive 100 shares of stock in village and regional corporations, and divided about 44 million acres and nearly \$1 billion in cash among regional, urban, and village Native corporations to manage the assets.) A bill is expected to be reintroduced early in the 104th Congress that would attempt to compensate the Alaska natives with more than 650,000 acres of land from the Tongass National Forest.

**American Indian/
Native American
Relationships**

On April 29, 1994, President Clinton issued a memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments. In order to improve implementation of these principles, a Forest Service task group published the "Forest Service National Resource Book on American Indian and Alaska Native Relations" for review and comment.

**Undocumented
Workers**

During the past 2 years, the Forest Service has been criticized for the use of undocumented workers by contractors to accomplish Forest Service work. The Forest Service has taken specific steps to resolve the problem, such as training contracting officers. It is working cooperatively with the Border Patrol, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Department of Labor.

**Job Corps Program
Reorganization**

The Forest Service has reorganized its Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center Program to reduce administrative costs and to streamline the program. A Job Corps field office has been established in Denver, Colorado to consolidate work previously done at five regional offices and the Washington Office. That regional reorganization could raise questions.

Firefighter Safety

Wildfire suppression safety is a critical area of concern as a result of the 28 fire-related fatalities in 1994. Intensive internal reviews are underway and corrective actions will be taken prior to the coming fire season. Fire investigation reports from the Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) are expected within the next month and may generate additional issues or litigation by the victims' families.

Air Tankers

The Forest Service uses air tankers to fight wildland fires. To defray costs, the Forest Service entered into an Historic Aircraft Exchange program with the air tanker industry. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) determined that the Forest Service lacked authority to enter into this exchange program. We are working with Congress to develop legislation to permit such exchanges.

Financial Integrity

The Forest Service received unfavorable audit reports on its financial statements from OIG. We are continuing to resolve the findings in the audit report related to control and reporting our financial status. Interested parties include oversight committees and the Department.

Status of Audit Implementation

A focus in the financial area will be the Secretary's Report to Congress on Status of Audit Implementation, which will cover unresolved issues accumulating from prior audits, such as inaccurate obligation reporting, failure to report property values, and losses of revenues and other funds misuses.

States' Rights

A movement in California, Oregon, and other Western States similar to those that produced the Nye County "Right to Bear Arms" and the Catron County "Home Rule" ordinances has gained momentum. For instance, the Lake County, CA, Board of Supervisors is currently considering five proposed "home rule" ordinances.

County Supremacy Movement

Approximately 50 counties in the West, many of which include significant amounts of NFS land, have adopted land use ordinances which purport to restrict Federal land management activities. The number of such laws is growing.