

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary

Ladies and Gentlemen. Before I present to you the Number 1 conservationist in the United States, I want to read you a letter. This famous letter dated February 1, 1905, was a letter of instruction from the then Secretary of Agriculture, "Tama" Jim Wilson, to the first Chief of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot.

Before I read you a short excerpt from that historic letter, permit me to relate a little history which you may not know. In the early 1900's most of the public land was in the Department of the Interior. That Department was not then the great conservation organization it is today under the leadership of Stewart Udall. Instead it was primarily a land disposal agency. And, as the hand of history has clearly written, the robber barons of that day were despoiling rather than conserving the public lands. Our great forests were rapidly disappearing.

Pinchot realized that under the laws and practices of that time, there was little that could be done about it by the Department of the Interior. The thing to do, he concluded, was to get some of the outstanding areas under different jurisdiction where they could be properly conserved. He went to Theodore Roosevelt.

Roosevelt enthusiastically agreed. Together they convinced Congress to enact legislation to transfer the existing Federal forests to the Department of Agriculture. Roosevelt signed executive orders adding some 132,000,000 acres to the system of national forests, including some of the most spectacular areas and most valuable timber in the Nation.

Remarks by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman introducing President John F. Kennedy at dedication of Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies, Milford, Pennsylvania, September 24, 1963.

Then Pinchot prepared for the Secretary of Agriculture the famous letter of instruction I would like to read you now.

It began: "The Forester, Forest Service. Sir:" And then in classic language it set down the spirit and philosophy that has dominated the Forest Service ever since. I quote:

"In the administration of the forest reserves it must be clearly borne in mind that all land is to be devoted to its most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people, and not for the temporary benefit of individuals or companies. All the resources of forest reserves are for use, and this use must be brought about in a thoroughly prompt and businesslike manner, under such restrictions only as will insure the permanence of these resources. The vital importance of forest reserves to the great industries of the Western States will be largely increased in the near future by the continued steady advance in settlement and development. The permanence of the resources of the reserves is therefore indispensable to continued prosperity, and the policy of this Department for their protection and use will invariably be guided by this fact, always bearing in mind that the conservative use of these resources in no way conflicts with their permanent value.

"You will see to it that the water, wood, and forage of the reserves are conserved and wisely used for the benefit of the homebuilder first of all, upon whom depends the best permanent use of lands and resources alike. The continued prosperity of the agricultural, lumbering, mining, and livestock interests is directly dependent upon a permanent and accessible supply of water, wood, and forage, as well as upon the present and future use of their resources under

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businesslike regulations, enforced with promptness, effectiveness, and common sense. In the management of each reserve local questions will be decided upon local grounds; the dominant industry will be considered first, but with as little restriction to minor industries as may be possible; sudden changes in industrial conditions will be avoided by gradual adjustment after due notice; and where conflicting interests must be reconciled the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

Add to the uses Pinchot spelled out in his multiple use letter of instruction that of recreation, including wildlife, and this instruction is still operational on September 24, 1963. With this one addition, the philosophy and principles of this 1905 letter comprise the policy we follow today in the management of the great national heritage which is the national forest system.

The unusual joint venture which joins the Department of Agriculture and the Conservation Foundation in the management of this new Gifford Pinchot Institute will, I am sure, be a most pleasant and useful one for all concerned. We of the Department of Agriculture are grateful to be a part of it.

I am sure I speak for all conservationists when I say thank you to the Pinchot family for their generosity. President Kennedy's presence here demonstrates better than words his keen interest and firm support for the conservation needs of this Nation. I know first hand from repeated personal experience that the President is keenly aware that our irreplaceable natural resources must be, at the same time, effectively used to meet the needs of more and more Americans and carefully husbanded for generations to come.

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In this dawning age of abundance more and more Americans will have the chance to experience God's great outdoors. That opportunity will, I am confident, under the leadership of the President of the United States, come "sooner than you think".

Ladies and Gentlemen: The President of the United States.

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