

Rededication of Pinchot Institute for Conservation

Remarks by F. Dale Robertson, Chief, USDA Forest Service
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Just think, 30 years ago yesterday, President Kennedy stood here on this very spot and expressed his vision of the future and what actions he thought must be taken as a Nation to carry on the conservation movement started by Gifford Pinchot 60 years earlier.

In fact, I remember 30 years ago yesterday very well. I was working for the Forest Service in Washington, D.C., and was asked to come to Grey Towers to be an usher for the event. But, unfortunately, I was only 2 years into my career and did not have a Forest Service uniform. So, I missed out on that great opportunity to meet and hear President Kennedy talk about conservation and his vision of the future.

But, I have been fortunate to have my career span those 30 years since President Kennedy stood here, and I have lived through and have been a small part of carrying out his vision and proposed actions. In rereading his speech, I think we have done extremely well as a Nation and, in many areas, have gone far beyond his vision of the future.

I am proud of the part the Forest Service has played in making even-greater progress in forestry and conservation than was envisioned 30 years ago by our President, who I am sure had the help of the best experts and thinkers at the time.

I think that is an important lesson to keep in mind. Things are always evolving and changing and we are never able to see the future with perfect clarity. At best, it is somewhat a blurred vision.

The challenge is to stay in tune with the time. We must continuously build upon that great conservation foundation that Gifford Pinchot put in place for us. If we are to be successful, we must be very good at constantly --

blending in new knowledge about the natural resources,

blending in our experience in managing the forests,

and, most of all, keep blending in the changing values and views of the American people and how they want their forests to be managed and cared for.

Our philosophy in the Forest Service is somewhat reflected in the sign that hangs on the wall at Merrill Lynch headquarters, "It's too late to agree with us now--because we've already moved on and changed our mind." Much of the controversy and political debate swirling around the Forest Service is about the past and not about the present nor where the Forest Service is headed--because we have moved on!

In that regard, I would like to just mention two very important ingredients that the Forest Service is blending into the conservation movement to make it relevant to the 1990's:

1. **Ecosystem Management** - John Gordon talked about ecosystem management last night in his lecture at Grey Towers. The Forest Service is clearly re-defining the meaning of forestry and conservation on the National Forests.

We will be managing the National Forests in the future to maintain healthy, productive, biologically diverse ecosystems. We will be managing the National Forests for the sustainability of all values and all resources. And furthermore, we are making significant progress in working out the many details to implement ecosystem management on the ground. We have many demonstration areas where people can come and see what ecosystem management really means in practice on the National Forests. We are on the move! Today is different than yesterday. Tomorrow will be different from today. And, our people on the ground are not waiting for me or anyone else to tell them what it means.

Forging stronger partnerships between researchers and land managers is an integral part of ecosystem management. We are re-orienting our research program to focus specifically on developing the scientific basis for ecosystem management. Our researchers are working in partnership with our land managers to implement what we know as soon as we know it.

Last night, John Gordon talked about the need for a paradigm shift. We are making a paradigm shift in how our researchers and land managers are working together in partnership.

The old paradigm was like running relay races by doing one thing at a time and in sequence--basic research, applied research, write a publication, technology transfer, and then maybe 5-10 years later get new research knowledge applied on the ground.

Now, the new paradigm is like playing basketball as a team. Researchers and land managers are out in the forests together, passing the ball around, learning from each other, working as a team, and applying what we know as soon as we know it--in some cases even before we know it!

It's an exciting new ballgame--a new paradigm--and we plan to make a few slam-dunks along the way!

Finally, we in the Forest Service strongly believe that ecosystem management means working in partnership with the people. Conservation partnerships are a big part of the Forest Service with about 10,000 partners

helping us get the conservation job done on the National Forests. Conservation partnerships will become even more important in the future and will be a dominant characteristic of the future Forest Service.

2. **Cultural Diversity** - The second ingredient that the Forest Service is blending into the conservation movement is cultural diversity. The people have to be an equal and essential part of ecosystem management. Otherwise, it would be like having a school without the students.

Just as we are striving for biological diversity in the forest, we are striving for cultural diversity in the Forest Service. Gifford Pinchot said that the National Forests are to be managed "for the greatest good, for the greatest number, for the long term." We are interpreting that to mean all the people--not just Americans who look like me with a European heritage.

We in the Forest Service are working hard and are making good progress toward a culturally diverse organization truly representing the diversity of cultural values of the American people.

I believe the American Indians, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, African-Americans, and women have important perspectives and important cultural values that must be reflected in our thinking about the forests and how we treat the natural resources.

We European-Americans who have dominated the Forest Service and forestry in general have done a good job. And, we ought to be proud of it. But, we have had too many cultural blind spots that have skewed our view of the world. The Forest Service is working hard to overcome our cultural blind spots by truly becoming a multicultural organization.

So, when we meet once again to rededicate the Pinchot Institute for Conservation at Grey Towers, it is my hope that:

ecosystem management and all that it entails
and
cultural diversity of the Forest Service

will be fully institutionalized as just the way things are in the Forest Service. And, if that is the case, I believe this generation of natural resource managers will be making the most important contribution in building an important "top story" to Gifford Pinchot's conservation foundation.

Gifford Pinchot had the courage: to bet on his ideas,
 to take the calculated risk,
 and to act on his beliefs.

As a result, he made a big difference. Now, that is our challenge!

More than any other conservation leader, Gifford Pinchot understood the importance of people in the conservation equation.

We must keep the Gifford Pinchot conservation movement alive and well because his philosophy, values, and ideas are as important today as ever.

Our challenge is to make them relevant to the 1990's based on what we know today--and our best projection of what the future is likely to be.

That's why the Pinchot Institute of Conservation is very important--to keep the conservation movement alive and well and keep it relevant and in tune with the times.

So, I am happy to be here today celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Pinchot Institute of Conservation. May it go on for 30x30 more years.

Thank you all for joining us here on this Happy Day! And remember, it may be too late to agree with the Forest Service because we have already moved on and changed our mind about many things--except for the basic values and principles of our first Chief Gifford Pinchot.