AN INTERVIEW WITH

MICHAEL P. DOMBECK

by

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Photographs provided courtesy of Mike Dombeck.

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Figure 1: U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck (official Forest Service photo, 1997.)

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Introduction

Michael P. Dombeck was born in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, on September 21, 1948. At age nine, his family moved nearly two hundred miles north within the boundaries of the Chequamegon National Forest. They lived on Moose Lake, which was twenty-five miles from Hayward, a town of fifteen hundred. His parents bought a country store where they sold food and other basics to the local people. The cornerstone of the economy was working in the woods and guiding. There were nine resorts along Moose Lake, and their store not only supported the Dombeck family, but introduced Mike to the guide profession. His parents retired when he was a high school senior and moved away, but Mike stayed. He bought a place on the lake and guided during the summers of his college years. He assumed that he would continue as a summer guide into the future.

During his first year at the University of Wisconsin--Stevens Point, Mike took a zoology class. The professor was impressive and Mike signed up for all that he offered. He decided then that his still undefined career would feature the biological and natural sciences. His academic record was such that the Zoology Department asked him to stay on after graduation in 1971 and teach. He completed a master of science degree in biology and education in 1974 with a thesis on speciation of rainbow darter, also at UWSP. He then earned another masters degree at the University of Minnesota in 1976; this time the degree was in zoology. For this latter degree, Mike conducted the first radio-telemetry study of the muskellunge; the "muskie" was an elusive fish and a favorite of those he had guided.

In 1977 while presenting a paper at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, Mike learned that the U.S. Forest Service was looking for biologists, as the agency was bolstering its fish and wildlife programs. He was selected and reported for work as a GS-5 biological technician on the Hiawatha National Forest. It was there that he met his first "combat biologist", a label that offered acute testimony to the difficulty that the traditional Forest Service culture had in accepting new disciplines. Biologists were considered to be "kind of a frill." Combat biologists were those who did more than stand their ground; they stepped forward and stared the foresters down.

Mike did well and was quickly promoted to a GS-7 fisheries biologist. As the agency traditionally does, his skill as a biologist was then rewarded by offering him a transfer to an administrative position. Instead, he arranged to be assigned to a research project, as part of his regular job, that was central to his earning a Ph.D. in fisheries biology at Iowa State University in 1984. His doctoral work focused on the muskie. He produced five peer-reviewed publications out of that research, which gave him national visibility. By now he was assigned to the regional office in Milwaukee, but worked out of Park Falls. His increasing national visibility, due to very active involvement in professional societies--even served as chairman of an international muskie symposium--opened the door to moving to San Francisco in 1985 as regional fisheries program manager for the California region of the Forest Service. The move included a two-step pay increase.

He liked his new assignment. However, the work was difficult in that his midwestern experience had given him technical expertise that did not apply in California--the species were different, the habitats were different, the issues were different. As he was no longer a technical expert, he turned to developing long range strategies and securing outside funding to support new programs. His involvement in program management and funding provided ever more national prominence, especially within the agency. After only two years in California, Mike moved to Washington D.C. in 1986 as national fisheries program manager, another two-step promotion.

One of Mike's assignments was to promote a fishery program--Rise to the Future--the first market-based approach to moving a program into the agency and building support. He met for the first time and briefed Associate Chief Dale Robertson on the new program on the very day of the announcement that Robertson would succeed Max Peterson as chief. Robertson said that he wanted the program to be a "curve bending event," something positive to stand out amidst the severe controversies over the spotted owl, old growth timber, and below-cost timber sales. Later, Robertson would remember Rise to the Future as one of the successes during his tenure as chief. Too, the chief certainly knew who the national fisheries program manager was. Later when Cy Jamison, director of the Bureau of Land Management, told Robertson that he wanted to rebuild the science capability of his agency, the chief said, "I think I know just the person you need." In 1989 Mike transferred to BLM as science advisor and special assistant to the director. He felt comfortable with the move in part because of Robertson's assurance that he would always be welcome back in the Forest Service.

Mike made a stipulation for his move, that he would not be asked to deal with the spotted owl issue, "a debacle waiting to happen." Jamison's goal was to develop a $50 million research program for BLM. By the time that Bill Clinton became president, the program had reached nearly $43 million, and Mike was much enjoying his successful BLM assignment. Jamison, of course, left with other Bush appointees, and Mike was asked to be acting assistant secretary of the Interior for lands and mineral management. Jim Baca was named as BLM director, but his management style quickly got him into trouble and he was removed. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt then asked Mike to "go down to BLM and settle things down for a while."

President Clinton acted upon Babbitt's recommendation, and he formally nominated Mike to be BLM director and sent it to the Senate for confirmation as required in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. However, now it was February 1994--a full year into the Clinton administration--and Babbitt's aggressive posture on grazing reform had angered key senators. As Mike was identified with the secretary's position, the Senate declined to act upon the nomination. Thus, Mike spent three years as acting director, a situation that he felt did not lessen his effectiveness, at least within the agency. However, his uncertain status did cause him to tend to think more in the short term, rather than the long.

During his tenure as director, Mike had many occasions to work with Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas. Grazing issues, ecosystem management, Columbia River salmon, and forest fires were only some of the tough issues and events that they both faced. Too, they both were wildlife biologists--Jack was closer to being a combat biologist than Mike--and they shared empathy for working in what had been a forester's world. When Thomas decided that he would leave the Forest Service, he strongly recommended that Mike be his successor. On January 6, 1997, Mike became chief of the Forest Service.

Mike's first order of business was to mend fences. Relations were "strained with Congress, strained with the administration, strained with the undersecretary's office--every place you looked there was a fight." Too, "the agency had lost its mission." Although some internal and external relations remained strained, he was able to very substantially lower the levels of antagonism, many times by hosting breakfasts in the chief's office for political appointees, senators and congressmen and key staffers, and other agency heads. Generally, Mike's guests were willing to meet him more than halfway; they too wanted to end the strained relations.

It was very controversial, but Mike declared a moratorium on road building in 58 million acres of roadless areas. The Forest Service had received a letter from a third of the members of Congress, asking that road building in these areas be stopped. Mike knew that the issue was really logging old growth, and new roads were the key to continuing this practice. As a result,

Congress had repeatedly cut the Forest Service road budget, resulting in a tremendous maintenance backlog. After the moratorium, the road budget increased--new roads were acceptable as long as they were not constructed in roadless areas.

Another controversy that strained Forest Service relations was over Alaska. Mike recalls that early in his tenure as Chief, "probably about half of my time was spent on the Tongass." Alaska was also an example of how tough problems were routinely bucked up to the top, as staff were afraid to deal with them. The issue was brought under control by adoption of the Tongass National Forest Plan and the buying out of long-term timber sale contracts, but the path leading to the remedy had been rough indeed.

In the fall of 2000, Mike was touring western forest fires. He received word that President Clinton wanted to see fire conditions first-hand, and Mike joined him in Idaho. As presidents do, Clinton gave the secretaries of agriculture and interior a mandate to come up with a fire strategy, which resulted in an interagency fire plan. As a result, the Forest Service budget was increased by $1 billion--the largest increase in agency history--mostly to be used to rebuild fire forces. To date, the increase has held.

Mike describes and explains many more topics in the pages that follow. Wilderness, workforce diversity, interagency coordination, government reorganization, and BLM and Forest Service cultures are only a few of those included. When talking about what it is like to be chief, "drinking out of a fire hose" is only part of his thoughtful description. Of extra value to the reader is Mike's ability to place the Forest Service within a broader context than most of his predecessors, his assignments in the Department of the Interior provided unique insights as he contrasted them with those in Agriculture.

After George W. Bush was elected president--the official announcement came on December 13, 2000 following the controversial recount in Florida--it was obvious to Mike that it was time to move on. The incoming administration sent clear signals that it wanted a low-profile chief, that the new undersecretary of agriculture was to make all important announcements about the Forest Service. Too, during the campaign, Bush had stated his opposition to the roadless policy. Mike could see that for him to stay on as chief would have created the level of stress that had marked the transition between Chief Robertson and Chief Thomas. On March 31, 2000, Mike resigned as chief. Dale Bosworth was his successor.

On September 1, 2001, Mike began teaching as professor of global environmental management at his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin--Stevens Point. Since leaving Washington, D.C., he teaches, writes, presents papers, and travels. Despite his impressive honors, he remains the friendly, informal, small-town boy from Wisconsin. If he's away from his university office, the voice mail instruction from the distinguished professor and former Forest Service chief and BLM director tells callers, "This is Mike, leave a message."

Harold K. "Pete" Steen (HKS): Why don't you run through your early background, so we'll know what it takes to be chief of the Forest Service.

Michael P. Dombeck (MPD): I graduated from Hayward High School in 1966. I got a bachelor's degree with majors in general science and biology at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point in 1971, master's of science in teaching in biology and education here at Stevens Point in 1974, an M.S. in zoology from the University of Minnesota in 1976, and a Ph.D. in fisheries biology from Iowa State in 1984, which was in the Department of Animal Ecology.

HKS: Why fisheries as opposed to some other field of natural resources?

MPD: I was born here in central Wisconsin. I never really planned on ending up coming back to my birthplace but it's just sort of a coincidence. I was the youngest of six. I was the only one born in a hospital. My family lived on a small farm about two miles from the small community of Bevent. My parents were third generation subsistence farmers in really what wasn't all that good a farming country to begin with. My father always liked the outdoors and the woods and going "up north," as they say in Wisconsin, to the woods and what's now the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. So they decided to move about a hundred and eighty miles northwest of there to Sawyer County. I was nine years old at that time. I think being uprooted is always a little bit traumatic, but what it did is it really put us in the woods in the national forest.

We lived in the Moose Lake area about twenty-five miles from Hayward, which at that time was about fifteen hundred people, so we were sort of at the end of the road. They bought a little country store called the Moose Lake Store. We sold kerosene and bib overalls and twenty-penny nails and groceries and beer and all of the basics, and had one of the few phones in the area. That was right at the end of the lumberjack era. The land that wasn't national forest land was owned by Consolidated Papers and undeveloped. Most of the local people made a living either working in the woods or guiding. The old growth was gone and it was second and third growth coming in, mostly aspen, but there was a little bit of hemlock left so they'd be cutting hemlock, balsam, no white pine left. Then peeling aspen in the spring and guiding at the resorts in the summer.

Moose Lake had nine resorts at that time. It was about nine miles long. One of the things that I always remember was, we were within about a half mile of the West Fork lookout tower. We could see the lookout tower from our kitchen window. One of my favorite things to do as a kid was to go up there with one of our friends and neighbors, George Deckman, who was a forestry technician and was a lookout. Every once in awhile George would stay out a little bit too late and come over in the morning and he'd say Mikie, would you walk up to the tower with me. I still remember the 135 steps. So I would go up to the tower and listen to George's stories. It was my very first connection with forest and fires, even though these were asbestos forests, and if there was a smoke it was usually somebody burning leaves who didn't get a permit.

As a kid I was working in the store with my parents, taking care of summer homes, a couple of years of working in the woods in the summertime cutting and peeling aspen. Then I got out on these big lakes guiding in the summertime and no bugs, no mosquitoes, no wood ticks, and I knew at that time the lakes were the place to be, versus in the woods with all the humidity, the heat, the wood ticks, the black flies, and the mosquitoes. So when you ask why fisheries, that's really probably how it sort of all started.

HKS: Sure. Hadn't thought about it that way but makes a lot of sense.

MPD: It was these cool breezes on the lakes just blowing all the bugs away. It was really, really a lot more fun than working in the woods. The year after I was a senior in high school my parents

retired, and I wanted to stay up there and guide. They moved back to the central part of the state so they didn't have to drive twenty-five miles to church or to the doctor or to the store. I bought a place on Moose Lake and stayed up there and guided the summers through my college years, graduate school years. It was really not until I started working for the Forest Service that I had to stop guiding, because I planned my whole life around having the summers free to guide. It was a great job for a kid because we made pretty good money, and you could work seven days a week.

Most of the people you guided were very nice, and I always felt that experience was important over the long haul because it exposed me to lots of different points of view. You got to know people very well in a relaxed atmosphere, everything from farmers to bankers to business executives to doctors and lawyers and people from all walks of life from all parts of the country telling stories about where they'd been. It really helped me realize how important the out of doors and the forest and the water and these experiences were to a lot of people. We also had friends that were only about five miles away from the Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation and the Lake Superior band of the Chippewas, so we also had friends and neighbors that were Native Americans that we got to know and would fish with and hear lots of stories from Charlie Thayer and others about what it was like, stories from his grandfather when the white man first came and the cutting of the forest. Of course, all of northern Wisconsin was really slicked off by about 1915.

HKS: I wanted to go into forestry because I wanted to work out of doors.

Early Education

MPD: I did well in high school and really wasn't into the social atmosphere of the typical high school student because we were twenty-five miles from town, and it was just too far to go. In fact, the only sport I participated in was track because it was in the springtime. In the fall we were trapping mink and muskrats and hunting grouse. Then in the spring of the year, which was the mud season in that country, we had a little free time so track was the only sport I participated in. I got out of high school and really didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. Ended up here in Stevens Point thinking about a lot of different things, everything from pre-med to going into the seminary. I ended up having a professor by the name of George Becker who I had for a zoology class who had just a tremendous impact on me, as he did on other students, and this was kind of the way it went.

I'm in this long line registering for classes when they handed out the computer punch cards, and I was registering for general zoology and the guy sitting there was neatly dressed—white shirt, tie, very dignified looking—and I was signing up for his class but I didn't know it. He said Dombeck, where are you from and I said Hayward. This was in December. Fine, so I got the card from him and walked into his class in January. And he said Dombeck, how are things in Hayward. The gift that George Becker had was the ability and infectious enthusiasm to get you to work at about a hundred and twenty percent of your capability and not know it. And I did very well in his class. It was tough. He was a taskmaster. But I ended up trying to take every course that he taught because he made it very interesting and fun, and from that time on there wasn't any doubt in my mind that I was going to be in the biological sciences and natural resources. I hadn't settled on aquatics or forest management or anything at that time, but George was just a wonderful, wonderful guy to work with.

HKS: Yes, it's so important. My first college professor was a botany prof, and I almost switched to botany my freshman year.

MFD: I graduated with a bachelor's and did well, and the biology department hired me to teach zoology, which was a great job, seven thousand dollars a year. We got ten checks a year and, of course, I had never seen that much money. I got into the sciences more and more, and very much enjoyed teaching. At that point never really planned on working for the government in any way.

You had the opportunity while you were teaching here to take some courses, so I ultimately did that. In 1973 I went to the University of Arkansas and spent a semester teaching there and collecting rainbow darters, which was a small stream fish I did a speciation study on for a master's thesis. Came back to Stevens Point, finished up the M.S. degree and then went on to the University of Minnesota. I'd also been very interested in muskies because of guiding. A muskie is this elusive fish with a lot of lore attached to it. The range of muskies is not very big. It's basically the Lake States. They're in the upper Mississippi and Great Lakes drainages, and the guiding that I did was almost always for muskies. I always had the idea in the back of my mind that I wanted to learn more about muskies. So for a master's in zoology at Minnesota I did the first radio telemetry study on muskellunge, which is the long name for muskie, in the United States. It was published. I'll talk more about it later when discussing my Ph.D. program.

I developed some very good relationships and support with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I was giving a paper at the Midwest fish and wildlife conference, and I rode down with some of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources aquatics and fisheries people. They said you know the Forest Service is looking for biologists. This was 1977 about the time Forest Service was really ramping up of the fish and wildlife and waters programs. In the meantime I had gotten married and I had taught high school biology and chemistry at a little town called Holcombe in the northern part of the state, and then continuing to guide in the summertime.

I talked to Dwayne Campbell, who was the forest fisheries biologist on the Hiawatha, and Harold McReynolds, who was the biologist for the southern zone of Region 9 working out of the supervisor's office at Bedford, Indiana. They said to fill out an application and send it in. So I did, and lo and behold they called me and said come on to work. This is December of 1977. I had gotten married in 1975. I had just written up all this research. My wife and I were ready to go to Florida, some place where it was warm, but instead we packed up our pickup and went to Munising, Michigan, where it snows two hundred and fifty inches a year right on the south shore of Lake Superior.

I can still recall driving into town and seeing the mailboxes just barely sticking out of the snow banks, because of the winds off of Lake Superior. We got to Munising and asked somebody where the Forest Service headquarters was, and they sent us to the Park Service headquarters. So I showed up at the Park Service headquarters and they said well, we don't have any job for you. At that time most of the people really didn't worry too much what agency it is; they said you must mean that you're going to work for Bob Miley, who was my first district ranger at the Munising office. And that's how I made the Forest Service connection. It was really through the presentation of a research paper at a professional society meeting. Even though I grew up in a national forest I'd never really thought about going to work for the Forest Service. I hadn't even thought about going into public service. I wanted to ultimately go on and get a Ph.D. and teach and live the good life in the Ivory Tower and have summers off so I could continue to guide and spend time up in the lake country and travel. But taking the Forest Service path really took care of all that. So I was hired on as a GS-6 biological technician.

HKS: So you worked on a ranger district, not at the forest level?

Figure 2: Mike Dombeck, Fisheries Biologist, U.S. Forest Service, Park Falls, Wisconsin (1985).

Combat Biologists

MPD: That's right. At that time there were four biological technicians hired by the Hiawatha in one slug and I was one of them, two of us on two districts. I started out with Bob Miller, who subsequently then went to Alaska and died in a tragic hunting accident about six or eight years later. We were a new discipline on the district. In one sense it was a tremendous opportunity because we were able to carve our own path. We had a forest fisheries biologist named Dwayne Campbell who was a little bit of renegade type of personality. I guess I'd call him a combat biologist. I think you've heard that before.

HKS: Jack Thomas uses that term.

MPD: The new discipline in the agency, and you've got to have pretty thick skin to deal with the traditional bureaucracy.

HKS: I was going to ask how the old guard handled you guys causing all those problems.

MPD: Well, I think we were kind of a frill or a bonus to our district. Our ranger was proud to have us fish guys that were new to the forest. Dwayne Campbell was a very bright man but very much a combat biologist with a fairly aggressive personality who liked to take on the rangers and the forest supervisor about the traditional Forest Service values. For example, we were out on a fire, and Dwayne would complain to the ranger, you have got my biologist. They should be doing biology. Dwayne had a Forest Service vehicle that was equipped to pull a boat because we had lots of fisheries and aquatic survey equipment and an electro-fishing boat. He almost always had his dog with him, and he used to tease the rangers and say that his dog Toni was a GS-9. Of course, it was against Forest Service regulations. The Lassie era was over at that time but Dwayne was continually testing the system. Anybody who worked with Dwayne or was around him, either state DNR [Department of Natural Resources] or Forest Service, always remembered him. Because he was a funny guy, a cantankerous guy, a very bright guy but if he would have been a student in the 1960s he would have been leading the protest marches. That was the kind of personality that Dwayne was.

There was one interesting exercise we were put through. Because we were new on the forest and our programs were new. The traditional Forest Service bureaucracy was trying to fit us into the targets for what to measure and how do we account for our budget.

One of the things that we did with the states; there were ponds that were old borrow pits that had filled in with water when they built Highway 28 along the south shore of Lake Superior in Michigan, and the Michigan DNR used these. They were on national forest land. The Michigan DNR used these ponds to rear walleyes from the fry to fingerling stage 'til they were big enough to stock in the lakes on the national forest. We had the YACC [Young Adult Conservation Corps] programs and we were closest, Munising versus Escanaba, and what we would have to do is apply yeast to these ponds twice a week. This would cause zooplankton to bloom which provided the walleyes food. Well, how are we going to take credit for this in the Forest Service system was the challenge. We had meetings with the supervisor's office staff and we said okay, the stocking rate of walleyes were either fifty or a hundred fish per acre, and on the ponds you would raise maybe five to ten thousand walleyes per acre. I don't remember the numbers exactly. So we said okay, this fell under habitat improvement like the traditional land management program. So for every hundred walleyes you produce you'll get an acre of credit. We had acre equivalents so it fit into the accounting systems and all of the kinds of things that we measure in the agency.

Because Dwayne had a tendency to rub his boss the wrong way and usually was smart enough to get away with it, they were always looking to question Dwayne's recommendations on things. They realized there's a fairly high mortality in these walleyes, that you plant a hundred and ultimately only five percent might survive to be catchable size. We called this lake habitat improvement and acres equivalent and they said well no, you can't count a hundred fish equivalent to one acre because some of them die. I thought to myself well, when we do reforestation and we plant trees and you have high mortality, what do the foresters do. Well, they take credit and replant next year. So you could really see the differential treatment in the Forest Service of something that they weren't quite comfortable with or something that was new. And this was also the era, hopefully nearing the end of the era where anything that got in the way of timber harvest was known as a timber constraint.

HKS: This may be the place to bring it up. I'm sure you've encountered this many times during your career, the relationships between what the states traditionally do and what the feds traditionally do. To me the states take care of the wildlife and the fish and the Forest Service manages the habitat. But here's the Forest Service dealing with the animals themselves, the fish themselves. Was this common or was this innovative in and of itself that the state's hatcheries weren't doing this for you?

MPD: It was really a state responsibility, but we had cooperative agreements and because we were closer we had the YACC crews. The state provided the yeast and bought all the material. We just did the labor because we had the manpower.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota where I worked, you basically had from one extreme to the other. The state of Michigan viewed us as one of their. We went to their training sessions. We did electrofishing surveys. We helped with the walleye rearing. We would help with the walleye and muskie egg takes in the spring of the year. They in turn would help us when we were doing habitat improvement work. We were doing a lot of in stream log placements to improve trout habitat. This was an area where there were lots of structures put in streams in the '30s by the CCCs. Some of them worked. Some of them didn't. Some of them needed to be replaced. We were cutting large areas of alder brush along the streams to improve habitat. I'm not sure all of those projects ultimately helped as much in the end as the thinking and the science at the time. We did a number of innovative things. There was a very, very close relationship between the Michigan DNR and the Forest Service.

In Wisconsin we had fisheries biologists on IPAs [Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments] who were state employees that were being paid by the Forest Service. These were fisheries biologists with an office in the Forest Service building, but they were technically state employees. The bent was always toward habitat, it was never toward species management, and there was never any confusion who was responsible for what. The viability clause of the National Forest Management Act brought a lot of attention to species viability. The thinking of the time was well, we had to monitor indicator species and if the state didn't do it, who would do it. Then it was the Forest Service responsibility to monitor or do population counts of indicator species to determine viability. So this was the gray area.

Now we come to the state of Minnesota; they didn't like the feds at all. They said you have no business doing any of this stuff. We had one state fisheries biologist in Minnesota, an IPA, and the state probably gave us somebody that they didn't want, my guess is what it really boiled down to. Minnesota had lost the timber wolf battles in court. They had the Boundary Waters and lost the access battle too.

One of the interesting things with the Boundary Waters area if you look at the history and especially if you read [Miron] Bud Hunsaker's book, he was a Forest Service employee, a researcher that almost every natural resources debate that's occurred in the United States occurred in or around the Boundary Waters. In fact, in 1926 the chief of the Forest Service ordered the first inventory of roadless areas because of a fight on the Boundary Waters. And almost all of the major players in conservation in the United States in the first two thirds of the last century were involved in the Boundary Waters. Gifford Pinchot, Arthur Carhart, Bob Marshall, Aldo Leopold, and the first state forester—I think it was General Fitzgerald, I'll have to check the guy's name, was appointed in 1891. President Truman issued the first regulations of flyover of wilderness areas on the Boundary Waters.

The bottom line was, Minnesota just basically wanted the feds to manage trees and nothing else. In fact, when I called one of the officials of the Minnesota DNR for the first time when I became the zone fisheries biologist working at Park Falls, one of the first things he said to me was, is this going to be cooperative or an adversarial relationship, which is kind of an unusual introduction. He was very much sensitized to the strong dichotomy because this is a state responsibility and you feds just mind your own business.

HKS: I gave a paper in Duluth some years ago on history of public lands. I didn't include state lands and a guy from Minnesota charged up afterwards and says, state lands are also public lands.

MRD: We were not really considered mainstream in the Forest Service. We in the aquatic resources were dealing with what were the timber constraints. I'll always remember dialogue with compartment examiners and other foresters that I worked with—if it was a recreation issue, if it was a scenic beauty issue, if it was a water issue, the inside language was it was referred to as a timber constraint. These things that are really getting in the way for us doing the job we're really supposed to be doing and that's get the cut out. That led me to believe that when we talk about the can-do attitude of the Forest Service that the culture is so proud of, the can-do means get the cut out. I'm saying this in a positive way because the mandate of Congress after World War II was to get the cut out. The big timber was gone off of private lands. Prior to World War II, you know this history much better than I, the industry did not want to allow federal timber in the West on the market because it would depress the prices for them. Come to World War II and the victory garden era and get in the war effort and we jumped in with both feet and the Forest Service did a wonderful job of doing that. Then as the accounting systems, the budgeting process, the flow of dollars within the agency really began to be linked more and more closely with the timber volume, particularly in regions like 6, then it became almost impossible to slow that machine down. It really didn't happen until Judge Dwyer did it with the spotted owl.

Let me backtrack to the ranger district. In those years there was money for these new programs, and it turned out to be a feather in the cap of the district ranger to have us biologists. We were involved in lake survey and stream survey work. In the wintertime we supervised YACC crews. This was the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) era. These were kids from the city, and in the case of Michigan they were mostly from the Detroit area, some from the Chicago area. We also had the YACC, which were local kids usually from poorer families that were high school dropouts usually from sixteen to twenty years of age.

We did lake mapping in the wintertime, which was in snow country and is really an interesting job. You'd have waist-deep snow on these lakes, and you'd set up a grid like a piece of graph paper. Then you drilled holes in the lake, took depth samplings, took bottom samples. If the depth was greater than five feet you came back halfway and did your traditional contour mapping—and this was all done with YACC crews. We went out on snowmobiles or hiked in if there was too much snow. But the thing is with the snow country and with these lakes, when you

drilled a hole it was literally like a fountain because you had the weight of the snow on the ice. As soon as you punched a hole through the ice it released the pressure and you had to finish what you started because if you came back the next day the hole might be two or three feet across.

HKS: You did it in the winter as a means of getting across the lake rather than using a boat in the summer?

MPD: It was an efficient way of doing the lake mapping. Probably not more efficient than sonar but it was winter work.

HKS: I see.

MPD: We'd have these large Skidoo snow machines with sleds, and we'd put a crew of six or eight people in and set up the grid on the lake and then do the borings and draw the lake maps in the office. A lot of our training at that time was actually done by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the fish and wildlife staff. In the summertime we'd work doing compartment exam, which in Region 9 was the forest inventory, providing input on aquatic and biological resources with the foresters. I really made some very good friends and had a wonderful time during the three years that I was on the Munising ranger district.

HKS: I made snow surveys in the Cascades, but it doesn't sound quite as challenging.

MPD: We were able to manage our own programs, chart our own course. One of the basic things that I learned was the importance of spending time with local people, and I had a lot of fun doing it. We had rental pickups because the summer crews were so much bigger than the permanent crews. I remember my first Forest Service vehicle was a red Chevy pickup.

HKS: [Laughter.]

MPD: About once a month I'd go and visit and get to know the local people, the influence leaders, who really help with public relations and to try to bring the communities closer to the agency. There were a couple of unique things going on in the Forest Service at the time. Our assistant ranger was a GS-9 forestry technician, and he was on that forest the last of that generation who knew the local people. Tim Baker, another close friend, was hired as a forestry technician. Tim had a forestry degree from Rutgers, so we were moving into the era where almost all of the people that were hired by the Forest Service came from someplace else rather than the local communities. I bring this up because I think that has had a very distinct influence on Forest Service relationships with local communities where typically you would have a core group of local people that hung out at the bars, that knew where all of the back roads and knew all of the nuances of the local communities. That was where we began to move away from that local connection, because we had this flood of people with college degrees in natural resources, and the local people who didn't have degrees in forestry or other things basically couldn't compete with people with a national pool of applicants.

HKS: Is this the Forest Service policy or is this Civil Service policy on hiring without discrimination that is kicking in about this time?

MPD: I would say it was a combination of both, and this was not unique to the Forest Service. I was out with Al Sabonniak, who was the assistant ranger at that time, and we were talking about the impact of humans on the forest. A said to me, and I've used this quote many times, you know the most permanent thing we do to change the land is to build a road in the forest. I would come back home on the Chequamegon and visit and I would look at large areas, several sections

of land that were largely inaccessible by vehicle, and suddenly there would be a road in there. It wasn't always Forest Service land. Some of it was Consolidated. At that time they were doing fairly large clearcuts, and once they built a road and developed access into it, it really changed the character of the land because it changed the behavior of the people. Once you build a road it's very, very difficult to close because you get individuals that drive in to hunt and fish and go back there and pick berries and do all these things and you change human use of the area. So when you open up a large segment of wildland it's not just necessarily the simple means of just going in there and harvesting the timber, but you have this change in behavior in the community. One of the reasons it's so difficult to close a road is because local people have ownership. It's their backyard. It's what they do for recreation. It's what they do and where they take their kids hunting and fishing. The difference is people can drive in and you end up with a lot more use, road hunters, and trash and introduction of exotic species. You lose the solitude and you've lost the wildness of the place. Those two events led me to take a look at what happens when we open up wildland. And yet the more traditional point of view is that we need to get in there and manage and we need to do the silviculture and all these kinds of things. I certainly have no qualms with that, but the point being when we do that we really change how people use the land. It was an interesting set of events that happened very early in my career that I used to think a lot about when I was struggling with the roadless issue, the roads budget, when I became chief of the Forest Service.

Taking the Ph.D.

HKS: Something was going on in your head because you were ... dissatisfied perhaps is not the right term, but you went back for a Ph.D. You wanted to be what, more of an academic?

MPD: I got along well with all of the people in the Forest Service and loved the job. One of the things that I did in my master's degree on muskies was located muskie spawning areas. They're sort of like the timber wolf of the waters, the top predator, low population densities. We didn't know very much about them. The populations were declining. In many areas of the range muskies were extirpated and there weren't very many remaining lakes where you had good natural reproduction. The radio telemetry study took me to those spawning areas, and I always had it in the back of my mind why is this, why this differential reproductive rate, why aren't they more successful? The Forest Service wanted me to go into line management at that time.

Jim Bruce became my district ranger. He encouraged me to apply for a YCC camp director job, which I did, and I was selected. It was really the first step in management at that time that you would be a YCC camp director then assistant ranger or ranger on to the forest supervisor ranks and here on up. Interestingly enough that was when the administrations changed and the YCC program was cut. So here I was, in the winter I was selected to be the camp director, by the time spring rolled around the funding had been cut. There was going to be no YCC camp and this was at the Muddy and Grimes camp on the Munising district of the Hiawatha. I had also at that time been talking to Dave Gibbons. Dave had a Ph.D. and was a fisheries biologist at that time, I believe, in Region 5. The Forest Service was sending people to school. They had a master's in public administration program going with Michigan, I believe, and maybe one other. Wasn't there one other university?

HKS: Harvard.

MPD: Dave developed a project and he earned his Ph.D. as a Forest Service employee. So I said gosh, that sounds like a really good deal. It wasn't clear in my mind at that time that I was going to be a career Forest Service employee. I had always focused on wanting to teach at a university,

so I began to explore possibilities and talk to people. I was also very active in my professional society, in the American Fisheries Society, at that time routinely giving papers. When I was at the University of Minnesota working on my master's, I started writing articles for a little local magazine. In fact, I've got it right here because I'm working on this year's series. They paid me twenty-five dollars an article, which was a pretty good deal. I started writing these articles called "Natural History Notes," and I wrote about everything from do fish have eyelids to tree rings. I always looked for unique facts about plants or animals in the area. For example, maple syrup has the trace element cadmium that is required for cell physiology, and it's one of the few places that your body picks up cadmium. French pastry chefs prefer bear grease because it produces, in the baking process, the finest texture of piecrusts and pastries.

HKS: How about that. I'm learning a lot here.

MPD: By the time I started working for the Forest Service with my outdoor background, the guiding and all this sort of thing combined with my training in biology, zoology, and aquatic sciences; I knew the scientific name of every vertebrate in this part of the country and all the trees and plants. I was well versed in Midwestern Wisconsin Great Lakes area ecology, natural history, all of these kinds of things. In the meantime I got promoted through a competitive process from a GS-6 biological technician to a GS-7 fisheries biologist. The Michigan DNR, for example, would fly me in to do training sessions for their statewide training for their biologists. I would be involved in not only just training in aquatics but sort of the broader aspects of fish and wildlife biology and forest management.

After I finished my master's before I started work for the Forest Service, I was all set to go to Cornell to get a Ph.D. We had been there, looked for housing. Simultaneously with that I was offered a job with the Forest Service. I called John Nickum, who was the advisor that I was planning on working with at Cornell. He was head of the Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit. He said, hey Mike, if you get a shot at a permanent full-time job with the feds, take it and come back to school later. That was where the idea got planted in my mind that I would get a Ph.D. So I did three years at the Munising district. I got career status and John in the meantime had moved to Iowa State. I ended up making that connection again. Instead of working with John at Iowa State I ended up working with Bruce Menzel, who had other students that had worked on muskies and was pretty much the fish ecologist. Now this is sort of an interesting turn of events. I talked to the people in the supervisor's office of the Forest Service about going back and getting a Ph.D. and it was sort of like well, why do you want to do that. That really won't help you very much.

HKS: I had the same experience.

MPD: I had been talking to other people about this and then getting advice from others that had gone it in the Forest Service. Well, they just weren't supportive. Roy Droege was a forest supervisor and Bob Grothman who I had good relationships with, they were wanting me to take a line management career path in the Forest Service. I got accepted to Iowa State and had the research proposal set up and now they weren't going to support it. So I actually ended up quitting the Forest Service for one pay period. Pete Wingle, Bob Radtke, and Bob Hollingsworth in the regional office, the fish, wildlife, recreation staff, had got wind that I had left and they intervened and hired me back as a regional office employee on half-time when I was in school, and then I came back to the Munising district in the summertime as a full-time employee to do the fisheries work. We ultimately designed the dissertation research project that was of value to the Forest Service, basically taking a look at the impacts of land management, of the quality of habitat that would enhance survival of muskies and improvements in muskies spawning habitats.

I did my three years at Iowa State, but I was really only on campus one year and one quarter because I'd had a lot of coursework already. Mostly what I took at Iowa State was statistics and it was the early stages of computer sciences. That was another real turning point in my career because I got five peer-reviewed publications out of my dissertation research. That project gave me some visibility nationally with the Forest Service. I didn't know this was going on at the time because I was doing my thing with sciences. Hal Salwasser was with the fish and wildlife habitat relationships group in Fort Collins, Colorado. I had done some predictive work and some modeling where we took all of the data that we could get our hands on from probably one hundred fifty lakes and basically asked the question through discriminative function analysis and some other statistical techniques, that I couldn't even begin to recount today, to separate out what were the factors most common in lakes that had good self-sustaining populations of muskies versus the lakes that didn't. Then we were able to turn that around into a predictive model and take data from other lakes and then we ultimately related to water level fluctuations and forest management practices the importance of riparian management, the importance of large woody debris and trees falling into lakes for fish habitat management.

I finished up at Iowa State and was now on the regional office rolls in Region 9 of the Forest Service. I moved to Park Falls, Wisconsin, and they wanted me to take on the Great Lakes zone, largely Wisconsin and Minnesota, but then also to provide some service to the Michigan national forests. So I really had an opportunity to deal with Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota DNRs. I did quite a bit of training and was probably an ambassador for the Forest Service as much as anything. I stayed very active in professional societies. I was program chairman for the first international muskie symposium, which was the first major scientific meeting about the biology of muskies. I was fairly visible and got recognition for a variety of things based on the research I had done for the Forest Service. And at that time the Forest Service budgets were in pretty good shape. The Reagan cuts hadn't really hit yet. I couldn't have dreamed of a better set of opportunities for a young employee to have worked in the Lake States and get to know a lot of people and focus on applied science. I did presentations, and that gave me a fair amount of exposure to other forest supervisors, to the regional office staff at the Forest Service.

One last thing I want to say about the muskie research and the stuff that I did for the Forest Service, and again not knowing it at the time but it gave me national visibility with developing habitat relationships models and, in fact, one of them was published by the Forest Service that I still have as a training program. It was used by the Fish and Wildlife Service in their habitat relationship series that they were publishing at that time. I got one of the larger cash awards for innovations in technology. I got a five thousand dollar cash award for developing a technique for measuring oxygen at micro zones, basically at the bottom, the substrate water interface where fish eggs hatch. And it was things like that that gave me visibility nationally and again, I was not aware that was happening.

The next major step was they asked me to go to California to be the regional fish program manager. They made it a two-step pay increase. Both of my parents had died and my wife's mother had died within about a fourteen-month period. We were on the Chequamegon working out of the Park Falls headquarters of the Chequamegon but yet doing the Lake States national forest stuff. We had built a new energy efficient house and just had sort of a paradise. The California opportunity came along and Jack Woiter, the forest supervisor, said you've got a lot of promise for the agency. You need to get some experience in other regions. It was good and bad. We had sort of this wonderful personal life, this wonderful new home on the lake, a beautiful young daughter, no neighbors within sight, and then the next thing you know it's off to California.

California Assignment

HKS: When you went to California did you go to the southwestern station in Berkeley?

MPD: No, I went the regional office as the regional fisheries program manager.

HKS: Okay, so you weren't in research?

MPD: No. Rather than having come up in the Forest Service through the ranks of the traditional forester, I really came up a very, very different way and yet I've got to be very grateful because of the supervisors that I had in the Forest Service. I really only had one that I thought was mediocre or poor and I won't tell you who that is. But I've had from the first ranger I worked for, Bob Miley, to Jim Bruce to the forest supervisors that I worked with, I just had the very best. And in spite of having gone a different route, yet somehow I managed to stay in favor with the line management. For example, in the early '80s Larry Henson was the regional forester in Milwaukee and the Forest Service was looking to bolster the leadership ranks. Every forest was supposed to provide five names of high potential individuals and the forest supervisor had personal interviews with these. And Jack Walter, the forest supervisor of the Chequamegon, selected me as one of the five individuals and interviewed me and I was apparently considered as high potential. This is one of the reasons that they probably put pressure on me to go to the California region.

I went from a county with not one single stop light- Price County, Wisconsin—to living in the Bay Area. I almost quit because it was just so stressful; it was wall to knuckle driving in the Bay Area. You could hardly find a house as expensive as a hundred-thousand dollars in Price County and in the Bay Area and you couldn't find a garage for a hundred thousand dollars. But it was a two-step increase. I had begun to develop a relationship with the Washington Office staff, and that's really where I first got to know Bob Nelson. If you look at Bob's management style throughout his tenure as director of fisheries and wildlife, he liked to reach down and pick out what he thought were younger, promising, sort of high energy people and move them up fairly quickly, and that was the mode I was put in.

HKS: Are there any particular experiences in California other than it was a transition that got you involved in the Washington Office more?

MPD: I had a wonderful boss in Joe Ham. Joe was director of wildlife and fisheries for the California region. He had been a line officer most of his life. He got his master's in wildlife. I believe he did his thesis on elk. Joe had been a line manager for over twenty years. He got crosswise with the leadership of the Forest Service when he was supervisor of the Six Rivers. The establishment of Redwood National Park put more pressure on the Six Rivers National Forest to replace the timber base loss. Joe and his team basically said look, we're already over cutting. We can't possibly cut any more. And he had the political debate and the dialogue, the negotiations of how to make up some of the board feet lost to the Redwood National Park. Joe moved as supervisor of Six Rivers and went to the regional office as wildlife and fisheries director. And Joe would tell this story. We were exposed as biologists to sort of the tug and pull between the traditional timber machine of the agency and the other values of fish, wildlife, recreation, and other kinds of things.

HKS: When I interviewed Bob Buckman I asked him about administrative studies, the research that the agency does outside of the research arm. He wasn't very much impressed with it generally. He said usually it peters out too soon. You solve the small problem and then it's all put aside. But you're talking about "administrative studies" done by the National Forest System that sounds pretty permanent. I mean it's peer-review quality research that you're working on. Was Buckman out of line when he was saying that or are you more exceptional, the kind of research that you did was more significant?

MPD: I don't think he's out of line at all because he is right, it's personality dependent. Rather than being part of a long-term research project that would involve more than one scientist or a team of people doing something, this was basically something that I was interested in personally. Especially after my experience on the Hiawatha with the forest supervisor and staff thinking, why do you want to get this Ph.D.? I mean go be a forest supervisor and do something important. The thoughts going through my mind at that time were, hey, the last thing I want is to be married to some organization that's going to dictate how I live my life and what I do. And the bottom line of, I think, making the decision to get the Ph.D. was I always wanted to maintain personal flexibility. Again, I didn't join the Forest Service assuming that I was going to be there as long as I was. I joined the Forest Service probably thinking I'd be there five or ten years and then go and do something else. Little did I know that my career would last as long as it did with the Forest Service or where it would take me. Having seen research close up, now I would very much agree with Bob Buckman. I worked very closely with Bob Hollingsworth, who was the regional fisheries biologist, helping a lot, and so I think we really did shape something that was really good science and brought a fair amount of recognition to the Forest Service in a positive way. But it was not a formal "research project."

HKS: So you didn't have any intention that you'd ever move over to the research arm of the Forest Service and do full-time what you were doing part-time? Because you were doing a lot of outreach work and obviously you liked it, all the training programs, the things you were developing.

MPD: My goal was to be a professor at a university. I liked people, I always tried to make things practical, and I really did not understand the research branch of the Forest Service. Nobody ever sat down and said hey, Mike, with all these interests that you have, you ought to consider becoming a research scientist. I never really became aware of that until I saw the research program close up once I moved to California and did the coordination with PSW over the salmon debate that was a big deal in California in those years, and still is. I really didn't look at research close until I got to the Washington Office, which we'll talk about when I get to that point.

HKS: Jack Thomas in his interview said that there's more Ph.D.s in National Forest Administration than there are in Research, and he thought an organic deficiency in the agency was that it looked to Research to solve its problems when it had the skills in National Forest Administration. All these trained scientists could actually do a better job of solving the Forest Service's short-term problems than Research.

MPD: I can share an observation or perception. In the scientific method the hypothesis testing, the statistical analysis, the basing a conclusion on a ninety-nine or ninety-five or ninety percent confidence interval is the way a scientist is trained and how a scientist operates. But move yourself over into management, and now you have a management decision and the probability in going one way or another, of doing the right thing, might not be much more than a flip of the coin, a gut feeling, or hopefully an educated guess. In most cases it's based upon a fair amount of science, technology, information, and maybe a seventy or eighty percent probability. I always felt that when we talk about applied research and with these debates that the combat biologists would get into with traditional forest management, the manager has to make a decision now. There is not time to study it for three years, for five years, to have a paper peer-reviewed. That's one of the dichotomies between research and management. The researchers' reward system, how they got grade increases, was dependent upon peer-reviewed publications. In this whole gray area of applied research, if a researcher spent too much time hanging out with the managers, he wasn't going to make grade.

HKS: I think that's what Jack was referring to, that the research branch really is not well geared to solve the manager's problems.

MPD: I think it was really people like Jack Thomas and Bill Platts and a few others who began to recognize the importance of more rapid technology transfer. I've sat on lots of research scientists review panels, and the researchers were always harder on themselves and more critical and stingier with promotions of research scientists than the managers were. I wasn't necessarily a high-powered researcher, even though I had a Ph.D. and a fair number of peer-reviewed publications, but I often felt that they were too hard on themselves. But I guess ultimately that's good because science requires discipline and there's just sort of a different philosophy between the two entities. And I'm really delighted to see in the '80s and '90s a closer bridge made between research and management. I think people like Jack Thomas and FEMAT and the Gang of Four and the Columbia Basin Assessment Team where you brought in scientists and managers, and they really helped pull it together but it still isn't what it could or should be.

HKS: You added to the interview outline– Ph.D. versus line management. I don't know if we're talking about the same tug against you of who you are, what is it you're going to do. You're a scientist but you have these problems that have to be solved by Friday. I mean you need a decision by Friday and Ph.D.s don't learn that in school. That's not a part of the education system. But that's your language, Ph.D. versus line management.

MPD: What I was really referring to was the career path the Forest Service thought I ought to take. They thought that I should have gone into line management, and I elected to go the other direction that ultimately led to my quitting the Forest Service for one pay period, and then the regional office stepping in.

HKS: Did you know that you were going to be retired?

MPD: No.

HKS: You probably breathed a sigh of relief in a sense then.

MPD: I guess that would have been 1980 so I would have been about thirty-two years old and I really wasn't too worried about job security. I've had the great fortune of never having a lot of money, coming from a poor family, but never ever being broke because we always worked hard. So I wasn't worried, I did not have a goal that thirty years from now or twenty years from now I want to be working for the Forest Service and this is what I wanted to be. I guess I was always more task oriented. I think one of the weaknesses of the Forest Service culture—this is not unique to the Forest Service—is that individual loyalties gradually shift from loyalty to the land or the mission of the organization to loyalty to the organization itself.

HKS: You bet.

MPD: Hence, when the organization is criticized, even though the organization may be going down the wrong track, you get defensive. I saw this in so many people in the agency in the spotted owl era. I was in California in the mid '80s, and I don't think there was a biologist that didn't think there would be a debacle and yet somehow the leadership could really never come to grips with the fact and actually admit it. Many saw the spotted owl issue coming in the late '70s and yet there wasn't the will, the ability in the organization to slow the train down because there was so much money in the budget, the politics in the West, the industries that have developed around it, that somehow the agency just could not slow down that train and achieve even some sort of compromises on the owl issue.

I want to go back to a couple of personal things in California. I went from the Midwest with a bachelor's, master's, Ph.D., knew the scientific name of almost everything, was doing a lot of

training, had published a lot of stuff, both from the popular stuff like the natural history notes that I mentioned earlier to the technical publications. Here I got plunked out in California where I knew very little about local ecology, etc. They don't care about alkalinity in streams. They don't care about productivity of the waters. They really talk about water flows. It was very, very different and in a sense very humbling and frustrating because I was a regional program manager and I didn't know hardly anything about how the biologists worked, what they did.

We didn't have anadromous fish in the Midwest. We had a few introduced species in the Great Lakes, but from the standpoint of the kind of fisheries we dealt with in California, the salmon issues, I was new to all of it. It was a painful time professionally and it was another one of those intense learning periods that I was being forced through and I didn't know it at the time. It forced me into program management versus being the technical expert. I'd go on a forest and I'd ask, what's the alkalinity of the stream. Oh, we don't measure that would be an answer or we don't look at this parameter or that parameter. Finally I got to saying to biologists, what's the angle of repose on the bank required for this and the riparian setbacks because now I'm in the mountains. I'm not in the flat Midwest. I'd say to the biologists and the staff on the forest, you should know more about this than anybody else here, which the fact is, the local field manager, the forester, the hydrologist, the biologist, the soil scientist, ought to know more about that area than anybody else and joke about it. But what that forced me into is really program management and marketing the program.

California had a lot of money in those years compared to the Midwest. There was the sale of the vanity plates, the green sticker money. Joe Harn said when I came to work for him I would be going to a lot of meetings. There was the Trinity River task force dealing with the fights over water and all the interagency squabbles over flows with the Bureau of Reclamation and salmon populations going down, down, and down. I made it my task to help get outside money and help develop long-term program strategies. Again not knowing this but the level of success got visibility in the Washington Office. For example, I lived in Petaluma, California. I worked a lot with Ken Hashagen, who was the coordinator from the California fish and game, and I would be in the regional office about half the time and then either traveling on forests or at meetings the other half. We had only meeting at my house because it was shorter and easier for Ken to come to my house in Petaluma than to drive into San Francisco. We made a deal to do a bunch of projects together that brought seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars into the Forest Service. Over the course of time we managed to bring in several million dollars of outside money into the Forest Service.

The reason I went down that path was because I knew I couldn't be the technical expert in California. There was just too much to learn. It was a very distinct shift for me in moving away from being the technical expert to really focusing on program management and helping others to get money and provide visibility to their programs. This was exactly what Bob Nelson in Washington wanted. So when Paul Brouha, who was the national fisheries program manager whom I first met in Wisconsin, left the Forest Service to be executive director of the American Fisheries Society, they said hey, Dombeck, you ought to think about coming to Washington to be the national fisheries program manager. I'd hardly been in California two years and was really uncomfortable in even thinking about that, let alone uprooting a family. I was in California basically from '85 to '87, and we experienced really tremendous program growth in California because I was focusing not on the technical stuff but on dialing for dollars, if you will. The forest supervisors liked this and the regional forester liked it because I was bringing in money and they were getting positive press because of the projects we were doing.

The one nice thing about working in an area like fish and wildlife is it's popular. People love it. It's not the controversy of cutting trees. It's not focusing on below-cost timber sales or endangered species, although there is a unity of controversy with some aspects of fish and

wildlife management. I had the good fortune of working on positive, successful programs. Ultimately that led me to focus on areas where there's the highest probability of success. As I would tell employees at places like management policy seminars after I was head of BLM or chief of the Forest Service, you're better off getting A's in one or two things rather than getting C's in everything.

HKS: But is that part of the criticism I hear of the Forest Service, it goes where the money is. I mean from Congress through its appropriations, so on, so forth. I'm not saying the Forest Service has another source of funds, but how do you balance that if the highest chance of success is to make Congress like what you're doing because you'll get the appropriation to do that? Or am I not understanding what you've said?

MPD: Well, I'm talking about sort of the personal evolution of a career more so than organizational behavior.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: If you look at people that have been successful beyond the expectation of what they would achieve, it's usually because they excel in a couple of areas that are different.

HKS: I agree. I see what you're saying.

MPD: That's the point that I'm making here. Bob Nelson was very helpful and encouraging when he said let's think about coming to the Washington Office. I went to California I think as a 12-13 or maybe an 11-12 and the Washington was again a two-step promotion. So during the course of about a seven-year period I went from a GS-6 to a GS-14, which was a much more rapid career path than I could have ever achieved if I was a forester or if I had gone into line management. It was because of these special projects that weren't in the mainstream. They weren't necessarily in an area of controversy but they were in an area that was helpful and it was positive for the rangers, the forest supervisors, the regional forester, and others that I worked with. Plus I was put in front of people not knowing what the next step would be. So it was a whole heck of a lot of darn good luck and having good supervisors and a lot of serendipity and really enjoying what I did.

Workforce Diversity

HKS: I asked George Leonard, we were talking about women in the workforce and how you can have quality women at higher levels. I mean how do you fast track anyone? But it sounds like it can be done. There's not a loss of quality. You don't have to be mediocre at each level in order to push women or minorities up into higher levels. And George says you can do this. Some don't make it, but fast track is not a loss of quality necessarily and you made a huge jump in a very short period of time.

MPD: I came into California right into the middle of the consent decree debacle. We were all on various committees and went to meetings dealing with the consent decree. As I look back, a lot of good things were happening to the agency that the culture probably didn't appreciate or realize at the time. Sure they were bringing in women and bringing in minorities and you had the allegations of reverse discrimination where the white male that had done all the traditional things for fifteen years in every step of the career and was an outstanding employee and then wouldn't get a job. The mandate was that we had to bring in a woman or we have got to diversify the workforce. There were a lot of disgruntled white males that ended up quitting or just being very

unhappy, because they felt that their career had really been short-changed because of this. But the thing that it did that was good for the Forest Service was to bring in another point of view and different disciplines into line management. This was not calculated that we're going to diversify line management from the standpoint of disciplines, because one of the challenges in my view of the Forest Service culture is again the view was that the forester could do anything. The forester could be a business manager. The forester could be a CPA. The forester could mark trees. The forester could run the organization. The forester could be the communications director. The view was that the forester could do anything. But the rest of us were specialists.

Then we saw these other disciplines come in, in the case of the biologist and hydrologist and many others, I think largely as a result of the National Forest Management Act and NEPA, and so we had the era of the combat biologist. Then the consent decree and the effort to diversify the workforce brought in another group of people of different disciplines. We had new forest supervisors that had majored in math and a new forest supervisor that was a sociologist and I think about this. This wasn't a calculated effort on the part of the agency to diversify disciplines. I think one of the solutions to the consent decree and the way it ended up in California—this is just the perspective of a mid-level staffer from where I was sitting at the time and what I heard and saw—was that leadership didn't think this would happen. They just didn't take it seriously until it was too late because they focused on the hiring rates of the '70s when the budgets were growing fast and then in the early '80s you had this downturn in the budgets so they weren't bringing on new people at the rate that they were used to. They had made the commitment to diversify and then there was reduced budget growth and there just wasn't a way to do it.

The Forest Service is good at stalling. All bureaucracies are great at stalling, and they just felt that it wouldn't reach the consent decree court ordered state that it did. In retrospect, a solution and I think it would still work today if and when we need to do it, is that we would have told every forest supervisor or every district ranger to find a couple of people every year and make this part of their performance evaluation. Find a couple of women, a couple of minorities who are well qualified, bring them in and do exactly as you said, fast track them and put them on two-step intervals because you'll find that some of them in probably a few years will be in a position to be good line managers.

But I think that would have prevented the view of what many of the white males felt was blatant reverse discrimination. I don't think people resent seeing a bright, capable person promoted. We've all had supervisors that are younger than we are. Once you hit forty for most people age isn't necessarily that important. Of course, it's human nature, if you applied for a job or you compete and somebody else gets it, you usually never feel good about it. But I think we wouldn't have had the level of resentment if we would have fast tracked people in an open way. But I really think that we went a long way from that. In *The Forest Ranger* what Kaufman says, part of the challenge the Forest Service had in '60s and the '70s and in sort of the years of excellence was they selected people of like mind. And you have this set of characteristics and we lost the diversity of styles. We lost the diversity of disciplines, of approaches because we thought this was the model ranger and the people in the organization that we can find that closely fit this mold we'll select rather than bring a breadth of approaches, of personalities, of disciplines into the agency. That breadth of diversity ultimately had to be forced in and it's still not accepted in some circles, and we don't talk about it.

HKS: No. I'm twelve years older than you are. I started with the Forest Service in 1957 and the foresters could do anything. I left forestry and went into history because my forestry education was so narrow. It's almost impossible to characterize how narrow it was. We didn't even take standard English classes as undergraduates. We took English for foresters and so forth. Anyway, history is pretty narrow too. Disciplines can be narrow no matter what they are.

MPD: There's a lot of things we learn in retrospect and hindsight's always twenty-twenty. I got to know Jim Kennedy at Utah State fairly well. He was on an IPA in the Washington Office when I was there. He left the Forest Service as a biologist and then did studies on why biologists leave the agency. One of the things we see in the traditional discipline of forestry is that, and many would say this about the Forest Service culture, is that the forestry discipline tends to be more arrogant and somewhat related back to Gifford Pinchot who was pretty much a command and control guy, who would be in a lot of trouble as a manager today. But that was the style of the day and the way that managers operated. I mean, if somebody didn't cut it with Pinchot, they were gone. There were no ifs and buts about it, no merit system protection board.

The problem foresters ran into, particularly after the era of the environmental movement, is that they lost the ability to be flexible. So when you had things like the Monongahela case come along, the Bolle report, I think a lot of the controversy that ultimately led into the Forest Service was based upon what people saw on the land, I mean the general public. The foresters had a lack of understanding, appreciation, or awareness of sociology. People would look at a clearcut mountainside and they didn't feel good about it. They didn't know why, and the profession did not make an effort to ask why, did not feel it was important enough, was not aware enough to respond. Again, this is of no malice whatsoever. In the 1960s more Americans took to the air and suddenly they're looking down at clearcuts lying near Seattle and Portland and saying gee, we didn't expect this. We were preaching conservation in the 1940s, and suddenly the public is looking down at the results of this high timber harvest era that began post World War II.

HKS: As I said, I started with the Forest Service in 1957. Region 6 had eighty new hires, if you can imagine the agency hiring eighty college graduates in one region in one year. Seventy-nine foresters and one landscape architect were in that new crop. I wasn't surprised to learn that there was a landscape architect, I'd just never heard of that field before. We went on a tour of the region as part of our training and he was always off by himself. We didn't have anything to talk about. Once he said something at a question and answer session, but he must have been pretty lonely in 1957 as a brand new landscape architect.

MPD: I'm sure he was. It was really in that era I think that we lost the public trust. The question I like to ask when we think about the courts and there's too much process in all of this, is to really get back and say why is that. Why did that evolve? What can we learn today from how that evolved and figure out what to do differently? Up until that era, Congress appropriated the money. The executive branch executed the laws and did the work through the agencies. So the basic question is why did the third branch of government, the judicial branch, get involved. Of course, the landmark was the Monongahela case, and the Monongahela case wasn't exactly filed by a bunch of wild-eyed extreme ultra green enviros. The Izaak Walton League is pretty much a middle of the road mom and pop organization, and I say mom because my dad was proud that my mother won a turkey at an Izaak Walton League turkey shoot.

And it was the inability to be flexible and adapt that ultimately led to decades of challenges and problems and increase in unit cost that we're struggling with more than ever today. In fact, some of that debate today is more intense than it was at that time. And we get into the National Forest Management Act but that's another, whole nother discussion.

HKS: I have a theory that I published twenty-five years ago, and I have to note that it hasn't caught on. It explains part of the public distrust of the agency, how it came about. I don't want to burn up a lot of your tape, but it relates to the self-righteousness of the forestry profession. Foresters were attacking the industries in the 1930s on clearcutting and so forth and we now call it protecting the environment. The Forest Service wasn't doing much timber harvesting at that time. Even had a radio program called "The Forest Ranger." It was a soap opera. It was on every Thursday afternoon and all that. Enormous amounts of publicity came out of the Forest Service

that logging is harmful. Well, a decade later after World War II, the Forest Service was logging the national forests. The Forest Service really set the stage for putting into textbooks and in the general public's mind that there's something wrong with logging, because the Forest Service was very active at that promotional anti-logging stuff, in order to get Congress to agree that the Forest Service should have regulatory authority over the private sector, which didn't happen. Foresters make their own bed time after time.

MPD: In fact, I have read that and used some of your arguments.

HKS: Oh, good for me.

MPD: One of the things I note, and I've had a chance now in the years at BLM and the Forest Service to deal with virtually all of the professions and speak at their meetings, the traditional foresters probably feel worse than many of the other professions. There's sort of a woe is us that they're blaming us, and I don't really understand why they feel that way. Doctors don't do bloodletting anymore. In the 1960s and '70s fisheries biologists were pulling logs out of streams, which now we know was the wrong thing to do. In the 1980s we were putting logs back into the streams. But there wasn't this sort of feeling of woe is us that we're the scapegoats. Maybe this is Society of American Foresters because of the large support they get from industry, and the industrial foresters that don't have the multiple use mandate to struggle with that the Forest Service does that we see this. We've got to get over it and get on with life.

People love trees. They love what foresters do. Trees produce enough oxygen for a family of four to breathe in a year. Single trees sequester thirteen pounds of carbon. I mean we've got sixty million acres of urban forest that we ought to be reforesting instead of wringing our hands about how we can't do the average management or whatever, that is still the case today. The range cons, I would place second in that continuum of how they feel about themselves. The range cons is a profession that just, in a sense, seems to be dying out. And then you've got the Society of Conservation Biology, the Ecological Society of America, these newer organizations that are really taking an integrated ecosystem approach. Part of it is the trend that we talked about at breakfast this morning, Pete, with as we're somewhere in between the man over nature utilitarian model in thinking of management transitioning to ecosystem management that's truly integrated. Even though we talk the ecosystem management game, and most people will say yes, it's the right thing to do, in practice the forester was trained to be a tree farmer in a sense. The fisheries biologist was trained to maximize fisheries. The wildlife biologist was trained to maximize wildlife and so on, and now we're all moving into this integrated approach.

This is not a new thing. The same thing happened with the state conservation agencies in the '40s, '50s, and '60s. The early conservation agencies were run by game wardens. And all of a sudden we had wildlife biologists and we had fisheries biologists and we had recreation planners, and they were starting to take over and there was this internal struggle between the game wardens that dominated the leadership of these organizations and all these new ologists that came in. That tug and pull is still going on in the Forest Service and a lot of agencies as we move to more truly integrate into what is a real holistic ecosystem management approach. Kind of interesting even though the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act was passed in 1960.

HKS: That's right.

MPD: Bureaucracies are slow to react and bring about change.

HKS: But it wasn't seen as a turning point. The Forest Service downplayed it. This is really what we've always been doing but we need congressional authority because controversy was

beginning to come up. Are you now ready to talk about being national fisheries program manager? Bob Nelson has reached out and plucked you.

National Fisheries Program Manager

MPD: I was selected and moved to the Washington Office as national fisheries program manager. Paul Brouha had just left that job. Paul wasn't a combat biologist, but he was somewhere in between. On a scale of one to ten with the combat biologist being a number ten, Paul was probably a seven and a half. He was very much of an advocate for fisheries, knew that it had to be integrated into the Forest Service and was somewhat of a risk taker. Paul and Bob Nelson put together a team to develop a strategy for where the fisheries program of the Forest Service ought to go. Willis Evans, who was one of the early fisheries biologists in Region 5, had written a treatise that was hundreds of pages long. Willis had a very methodical, detailed approach to the way he went about things.

The challenge that Paul and Bob and the team ultimately had was to put an aquatic management strategy together that would work in the Forest Service, that would actually bring us to the table. Mike Barton was the regional forester, the line manager that was a part of this team. We had Steve Wright, his title may have been the commissioner of conservation, from the state of Vermont. Ron Marcoux was the chief of fisheries from the state of Montana. Also Gil Radonski from the Sport Fishing Institute. And then you had a variety of Forest Service people who were part of it. And they had just developed this strategy. I was doing a similar exercise with individuals in the California region at the time as well, and so I was in a sense a natural for the job at the Washington level.

I got into Washington and Hal Salwasser was my direct supervisor. Bob brought Hal in from the habitat relationships program. Hal is one of the most creative people I have ever been around in my entire career. A great thinker. A lot of people will say that Hal may have had some wild ideas but the fact is, this is the way creative people are. Every idea isn't necessarily dynamite but you got to have ideas to work from. Hal was just a wonderful guy to work with. We had to give a name to this strategy that we had, and that was one of the first things I got to do when I came into Washington. So we borrowed a title from I think the Federation of Fly Fishers and we called it "Rise To The Future."

HKS: Dale Robertson said one of the great achievements of his administration was "Rise To The Future."

MPD: And I was where the nuts and bolts were developed. Carl Sullivan, who was the executive director of the American Fisheries Society at the time, was also part of this team. So we had professional society support. We had state support with two state officials on the team that put this together with Mike Barton, a regional forester. One of the first things I did when I came to Washington was promote "Rise To The Future." We adopted the title and developed a logo, a poster which I should give you just for the record.

One of the first things I participated in was a presentation to the RF&D as a new employee in Washington. In fact, it was in January and I didn't know Metro very well. We were living in temporary housing and there was a prediction of snow. Of course, this is Washington. I had lived in Nursing, Michigan, where it snowed two hundred and fifty inches a year. I grew up in the frozen North where it was forty below zero. I'm not going to worry about winter weather in Washington, D.C. My office was in Roslyn. The RF&D was in some hotel in Pentagon City. I'm getting off the Metro and it's snowing and I'm remembering should I stop and buy a pair of

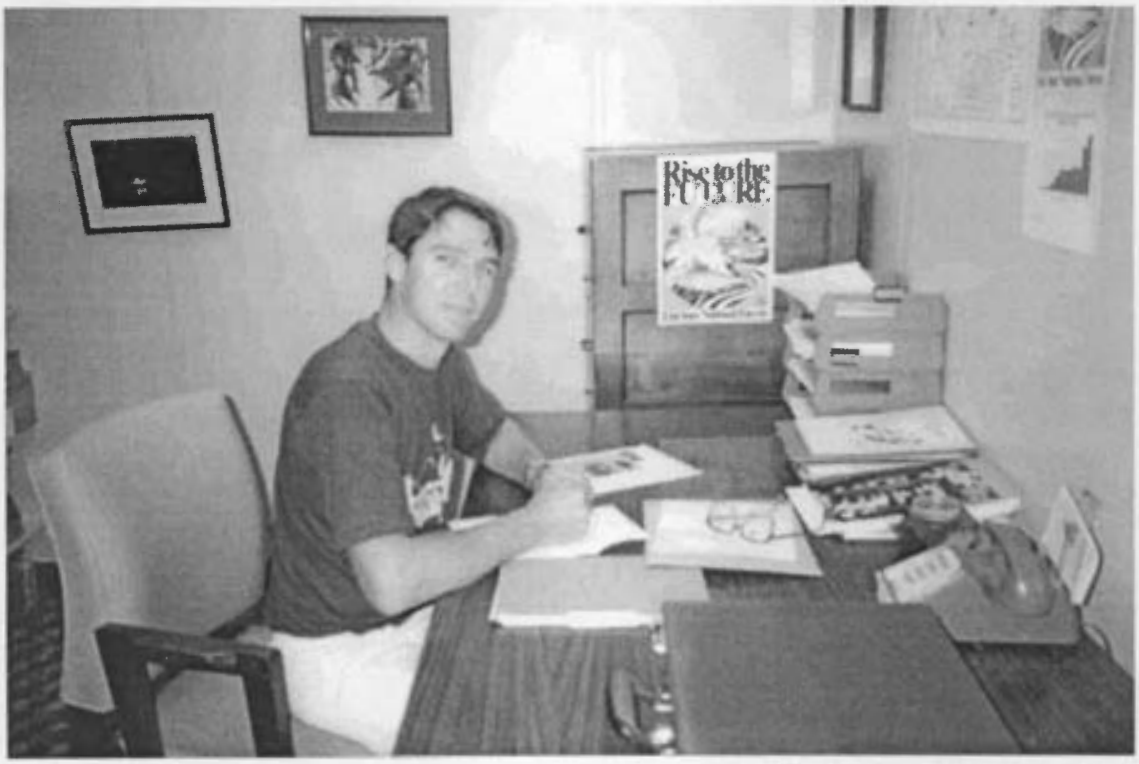

Figure 3: Mike Dombeck, National Fisheries Program Manager, U.S. Forest Service, in office in Rosslyn, Virginia (1988).

Figure 4: Rise to the Future logo.

boots. I had loafers on. Ah heck, I'm, you know, this guy from the frozen North. A little bit of snow isn't going to bother me. Well I'll tell you, was that a mistake that I never made again. Anyway, we had the meeting, did the presentation. It went very well.

Another interesting thing happened. Karl Sidenits who was the budget manager on Bob Nelson's staff was in charge of arrangements for the RF&D, and he was setting up for this really nice dinner and reception. I remember Karl and I talking, I wonder if Chief Peterson is going to announce his retirement tonight, and he did. So that was the very day that Max announced his retirement and that Dale was going to be chief. We did a pre briefing to somebody in the chief's office, and that was the first time I met Dale Robertson. Dale was the associate chief and we briefed him on "Rise To The Future." He had to have known that he was going to be announced as the new chief that night but we had no clue other than Karl is responsible for the arrangements and they're having what seems to us to be a very special occasion. That was an interesting day. And that was also a day I spent four hours on a bus going home, getting from west Falls Church to Tyson's Corner because of the snow, and if I'd had a pair of boots I could have walked it in a half hour. So I learned all about snowstorms in Washington, D.C. That was the January of '87 that we had two back-to-back snowstorms that were about thirteen, fourteen, fifteen inches each. But there I was again this young guy with this Midwestern accent (people used to say are you from Canada), basically thrust in front of the chief and the RF&D literally my first few weeks in Washington. I do remember Dale was very pleased with what we were doing and when we formally presented the "Rise To The Future" program to the partners and the constituencies. This is Dale's quote, "I want this to be a curve-bending event for the Forest Service." And that quote may even be in Dale's oral history interview.

HKS: I don't remember.

MPD: I distinctly remember Dale being very positive. Now keep in mind from the psychology of leadership, and what's going on here. Here's the spotted owl, the old growth debate, below-cost timber sales with the chief and the staff being hammered by Congress. Here come the fish and wildlife programs that are popular, that people like. And I certainly know that if I was in the leadership position, there's the positive reinforcement that has an effect on all of what we do, and Dale was very, very supportive. In fact, I have tremendous respect for Dale and what he did for diversifying the way we looked at programs. He was really the champion of developing the recreation program of the Forest Service of which fish and wildlife was a major part. So now we had the fisheries program, this "Rise To The Future" thing that we had talked a lot about. This was really the first market-based approach to moving a program into the agency and building support. After "Rise To The Future" a lot of tremendous programs came out of the Bob Nelson staff - Animal In, There's Life In Dead Trees, the effort to save snags for cavity nesters, Partners In Flight, Neotropical Birds, Bring Back The Natives, native fish, that is. We had this full array of programs developed and explosive growth of the fish and wildlife programs. In fact, I can remember Bob saying, when our fish and wildlife program reaches sixty million I'm going to retire. Then it would reach sixty million. Well, when it reaches a hundred million I want to retire. It reached a hundred million, and Bob was so dedicated to the program that he just had to be part of it.

HKS: Was he still there when Jack was chief?

MPD: Yes, he was still there when I was chief. Bob did more for the Forest Service than the culture will ever appreciate in building partnerships and many other respects as well. Since Bob has left we've lost a lot of that, because he pushed us to work with the constituency groups. He knew how to indirectly put pressure on Congress through the constituency groups. In fact, one of the people that really lobbied hard, I've found out since then, for me to be national fisheries program manager was Gil Radonski who was president of the Sport Fishing Institute and a real

mover and shaker in the fisheries arena. Carl Sullivan was head of the American Fisheries Society. The professional society was a strong supporter for bringing me into the Washington Office. So I've had just a lot of tremendous friends and tremendous support over the years and coming in a very non-traditional way. You could never ever plan a career path like this.

When we started "Rise To The Future" there were probably about a hundred and seven fisheries biologists in the Forest Service. Within about two years we had about two hundred and fifty. We increased the level of diversity from seventeen percent being minorities and women to about thirty-five percent being minorities and women. And this got the attention of the leadership, that we were successful, and diversity and the consent decree were all big issues at the time. So almost everything we were doing was positive and put the agency in a good light, while it was being hammered over old growth and the spotted owl.

HKS: If you're bringing in more fisheries people, do you need to bring in more limnologists and the water specialists?

MPD: My background was really aquatic ecology. My first professional classification was as a 486 fisheries biologist. We had a lot of debates what should we call the program, what should we call ourselves. The fact is that most of us felt that we should have been called aquatic ecologists or ecologists rather than the pigeonholing of the fisheries biologists, the wildlife biologists, the range con, the hydrologists because really we had a blend. Jeff Kershner was somebody that's with the fish habitat relationships program. He ultimately got his Ph.D. and is still with Utah State's habitat relationships program. So there were those of us in the program at that time who were a fairly broad mix. We weren't what is traditionally perceived as fisheries biologists, population dynamics people, sort of number crunchers in managing fish stocks. We really did have the strong habitat bent to what we did and were much more ecologists than the title implied.

HKS: Just to be provocative, would a limnologist ever say you aquatic biologists think you know all of this stuff? I mean there's always a specialty on beyond the generalist. Is an aquatic biologist more general than a limnologist?

MPD: I think if you would look at how they're trained, obviously they all have a broad background. The aquatic ecologist implies that you have some land based training as well, things like forest influences and other things related to land management.

HKS: Cops, I said biologists.

MPD: Whereas, if you break it down into hydrography, there's two subdivisions, the study of water, oceanography and limnology, with limnology being the fresh water piece of it and oceanography being the salt water. And hydrology then being more the physical science of how water moves, the effect of stream sinuosity, the effects of the erosive forces, the physics of water and all of that, and quality, the chemistry of water verses limnology. Limnology probably has more breadth than fisheries biology, but then fisheries biology gets into harvest and the recreational aspect. So it's really a continuum. There was a fair amount of dialogue about what to call ourselves at the time, but the Civil Service classification was set and we weren't about to change that.

HKS: How significant is Civil Service in all of this diversification thrust? They don't have the new names yet for positions you're trying to fill.

MPD: In fact, they still don't. The interesting dichotomy between the forester and the biologists, those of us that were working in fish and wildlife, even though we had to have more in our

portfolio to make grade than a forester, we were pigeonholed as specialists. Whereas, the forestry profession said they could be the CPAs or they could be the business managers, the communication experts. We felt that in essence our jobs had as much or more complexity because everything we did involved coordination with other agencies in the states and much more interaction with the public. In a sense we had a level of complexity in our jobs working with all the partners, whereas, the traditional forester's job was more focused on the forestry. There was always a concern that we ought to be getting a lot more credit than we are because we're really doing all these things and yet they consider us to be specialists. There's still somewhat of that perception today by some, but we've just come a long way in many of these areas.

HKS: Forestry schools had a lot of ground shifting to do during this time, because the success of professional programs like forestry and law is the hiring-rate of the graduates. They're into the market and as long as there are graduates who are being hired, forestry education is successful. I don't know how you change educational programs to broaden ahead of the curve, as it were, so you've got the people you need coming out of the schools.

MPD: In some cases the schools are the last to change because the professors that are running the show don't necessarily have the exposure to what the agencies are struggling with. They obviously read the literature and keep up and are active in professional societies, but they still don't have the level of exposure. Also most professors don't have the chance to have the hands-on policy experience. They may have summer jobs or something like that, but the tenure system actually discourages that because we're back to the same problem as Forest Service research, the either publish or perish syndrome and that doesn't allow time to go out and do other things like getting hands-on policy experience. It's nose to the grindstone, research and publish.

We left Roslyn about one in the afternoon heading for Grey Towers for a management policy seminar. I think we went through five or six states before dark. I was a guy who grew up in Wisconsin and spent some time in California, and I was just stunned that how could I have possibly have gone through five or six states and it's not even dark yet. The management policy seminar was probably one of the best courses I've ever had. It was probably the first one that Dale did as chief, and he came out and visited with us, spent an evening with us and talked about the Iron Triangle, Congress, other constituencies, and the administration and some of the political pressures that are on the agency. By that time Dale had had a lot of experience. He'd been associate chief for I don't know how many years. He was still a young guy when he became chief. That really made an impression on me to be sitting around with twenty or thirty other Forest Service employees to be talking to the chief and talking about politics. Little did I know at the time that I would have an opportunity to play in the same sandbox.

Like I did in California because I wasn't the technical expert there, I focused on program management, helping get funding for the program, helping build a support base for the programs and give it visibility. I really followed that same path in Washington, and "Rise To The Future" really was a tremendous platform to work that way because we had all of the outside groups saying this is an exciting program. This is an opportunity to really get aquatic resources at the table in the Forest Service, and they were all lobbying for us.

Legislative Program

MPD: Bob Nelson got me into the legislative fellowship program, which is basically training in congressional operations. It's a program that people who are viewed as rising within the organization are put into. I wanted to work for a member of Congress or a senator who was involved with both authorizing and appropriations. I wanted to work in the Senate after we went

through the training because usually senators had a lot more latitude. The House members' offices were cramped. Usually they didn't even have a desk or a place for a "fellow" to sit. So I looked into what senators were on the right committees, and there were really only about five or six--Mark Hatfield, William Proxmire from my home state, George Mitchell, Lowell Wicker, Thad Cochran, Kent Conrad from North Dakota who was newly elected. I was stunned. I went to interview with Conrad, and he looked like he was twenty-two years old. He was a young looking guy.

I ended up going to work for Thad Cochran from Mississippi, who is a wonderful guy. It's amazing, you know, ten and fifteen years later if I met Cochran in the tunnel or in the Capitol he'd say hi, Mike, how are you doing. He was that kind of guy. Cochran was on the Ag committee and he was on Interior appropriations, so I got exactly where I wanted to be in learning the appropriations process, particularly in the Interior subcommittee, as well as Ag authorization. David Graves was on Cochran's staff. They were beginning to gear up at the end of the Reagan era, the Bush campaign, and Cochran was in charge of the Ag plank of the Republican platform. David was the staffer assigned to that. I had developed a good relationship with them. The staffer that did Interior appropriations for Cochran was reassigned to the Committee on Aging, and they asked me if I would be the lead staffer on the Interior appropriations for Thad Cochran, which is exactly where I wanted to be to see how this all works from the perspective of Congress. I was a little bit nervous about it and I remember talking to Jim Overby and George Leonard. George said to me, remember Mike, that you work for the senator while you're there. You don't promote your point of view or the agency's. Don't stab us in the back. Just keep us informed.

Cochran wasn't the kind of a guy to stab anyone in the back. Cochran from the standpoint of the Forest Service was mostly interested in the research budget. He was a member of Ducks Unlimited. He liked to hunt. Was an outdoorsman and basically had a deal cut I believe with the western members in the Republican Party. You support the research budget and I'll support the timber budget, even though Mississippi is a big timber state. I worked with and got input from the Mississippi constituencies. I'd phone the head of the Mississippi department of natural resources. I met with some of them and it was interesting. Here I was this Yankee with this thick midwestern accent dealing with folks in Mississippi, but they were always just absolutely wonderful to me. The fisheries chief and some of the folks in Mississippi wanted me to help bolster the Forest Service fish and wildlife budgets for Region 8, and this was another golden opportunity that I didn't realize what was happening. I remember Paul Brocha when I finally got my legis assignment with Senator Cochran said, why don't you work with somebody that supports our program, that you could help us with. You know Paul was now executive director of the American Fisheries Society. He was out of the Forest Service. I talked to David Graves and I talked to the senator about it and they said yes, let's help with this program. So we started to build a coalition of people that would support Forest Service fish and wildlife with a focus on "Risk To The Future."

I did a lot of analysis of programs for Senator Cochran, and here's an example of the kind of analysis we would do. Region 8 had eighteen percent of the fisheries' resource of the National Forest System, over twenty percent of the use, but only got three percent of the budget. Cochran felt that this was an inequity and we ought to try to do better. He said do what you can. So we ultimately built a coalition that included Patrick Leahy also on the Appropriations committee, senator from Vermont, friend of Cochran's on the Ag committee. In fact, I think he was chairman when the Democrats had the Senate. Harry Reid, who was on Appropriations, didn't have a timber program in Nevada. He had somewhat of an adversarial relationship with Larry Craig, so it didn't bother him at all to move a little bit of money around. And Ted Stevens, who was a close personal friend of Thad Cochran's who basically wanted to get the commercial fishermen off his back in Alaska.

We had built a coalition of two Democrats, two Republicans from Vermont, Mississippi, Nevada, and Alaska, all supporting increases in the Forest Service fisheries program, ultimately culminating in a dear colleague letter where we had thirty-three signers, a third of the U.S. Senate supporting a fourteen million dollar increase to the fisheries budget of the Forest Service, which was almost a doubling of it. In fact, with the fisheries program managers when we had "Rise To The Future" evolving we'd say well, how much, when will we have achieved what we think we ought to be and thought maybe a twenty million dollar fisheries budget because I believe it was seven at the time. And here all of a sudden we get this big shot of money in one year that was, by the way, sustained year after year. I used to think that was Dale Robertson's curve-bending event, that getting a third of the U.S. Senate to support this level of budget for a positive program and yet it wasn't part of the president's budget. Dale obviously couldn't publicly support it because the chief's marching orders are to support the president's budget and this was the Reagan administration. An agency didn't go up and ask for more money. But Dale knew this money was coming in the side door. George Leonard and others were supportive because it made them look good while they were dealing with all this controversy (which I learned after I became chief what you really have to deal with). Anything that's positive, you got to love it. And just again another piece of serendipity in a career. I actually did the questions, the appropriations hearing questions for the chief, for Thad Cochran to ask the chief, which I was very nervous about but it was positive and again I would talk to George Leonard who was now associate chief from time to time and he said, remember you work for the senator. If he's got an ax to grind with us I understand that. Just don't stab us in the back. And had a good hearing with the Forest Service. I'm thinking that hearing was chaired at that time by Byrd. Senator Byrd was chairman of the committee and I think Harry Reed acted as the chair during part of the hearing.

One of the hearings I remember was with Bob Burford who was director of BLM and the senators questioning Burford very intently on what would you do if we gave you another five million dollars in X program or in Y program. The committee was concerned about the Reagan administration basically greatly reducing the renewable resource programs, fish, wildlife, recreation, the water programs, the other values. Burford would say we probably couldn't use it efficiently and would never say yes, we could spend it efficiently even though the committee was literally wanting to give him money.

HKS: I thought the rules were you can't oppose the president's budget, but if you're asked a question you can be responsive and you won't be blamed. So Burford, could he have politically said sure, this is what I would do?

MPD: Yes, very much so. As I found out later, he could have said we have A,B,C,D, and E and F we had additional funding this is likely what we would do with it. He could do that in a way that's not being insubordinate as an agency head by saying I could use more money. But Burford, of course, didn't do that. You're prepared because staff knows through the constituencies and by all the behind-the-scenes relationships that occur in Washington that you usually know what the questions are going to be and oftentimes your staff has written some of the questions so you can get the positive aspects of your program out. The legis program was the other part of just a tremendous learning opportunity for me in how Washington operates. For somebody that came from a very technical background like I did, the excitement for me was to see these programs grow and then to be able to provide funding for these programs and see the excitement of the staffs and the biologists in the field for the level of growth that occurred at that time. There wasn't a single forest supervisor or district ranger that didn't want or need more money.

I mentioned this dear colleague letter. I believe I still have one of the original copies of that letter signed by the thirty-three senators asking for the significant Forest Service budget increase in that area. For many other areas we were able to work to increase as well. I have notes that I

kept of that. A guy by the name of Jeff Cilek --he's now with the Peregrine Fund in Boise, Idaho— was Senator McClure's staffer on the committee and Don Knowles was Senator Byrd's staffer on the committee. Don Knowles is one of the people as major staffer on the Interior subcommittee of appropriations who played a major role in forest budget and thus policy.

HKS: I'm familiar with Jim Giltmier, who was a staffer for quite a while. Are most staffers short-term like you or on assignment there or are they professional staffers, that's what they do?

NPD: There's three categories of congressional staffs. The committee staffs that are professionals, been there a long time. The personal staffs that have been there a long time that know the members well, that know the issues well, that set the policy and the philosophy. They know the member's philosophy. And then there's a staff that move through on a two- or three-, four-year term fairly quickly. They come in out of college, lots of attorneys, lots of public policy type people, political science, economics majors and others that do a lot of the work. I was amazed up there to see one person answer a couple hundred letters a day in constituency mail for a member. I saw our agency, how we would struggle and take two or three weeks to respond to a letter. All of us tried to bring some of that back into the agency culture but would never accept that kind of sort of assembly line approach to constituency mail. But what both Jeff and Don did is really show me how the inside of the appropriations process works. The matrix, we used to call it the wish list, was every senator submits their requests. The press might call it the pork but really it's not fair because some of it might be but a lot of it is not. This request list goes in a large matrix in the committee staff and then they begin to sort who is asking for what.

One of the most important things is to get several members of Congress asking for the same thing. If you think about what legislating really is, it's building coalitions. The bottom line currency for a member is the vote. If you're a staffer you've got to demonstrate to the member who wants it (a piece of legislation or money for a project) and why, who's opposed to it and why, and can you build a coalition around it. So in the case of this fisheries issue I happened to be walking down the hallway one day in the Russell Senate Office Building and Senator Thad Cochran just happened to be coming down the hall and said hi, Mike. We walked together for a while and I said by the way, this Forest Service fish and recreation issue we've been talking about, I've been talking to Senator Stevens' staff and they're potentially interested. And his response to me was good, Mike. He said I really like Ted, let's do it. And that demonstrates the importance of personal relationships.

I have to digress a little bit and tell a story. You always have the impression well, I'm a technician on the district or I'm a biologist on the district and if I don't know something I'll just call the SO, the supervisor's office, and they will know. Then you get promoted and you work in a supervisor's office and you'll say well gosh, if I don't know this I'll just call the regional office and they will know. And then you work in a regional office and you need some expert advice and you say well, I'll call the Washington Office and they will know. The fact is, the best expertise we have in the agency is at the field level. It's what I learned to appreciate after having sat in all those chairs. I think that the model that was in my mind early on in my career was that it was data, it was science, it was policy, that a lot of big decisions were made on. Here I walk down the hall and I meet Senator Cochran who was well aware of the issue and we're talking about fourteen million dollars and I say to Senator Cochran, Senator Steven's staff is interested and he says to me good, Mike, let's do it. So I came back and I told my supervisor, David Graves, who had been guiding me through this process. He said you know, the senators travel together, their spouses are friends. That clearly exemplified the importance of personal relationships at the highest level of government that we tend to overlook. I had a model in my mind that was a very clinical process, A,B,C,D, this is the way we get to end. The fact is, if anything, when you're in Washington the personal relationships are more important, not less. Ultimately then how the chief, the secretary, the assistant secretary, interact with the other agency heads, with members

of Congress, and ultimately the White House and all the players is most important to the outcome.

HKS: When I was interviewed for my first Forest Service job by a personnel officer, I was disappointed at what the guy said. It didn't sound right to me. But he said if you're going to be successful in the Forest Service your ratings are based eighty percent on your ability to work with the people, about twenty percent of it on your technical skills. Well, I would have turned it the other way around at that time.

MPD: And I came from exactly the same place. So we got this nice budget increase and we had, to use Dale's words again, the conversation event in really putting forest fisheries on the map. It also began to help fisheries research. I didn't talk much about the salmon issues when we talked about my stint in California but the fact is, the salmon issues were tenacious at that time on the Trinity River, the Sacramento, the Smith, the Eel. Every place you went this high visibility, high profile issue of salmon was just boiling. So we brought some more resources to bear for the Forest Service for that and, of course, in the overall scheme of the Forest Service budget this was just a drop in the bucket. But when you're coming from an original base of about seven million dollars to get fourteen, it's quite a slug. We had a lot of adjustments to make, and as a result research got more money, too, and research began paying more attention. Keith Evans was the research staffer in Washington at the time, and he was very interested in the programs, and even some of the station directors began to pay attention. Some of the groundbreaking salmon work at that time was being done by Forest Service research just like Jack Thomas was doing with elk. People like Fred Everest, like Jim Sedell, like Gordy Reeves, Bill Meehan was in Alaska, and others were really doing groundbreaking work on salmon. It really helped bring, I think, research and management at least in this area closer together because they began doing a lot of what the fisheries biologists and management would say was more applied research rather than long-term theoretical research. It was a need and they were successful at filling it, and it was really a fun time to be involved in a program like that.

I want to spend a little bit of time talking about outside partners because they played a major role in helping us get senators to sign on to this dear colleague letter. There was a group in Washington called Fishnet. Bob Herbst was formerly assistant secretary of the Interior under Carter. Bob was now head of Trout Unlimited and was just one of about fifteen individuals who represented the fishing interests in D.C. who we informally called Fishnet.

HKS: He talks real loud, doesn't he? I met him once. He just sort of shouts from one foot away.

MPD: And Carl Sullivan. Paul Brouha was then at the American Fisheries Society, people like Gil Radonski, and we began to start making linkages with the fishing tackle industry itself and others. There were some strong performers in industry who were worried about clean water, and they viewed the Forest Service as the only game in town. They viewed the Fish and Wildlife Service as being stuck in time and the place that the action was was the Forest Service. I was in the middle of that and had the opportunity at that time to get to know members of Congress, to get to know basically all the players of the Iron Triangle that Dale had talked about.

I began to understand at that time what it really meant when people said well, you know, it's all politics. "Washington is a political place." "They don't base decisions on science." Think about the way the government is set up. Washington is a political place and part of policy is science and part of policy is the way people feel about things and what they want and the needs of society. While a lot of technical people were very critical of Washington and the activities of Washington, I got to see firsthand that you could make a difference, you could get a lot of stuff done in Washington and you build a support base of a lot of constituencies. You couldn't do it alone. Usually the people that got the most done in Washington were people that didn't care who got

the credit, as was the case I think with people like Dale Robertson, Bob Nelson. Bob especially was a very effective behind-the-scenes player.

Ultimately that support base really was a major factor in my becoming chief and director of BLM over say the course of the next ten to twelve years. So it was really all built on a very different support base than the way that I think most chiefs have probably come through the organization. If I look at Jack's tenure, Jack and I share a lot of the similar characteristics with the kind of external support base that we had, but we didn't have the internal support base that some chiefs had. That would also make a difference in the way that we were perceived in the Forest Service because we would never really be perceived as true blue, loyal Forest Service employees. First of all we weren't foresters or engineers. We didn't necessarily come through the line management ranks like others had, although nor did George Leonard. George Leonard came up the staff career ladder in contrast to Dale Robertson, who is probably about the only chief that was nearly in every chair, although Dale was never a regional forester.

HKS: I don't think anyone has been in every chair because Dale is the only chief that was a ranger, far as we could find out. The nomenclature is pretty vague back in the Pinchot times of what they really were.

MPD: And obviously the first few chiefs couldn't have been.

HKS: That's right.

The Bureau of Land Management

HKS: You're next step was to BLM.

MPD: Personally we do a lot of camping and canoeing and fishing and hunting and all of that kind of thing; my whole family always had. One of the things that drew me into the Forest Service is one of the conversations my wife Pat and I had as I was deciding whether or not to take this technician job on the Hiawatha. Well, if we don't like it we can always quit but on the other hand we'll get to see a lot of nice places. That certainly has been a dream come true because I've been in every state, all over Alaska and then particularly with BLM seeing the north slope of Alaska, of Prudhoe, Nome, the Brooks Range, Point Barrow, and all of the interior. Then you add the BLM public lands to the national forests, which I've been to not all but certainly a large majority. It's just been tremendous. Then you add the international travel that comes with being chief. Any advice I have for employees is you may not make a lot of money working in resource management in the government, but you'll get to see a lot of really nice places that you probably could never afford to go to on your own.

The pace was really hectic, and we had a young daughter Mary, and I had the research science side tugging at me about the time that all of the "Rise To The Future" stuff was going on. And research was saying to the people like Fred Everest and others in research that saw what was happening on the management side in fisheries, you know, we need somebody like Dombeck helping us in research. And they set up a fisheries project in Boise, Idaho, and got me interested in that, and I had actually accepted then the job as a fisheries project leader. I still feel today that probably one of the best jobs in the Forest Service is one that I never had, but I almost had, and that's to be a research project leader—just in the way you can live your life. Maybe it's fantasy or maybe it's that the grass is greener over the septic tank point of view, but they work on a five-year project. They don't have to travel endlessly. They don't have all the irate public meetings that the forest supervisors, rangers, or others have to deal with. They have a staff to

help them and they have this nice organized life, can pick their travel and the satisfaction of science and research and scientific discovery and all of that.

I had accepted a research project leader job in Boise, and that was the very early months of Bush 1. I got word probably through Bob Nelson, although I don't recall specifically, that the new director at BLM, Cy Jamison, had a conversation with Dale Robertson about needing to bolster the fish and wildlife and recreation programs in BLM. Cy, as the story was told to me in his confirmation hearing, said that he was going to rebuild that program. There was quite a bit of criticism of the Reagan administration's dismantling of those programs in Interior, and Cy made the commitment that he would hire a professional as an advisor to help bolster those programs. Dale said to Cy, I think that I know just the person you need. And I sort of breathed a deep breath. I had a car out in Boise. We had been out on a house hunting trip, and we had our house on the market. We had made an offer on a house in Boise contingent on our house selling. My wife, although she would have gone, really didn't want to go to Boise. So all this was going on and I remember walking in the house and I said guess what happened to me today. She said you had a job offer, and I said yes and I told her about what had been going on with BLM. I was very skeptical about it, because the traditional Forest Service thinking would be why are they getting rid of you. What have you done wrong. You don't fit the mold so off you go.

I was real skeptical but I went over and had a couple interviews with Dean Stepanek who was the associate director, and with Cy Jamison. Cy didn't have a particularly good reputation in the conservation community because he'd been a staff for Ron Marlenee, a congressman from Montana who was pretty much of a black hat in image in the conservation community. Basically the interviews went like this. Cy was actually a very good boss. I very much enjoyed working with him, personally, a lot of fun, very positive, high energy. He said Mike, I want a fifty million dollar fish and wildlife program. I want a fifty million dollar recreation program. I want a fifty million dollar range program. Do whatever you got to do, whatever you can. Just don't do anything illegal and if you get me fired, you're fired. That was Cy's style. Well, I thought about it for a while. I talked to people like Jeff Sirmon, who was a neighbor in Vienna. Jeff said you've got a lot of promise in the Forest Service but the Forest Service is really a tough agency to change and if you go to BLM you'll know in a year or two if you can make a difference. He said you might be surprised how much this could help you. I had a lot of respect for Jeff and I think a lot of people felt Jeff was certainly one of the potential chiefs of the Forest Service. In fact, I think if Jeff had been chief the Forest Service might be somewhat different today because of his style and approach. Bob Nelson felt I ought to do it.

I was still skeptical, so I wanted to talk to the chief. This was really the first time I had talked to the chief and this was a phone conversation but one-on-one about what should I do with my career. Dale said to me, Mike, the Forest Service really needs you but the BLM needs you more. Because I still wasn't convinced that they were not just shoving me aside I said, will you give me a guaranteed backing of the Forest Service. I still have the letter signed by Dale where if I would go to BLM he would guarantee me a job back in the Forest Service. So I went over to BLM and that turned out to be one of the most delightful surprises of my life, because I essentially had the authority of the director in the BLM culture as a special assistant and advisor but I didn't have any responsibility. I got to know the staff very well and actually have tremendous respect for the organization at BLM and the capability that the organization has and the quality of the staff. I didn't have to worry about supervisory responsibilities. I could almost do whatever I wanted.

I do want to back up a bit and make this connection. One of the things I started doing as fish program manager and then as a Hill staffer is I started taking people canoeing. People loved to

Figure 5: U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck (left) with U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt filleting fish for a shore lunch along the Shenandoah River (June 1998).

get out on the water and, of course, I had my eleven years as a fishing guide and cooking shore lunches. We'd usually go on the Shenandoah and we'd usually catch some red breast sunfish, which we kept a few, and I'd do a shore lunch, fry up fish. We'd have some beer to drink, fish, bread, can of beans over the campfire and people just loved it and, of course, this is what I did as a guide. I took Hill staffers and various people on trips. We'd take Saturday or Sunday and canoe the Shenandoah and catch some fish and have a nice shore lunch and have a good time.

So back to BLM. One other important detail I left out of the interview was that I knew about the spotted owl a lot more than I probably wanted to. One of the things I told Cy Jamison and Dean Steadnick as a condition of the job is that I did not want any part of the spotted owl issue because it was a debacle waiting to happen. I wasn't about to compromise my professional credibility over whatever direction we would end up going with the spotted owl issue, sort of looking in the rearview mirror of the Bob Burford-Ronald Reagan philosophy of, if you've seen one redwood you've seen 'em all so there really wasn't much sympathy for the spotted owl issue. Cy never pulled me into that issue except for one time, which when we get to that issue I will talk about and I won't take very long. But those were my two big apprehensions in going to BLM was that, number one, was I really being shoved aside by the Forest Service and number two, was I going to get drug into the spotted owl issue that I knew somebody was going to end up with egg on their face before this was all resolved.

I got to do more of the fun stuff at BLM. I struck up a very good relationship with Dave Almand, who was chief of wildlife and fisheries for the Bureau of Land Management. Dave was a very creative guy also. Had a lot of the characteristics of Bob Nelson. In fact, I always felt that if you could cross Dave Almand and Bob Nelson you would have an unstoppable force in an organization because the skills that the one lacked the other one had—and there weren't very many skills lacking, by the way, with either. One of the things that Dave Almand did during the Burford era was, he was really the first one to develop the market-based approach for fish and wildlife that began "Rise To The Future," "Animal In," and "Bring Back the Natives," all of these other programs I talked about earlier. He developed a program called "Fish and Wildlife 2000." Since all of these programs were being de-emphasized, a lot of the biologists just got frustrated and left and came to the Forest Service in that James Watt, Ronald Reagan, Bob Burford era. But Dave developed this market-based strategy called Fish and Wildlife 2000 that was really even ahead of "Rise To The Future." The problem was, Bob Burford wouldn't allow implementation of any phase of that in his tenure, while Dale Robertson let us bring "Rise to the Future" in the side door and money along with it.

HKS: I see.

MPD: So we had a program ready to go when Cy became director. It really brings meaning to that old quote of Louis Pasteur that "chance favors the prepared mind." What Dave Almand was doing is developing this strategy, knew the funding needs, all that was needed to move a program forward. We had a ready vehicle to move forward and next came Recreation 2000 and this is 1989, 1990, 1991, so it was a forward looking program that we were able to move forward and, in fact, by the time of the Bush/Clinton transition we didn't quite make the fifty million dollar mark that Cy wanted. I think we were at about forty eight million from about twenty, the low twenties in fish and wildlife and similar increases in the recreation program. So it was a time again of great success, if you will, in the serendipity of me having the good fortune of being at the right place at the right time with sort of the right set of skills to help move something forward that was viewed as positive and fairly high visibility.

HKS: Was the BLM timber program being reduced at the time? You're getting more money but overall was the agency's budget increasing?

MPD: Yes. It was but it wasn't large increases. It wasn't the increases like we had in most programs in the Carter administration.

We were able to do a lot of fun things in the job when I worked for Cy. We did show me trips. I did more canoe trips. I got to know Secretary Lujan fairly well. He liked to fish and loved the shore lunches. And we would take Hill staffers and other key players from the Iron Triangle in Washington on trips. We tried to get President Bush out. Of course, never did. The closest that we got, the first President Bush was out to a national fishing week, kid's fishing days on the Anacostia River where he came out and talked to the kids. They had casting tournaments and various things like that because part of the objective was to take a kid fishing and this is in the sort of the help stamp out drugs in the Bush administration, taking kids fishing, not drugs. It was popular programs that we focused on that the White House was somewhat interested in. Again, I didn't have to dabble in the administrative aspects of the program very much.

Now I want to shift gears back to another thing that was interesting as I look back on my career. The traditional staffer that comes up in any of the land management agencies. Say you're a district biologist, a hydrologist, a soil scientist, I think even in forestry if your track isn't to go line, you're a technical expert and you do a good job. Say you're on a district, you've worked there some years and you get promoted to the supervisor's office. Your job there is to provide a little budget advice, look at the guidelines, be the mentor for the individuals in your profession that are coming in that are in the district level and you stay in that technical arena. If you do a good job at the forest level you get promoted to the regional office. Your circle enlarges. You tinker with the budget a little bit. You look at the guidelines. You review forest plans and you provide technical expertise to the biologist when they call up and ask what should the angle of a bank be or what should the leave strips be. Then if you do a good job there you get promoted to the Washington Office to do the same thing.

This is where I think a lot of the programs have fallen down, because I went from the Midwest where I knew so much about the land and the biology to California where I knew almost nothing that forced me out of that track and it forced me into the actual nuts and bolts of program management versus being a technical expert that so many of the staff people are. It's a natural thing because that's the area you're comfortable in. That's, I think, an important aspect of the way organizations function. One of the problems I think all agencies have, and certainly the Forest Service, is we've got too many technical people, too many people focusing on technical things too high up in the organization. More people with these skills ought to be moved to the field level. I used to think one of the ways to evaluate what people did is to see who they talked to. If a staffer in Washington is only talking to his counterparts in the agency then they're not doing their job because they ought to be talking to all of the Iron Triangle, the constituencies, the lobby groups, the trade associations, all the people that put the program together from the standpoint of funding and political support. Usually that's just left to a handful of people.

The thing is that Bob Nelson understood this more so than a lot of people in the Forest Service and I really think that was one of the keys to his success. He understood the importance of making all the connections and the importance of a relationship in programs. If you look at his tenure as director of fisheries and wildlife in the Forest Service, he probably brought it from—I'd have to look at the numbers—say twenty, thirty million up to well over a hundred million dollars in his tenure and built the staff significantly and had people in his staff moved into other key jobs. If I had to provide a critique now looking back, the thing that Bob should have done more of is get more people into line positions. If you were a Bob Nelson recruit, you sort of reached the apex of your career if you were a regional fish and wildlife director. I talked about this with Bob a little bit and I kind of almost felt deep down inside that he felt you could be more effective there than if you were a forest supervisor.

Figure 6: U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt (left) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management Acting Director Mike Dombeck during National Fishing Week on the Washington, D.C., Mall (1994).

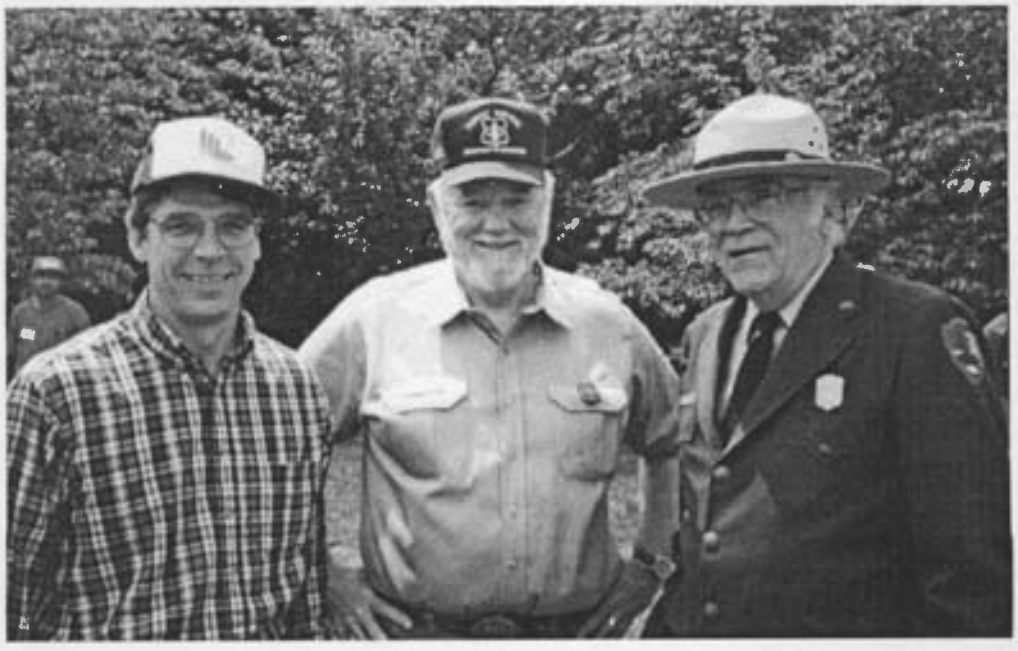

Figure 7: U.S. Bureau of Land Management Acting Director Mike Dombeck (left), U.S. Forest Service Chief Jack Thomas (middle), and U.S. National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy (right) during National Fishing Week on the Washington, D.C., Mall (1994).

HKS: I could see the argument either way. But it's interesting that Bob Nelson got two people to be chief of the Forest Service. Jack says that's how he got to be chief. Bob Nelson put him in positions where he had that kind of visibility. It was certainly never Jack's intention to be chief.

MPD: I never really thought about it quite that way, but his team of people certainly put me in the right positions. Region 9 to Region 5 to the Washington Office where I was in a situation where we were doing something a little bit different that was very positive, that was welcome in the agency at that time. Meanwhile the rest of the agency was fighting the owl wars or the grazing wars or whatever controversies were going on at the time, so I had that luxury in a career. The other thing that I feel very fortunate about is compared to most chiefs and I think the same is true for Jack, I've only had four major moves in the agency—from Nursing, from the district, to living in Park Falls where I was really on the regional office roster to California to Washington, D.C. Obviously I went to graduate school in the meantime, which involved living for a time in Ames, Iowa. But I recall in new employee orientation with Jay Cravens speaking, telling about how he'd moved something like eighteen times. I consider myself lucky, and the fact is, that era's over and I'm glad it is because I think it was really tough on families.

HKS: The McGuires moved I don't know how many times but he was back and forth between Berkeley and the Washington Office one year in each place, and he moved up each time.

MPD: When I went to Washington I assumed I was going to be there three to five years. We bought an absentee landlord fixer upper house and did all the work on it ourselves, didn't have a clue that I was going to be there almost fifteen years. I didn't like Washington when we first got there because I was this kid from the woods, twenty-five miles from a town of fifteen hundred people in the Chequamegon National Forest now living in the Washington, D.C., metro area. Where I come from if you saw someone and you didn't smile and say hi they'd say what's wrong with you. You ride the Metro in Washington in the morning and you look at somebody and smile and say good morning they think what's wrong with you.

HKS: [Laughter.] I understand that.

MPD: It's just the opposite kind of thing.

HKS: Is this the time, somewhere in here maybe we can talk about the president's plan, Cy Jamison as a person, your characterization of him. I know nothing about him except what Dale said and that was in context of the spotted owl controversy. Jack Thomas in his journals is very harsh on Jamison as a person, lack of integrity, immorality. You're characterizing him as a nice guy, fun to be with and so forth. Maybe he can be both, but I was surprised when you said that because I wasn't ready for that.

MPD: Let me come back to that in a minute.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: Let me fill in some gaps of some of the things that we were able to do while I was special assistant and then science adviser at the BLM. Building on the concept of "Rise To The Future" and then Fish and Wildlife 2000 and Recreation 2000 at BLM, the secretary's office got interested in this fish wildlife and recreation stuff and we actually framed a program that became the secretary's program, called it Enjoy Outdoors America. We built a large coalition with the recreation community and the fish and wildlife community and I was the primary staffer putting BLM in the lead in the Department of the Interior and really got to know all of the secretary's senior staff, the chief of staff, and the counselors.

I had more personal time with Manuel Lujan than I did with Dan Glickman as chief of Forest Service. We went to sporting events. We went fishing and canoeing and things like that. Cy Jamison also saw the positive side of these programs and how they could build a support base for the entire agency. We did outdoor TV shows together and various features like that, that was all sort of built on this guiding experience that I had way back when because people like to go canoeing. They like to go hiking. They like a shore lunch cooked over a wood fire. I'd be in Washington and people would be just amazed how do you know how to do this kind of a thing. It made life fun in addition to dealing with the stress that comes along with all of this. At some point I'd like to talk about the difference in cultures between the two agencies.

HKS: Right, that's a very important topic.

MPD: As all this was going on with the spotted owl, Cy I think really got to see the importance of science and knew that I had a Ph.D. and asked me to start the framework to build a research program within BLM. The last two years or so we began quietly working on how BLM could have a twenty- or thirty-person research team within BLM modeled somewhat after the Forest Service. BLM did have some Ph.D. scientists and some that were on IPAs largely driven by the spotted owl issue. But Cy knew that you have to have the science basis. Cy was an astute guy in that respect. We were actually to the point of looking for a location and talking to members of Congress about where to locate this science unit of BLM. And we weren't exactly sure what we were going to call it, whether we would call it a center of excellence or we would have more than one, but I took it as far as having visited Oregon State, Colorado State, talking to deans about location, looking for buildings, looking for office space. We looked as Las Cruces, New Mexico, as another place for example, and we had members of Congress saying come here and locate this center of excellence, this research entity. We were looking at it to be not modeled exactly after the Forest Service, but more of a bridging of applied science with a lot of technology transfer going on to provide managers more and better information to base decisions on and all that sort of thing. In fact, we were ready to pull the trigger on this when Bush lost the election. Of course, being a political appointee, Cy was out and there would be a new director in place. Those are the key things that were happening in BLM at the time. Cy was really struggling with this owl issue and some of the other issues. My belief in observing Cy, being at top management meetings on a lot of issues, Cy did want to run for public office and ultimately he did. He ran against Pat Williams in Montana and I think got thirty-eight percent of the votes. But Cy wanted to be able to say my policies didn't cost anybody their job.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: I was never part of the behind-the-scenes dialogue with Dale Robertson and Cy Jamison and Jack Thomas. Cy was very competitive and very shrewd politically. One of the advantages that Cy had is he had the support of the administration. Lujan and his team had a lot of confidence in Cy. Cy had a pipeline to the White House, so when the spotted owl issue really got brewing I remember one of the key meetings, decision meetings, near the end of the Bush administration on the owl. Dale was traveling in Israel. George Leonard wasn't invited, and Cy basically ran the show. BLM has about thirteen percent of the old growth, the spotted owl habitat in the Pacific Northwest, and is basically running the show.

It was almost as though it was a food fight between the Fish and Wildlife Service and John Turner and Dale Robertson and Cy Jamison in the way the behind-the-scenes politics worked. There are both advantages and disadvantages to the chief not being a political appointee. The chief is appointed by the secretary so it's a matter of vernacular, but the fact is that the director of BLM is an advice and consent slot appointed by the president, confirmed by the Senate. And that gives somebody like Cy and the BLM the inside track politically because they have the confidence of the White House. The Forest Service is not very popular within most

administrations. It's sort of seen as the stepchild, the unruly troublemaker. Had the chief of the Forest Service been on an equal plane with Cy, the spotted owl issue would have probably turned out a whole lot different. So the very pride that the Forest Service has in our chief is professional; that our chief comes up through the ranks is very important. It is important in many respects except when it comes to the inside politics in Washington. Chiefs are rarely front and center in that. Pinchot, being a friend of Teddy Roosevelt, was the notable exception; he was in the thick of D.C. politics.

HKS: That's right.

NFD: There are a couple of other things I want to mention. One of the things that Cy told me as part of encouraging me to come to work for BLM and leaving the Forest Service for a time was that he'd help me get into the Senior Executive Service. I was in the last SES class in the Department of the Interior during the Bush administration, and so by the time of the end of the Bush term I was SES certified. They placed me as an SESer as chief of staff to the assistant secretary for lands and minerals management. I was very skeptical because I thought I was going to be perceived as somebody that the Republicans stuck some place to burrow in or whatever the vernacular of the Washington lingo is. In fact, I had even thought about turning it down. This is after Clinton has won the election, and so I went to some of the most skeptical people I knew in BLM—Tom Allen was assistant director for administration operations and some of the people that had really observed a lot of this—and I went to a couple of other old timers in Interior. They said you've got to do this. The worst that can happen is they will put you back to where you were and you will end up where you are now. It was somewhat of a risk, a little bit like moving from a county with no stop lights to San Francisco. But it turned out to be just another platter handed to me full of opportunities that I had no idea were coming my way.

SES classes are for career people, not political people, and they cross administrations. But the point being, it's the political appointees that ultimately determine who is in the SES class. I've been through three transitions at a fairly high level in the agency and have seen how different transitions operate. There's always suspicion, especially when there's a party change. There's always concern about loyalties, but yet on the other hand, most of the people that are selected for these are still in. Many of the people I was in SES class with were promoted in the Clinton administration. So it turned out not to be a problem but an opportunity.

I want to go back to a couple of things while I was science advisor and special assistant to the director of BLM that I think are important. One of the things that both Dale and Cy had asked me to do was to look for opportunities for the Forest Service and BLM to work more closely. I already mentioned the recreational fisheries policy that was developed, and Butch Marita on the Forest Service side was head of a team and I was head of the team from the Bureau of Land Management side. We had several meetings with a whole array of people from industry and the conservation community and developed this joint recreational fisheries policy that was signed off on by both Dale Robertson and Cy. And we had some fun events to try to create some camaraderie and goodwill between the agencies, including a major event in Secretary Lujan's office with Tony Dean, the award-winning newscaster and TV guy. He's done everything from public service announcements for the Fish and Wildlife Service to award-winning outdoor shows. I subsequently did a number of things with Tony, who is just an absolutely wonderful guy. Phil Janik and Harv Forsgren and a team of other people began working on the salmon issues in the Pacific Northwest that also posed to be a problem potentially almost as serious as the owl. They developed a program they ultimately called PACFISH. I brought BLM to the table to be part of PACFISH because if you look at the land tenure map of Forest Service and BLM, typically you'd have the Forest Service at the higher elevation and then BLM sort of at tree line and down into the desert. These streams all flowed downhill and so we developed PACFISH and then followed up with another program called INFISH for inland fisheries. And the reason I think these are

important and the guys that really deserve the credit for this are the staff people like Jack Williams of the Bureau of Land Management, Phil Janik and Harv Forsgren of the Forest Service, and many others.

I think about now the ten or so years that I worked as a fisheries biologist and all of the efforts we put into stream improvement work and all of the tinkering and everything, as I said earlier, from removing logs in the 1960s and '70s, which we know now we shouldn't have been doing, to then putting them back in. And those two efforts of PACFISH and INFISH probably did more to protect and restore fisheries than all of the efforts of the instream projects that the fisheries biologist did because they really addressed the core problems of how to manage riparian zones, grazing in the riparian zones, the upland land management effects on streams. So where we fisheries biologists were putting on Band-Aids, when PACFISH and INFISH came along what we were actually doing is setting policies to change the way we manage the land that was the core problem of the streams to begin with. Two very, very important efforts came out of that era that I think will have a long-term tremendous impact on protecting and improving the aquatic habitats in the fisheries in the Pacific Northwest, and they really became a standard for the rest of the Forest Service and BLM.

HKS: Where's the controversy? Who's opposed to this? Are you getting a lot of heat from the fishing industry, the agriculture industry, the forest industry about what you might be causing here?

MPD: The grazing industry, somewhat the timber industry, the off-road vehicle users in recreation industries were somewhat concerned. But the thing is we had just come out of the spotted owl debacle. This was all sort of simultaneous with the whole spotted owl debacle from ... it started, I believe, before the Dwyer decision. And there were those in the agency like Bob Nelson, like Phil Janik, and the leadership who obviously supported these actions ultimately although the chief himself wasn't out front on these issues that they knew something had to be done about. I look back and think what a success, what a major step forward with programs like these when compared to where we were in say the early '80s or the 1970s. And this occurred with some of the partnerships that I was part of pulling together with, again with Bob Nelson, with Phil Janik, with Hal Salwasser, who by this time was now in Montana as Boone and Crockett professor, and many others in both agencies.

Forest Service in Agriculture

MPD: I was front and center perhaps on a couple of issues as chief, and Jack was for a time on some issues. But often the chiefs are not, and this is where the Forest Service has a significant disadvantage. Then there is all of this debate would the Forest Service be better off in Interior and why the separation and so on. Yet the competition, the dollar competition for the Forest Service is not within the Department of Agriculture. It's within the Department of the Interior because the Forest Service is part of the Interior appropriations bill. The second point is, money wise the Forest Service isn't necessarily a big deal to the secretary of Agriculture. The Ag budget is about sixty billion dollars, sixty-three, sixty-five. I don't know what it is now. It might be seventy or more. The Forest Service budget at that time was say four billion dollars out of sixty or seventy. The Interior bill is about fifteen billion. The Forest Service is about a quarter of that. So it's a big deal to the secretary of the Interior how the Forest Service plays in all of this, and yet the chief, not a political appointee, is competing with the secretary of the Interior. It's really an interesting dynamic when you think about it; is the Forest Service in the right place or where should it be and why and what are the pros and cons.

Another one of the cons is that most secretaries of Agriculture don't know much about the Forest Service. They're almost all Ag people. Dan Glickman used to say I'm from Kansas. We have no forests in Kansas. Madigan was the same. Of course Orville Freeman knew the forest debates because of what went on in Minnesota. Typically when the Forest Service issues boil up and become very controversial not really that's about the only time the secretary of Agriculture gets involved. So he gets involved or she gets involved when there's a fight to deal with, when something has boiled up to the point that the president asks what's going on. Cabinet member this is your responsibility. Fix it. And then the secretary has to come down on the side of the Forest Service.

So that's an interesting dynamic with where the Forest Service is and how it plays in the whole political arena in Washington. It would be very different if it were in Interior, and I'm certainly not a proponent of merging say BLM and the Forest Service because I don't necessarily think bigger is better. But the thing that we don't often talk about is that there are definite disadvantages with existing systems. I don't know if we've ever had a good intellectual or policy analysis of one versus the other because we typically say well, we're here because it's better. We're loyal to Agriculture. If you're a staffer and you write the word Forest Service and you don't put USDA in front of it you get chastised, and yet to the American public it's U.S. Forest Service.

HKS: But you don't see USDI BLM.

MPD: That's right.

HKS: There's not that identity crisis.

MPD: That's right. I remember my first two months in Washington as a staffer writing Forest Service on public service stuff and it would come back red ink insert USDA because they were concerned about that identity crisis. Kind of interesting when we think about the serendipity of history and politics, the most recent biography of Pinchot talks about a conversation he had with Teddy Roosevelt saying if you were only from the West I'd make you secretary of the Interior.

HKS: That's right.

MPD: Where do you think the Forest Service would have been if Pinchot was secretary of the Interior?

HKS: Sure, but most secretaries of Interior are western and have an appreciation for public lands. They may not know much specifically about the agencies but certainly are different from Dan Glickman from Kansas having the Forest Service under his authority. He doesn't have a sense of public lands at all from practical experience.

MPD: There's some fascinating things to think about as we look at various policies and how government is structured and also the role that chance plays. If Pinchot had had a little bit of experience or lived in the West for a time, he probably would have been secretary of the Interior. His reasons for wanting to be in Ag—Pete, you know them better than I—concerned corruption, the competition between the Bureau of Forestry and, or whatever it was called.

HKS: It was the Forest Service after 1905.

MPD: In the Interior what was the forestry branch called?

HKS: It was Division R of the General Land Office.

MPD: And knowing that his primary reason, as I understand it, for wanting to be in Agriculture is to be independent and he achieved that.

HKS: And the corruption in Interior over public lands. We've got U.S. senators going to prison for land fraud around the turn of the century. Pinchot saw that. He was on the Public Lands Commission for Teddy Roosevelt and he looked at that land fraud. It's a big section of that 1903 report, land fraud in Interior. Fraud in Interior, and we had Teapot Dome in the '20s. The Forest Service has never forgotten how corrupt Interior is. It's very convenient for its position. You do wonder. John McGuire thought the agencies ultimately needed to be together or maybe at least in the same department.

MPD: Well, from the standpoint of efficiency that's the only way to go. I've been head of both agencies and we'll talk about this more when we talk about culture. But from the standpoint of practicality and politics, it may not be. The other question is, is bigger better.

HKS: Denny LeMaster writes it's Congress. The committees don't want to lose their turf and if you move the Forest Service around senators don't like that.

Clinton Administration

HKS: Is the president's plan, the kickoff of the Clinton administration, visibly on the environment? How long had he been president until the Timber Summit and all of that in Portland.

MPD: It wasn't long. I don't remember the exact date of the summit. Some of the behind-the-scenes stuff I think are interesting in the way transitions can work. After being through three transitions, the one thing I can tell you is they're all different. You will always have people telling you this is the way, this is what happens in transitions, but the most important thing is that they're all different. Right at the end of the Bush administration I was sent up to the assistant secretary's office for Lands and Minerals Management, which oversees the Bureau of Land Management, the Office of Surface Mining, and Minerals Management Service in the Department of the Interior. As I said I was skeptical about doing that because I was somewhat worried about being perceived as a Bush plant or whatever it would be. Also, I talked to some of the most skeptical people I could find, the real critics, and they said they need somebody up there that understands some of these programs and knows how the agencies operate.

Well, lo and behold, January 20th rolled around with Clinton being sworn in. One of the interesting things is the political appointees from the previous administration, some have a day to have their offices cleared out and others have three days. One of the deputy assistant secretaries whom I had worked with, technically I was now his supervisor, called me and said Mike, I've decided I want to stay. I want to get to know this new Clinton team and so on. This was really a surprise and an unusual situation, so I talked to the acting secretary who was a holdover political appointee versus a career person. He made a phone call and that problem was solved that the deputy assistant secretary that had wanted to stay was out by noon on Friday with the office cleaned up ready for the new team to move in.

The transition team, of course, was formed before the inauguration, and you had people like John Leshy and Jim Baca and others that became central to the Babbitt team that were in the building and were talking to people and were developing their strategies. Bruce Babbitt was one of the early cabinet members to be confirmed. He was in the building, and we began to have budget meetings and a variety of meetings like that. It turned out the Babbitt team liked people with science backgrounds and with Ph.D.s. I began to provide them the assistance that they

needed to understand the agencies and was part of Babbitt's first team to take a look at what to do to move forward things like the National Biological Survey idea that he had, which, of course, flopped.

HKS: Sure.

MPD: It was probably one of the best ideas that came out of that era, but it was just the way it was handled. I can recall having this conversation around the table with part of Babbitt's team and recommending that before Bruce Babbitt made the announcement at the international fish and wildlife conference in D.C., that he at least ought to call a bunch of the opinion leaders, state agency leaders, and listen to them, brief them. He didn't even have to say anything, just listen to them. That wasn't done, so when he finally made the announcement suddenly there was this wave of opposition that came at him. The idea of having a National Biological Survey really never reached the level of effectiveness that it could have.

HKS: Babbitt's an experienced politician. It seems a little bit strange he would not have routinely touched base.

MPD: This is my view and my interpretation of what I observed at the time. My feeling was that most of the people who ended up being opposed to it could have, if they had been brought in, helped shape it. It turned out to be the state conservation agencies that were worried about the feds coming in on their turf, and so it turned out to be more of a turf thing. Some of the federal agency supporters were also concerned, especially those that had small science capability. For example, the science capability of BLM, there was a little but not a lot. The Fish and Wildlife Service was worried about losing a major research arm and what it would do to the Fish and Wildlife Service. So it really split the interests in that area and turned out to be an example of how not to do something and how a good idea can fail.

Another similar example that I've got to mention that was like that was when Max Peterson was chief of the Forest Service and Bob Burford was director of BLM. They proposed the interchange effort. If it made the most sense for the Forest Service to manage some lands, let's have this interchange. And if it made more sense for BLM to manage others, let's have this exchange of lands. It was one of the few good ideas that came out of that era, particularly out of BLM, and yet it was the very constituencies and the people within the agencies that really submarined that idea, and it came crashing down. It was probably one of the most logical proposals from the standpoint of management efficiency that we could have had. But because the groundwork wasn't laid it failed. Of course, all of this becomes clearer in retrospect.

HKS: Sure.

MPD: This is not necessarily a criticism, but it's just sort of the way things turn out. Another interesting thing when you're in transitions like this is that all that's in front of you are unknowns. Now we look back and we see the way things could have been or we think how they might have turned out if we would have done something different. Ultimately the assistant secretary designate for the chair that I was sitting in was Bob Armstrong. He probably came to Washington before the first of February. Bob never came into the assistant secretary's office, because there's this need for separation; you don't dabble in that business until after your confirmation. So Bob never came down to the office but he was at the other end of the building. The assistant secretary for Lands and Minerals Management's office is on the sixth floor in the northeast corner of the Interior building. Usually the deputy secretary's office is on the southeast corner of the Interior building, and I went down to meet Bob, who is a very nice guy, very cordial, a good sense of humor. I began to help Bob, brief him on issues, provide information that he needed as we prepped for his confirmation hearing. It was maybe the 25th, 26th of May when Bob was

confirmed. So I was acting assistant secretary from January 20th until almost the end of May, and got to know the team. Nice people to work with. They looked at all the issues that had been done near the end of the Bush administration just like this Bush is looking back at the issues that were handled near the end of the Clinton administration, trying to determine what to do with them. And it really was a fascinating time to see all of this.

One of the interesting things on a personal standpoint that I do want to mention because it's important to me is at that same time I was a bone marrow donor, anonymous donor. Both my wife and I had given a blood sample about three years earlier and we were called. I was called in for some more tests because there was a potential recipient who needed marrow that was closely matched to mine. This was about February or March, and they called me in and they said okay, we want you to go through the procedure to take marrow, which is another story in itself. But there was no provision in the regulations for an employee to take leave of some type for this kind of effort. I could have taken sick leave, of course. So we put this measure forward to the assistant secretary for admin and changed the policy in Interior so they were able to grant me administrative leave for three or four days while I participated in this bone marrow procedure and the couple of days of quiet time they want you to have at home. So I mention that as an aside to show they were open to ideas like that. I found that as a long-time career employee I could put ideas on the table and they were accepted and discussed. Of course we all wanted to encourage other employees to participate in these kinds of programs.

They worked us hard. I can remember Tom Collier who was Bruce Babbitt's chief of staff, we'd had budget briefings with the secretary where they'd call us in on Saturday, sometimes stay all day, as they were really trying to soak up as much information about this department, the agencies, and all that they did. There was a fair amount of new information for me there, too, because I was really not familiar with the operations of the Office of Surface Mining, which was just full of personnel problems, and the Minerals Management Service that collects the royalties for offshore oil and gas and collects four billion dollars or so for the government from the extraction of resources that belong to all of the people.

HKS: My perception is that the Clinton administration was unusually slow at getting it's appointees going. Is Congress playing a role in that or are the nominations not coming out? CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] wasn't filled for ten months or something. Over in Agriculture Jim Lyons wasn't available for quite a while. Espy was there by himself basically with a secretary for months. Is that just the chaos that's not uncommon for a new administration or what?

MPD: My perception is that the Republicans tend to be more organized than the Democrats. The stories I've heard about the Reagan transition was that it was very organized. I wasn't there so I don't know. And I look at Bush 2; it seemed when they came in they knew what they wanted to do, even though it wasn't determined who was going to be president until December 13th. One thing that struck me and this may have been Bruce Babbitt as well as, more so than Bill Clinton in the style, but the people that Babbitt brought in as political appointees had very impressive qualifications. You had people like John Leshy as solicitor, who was in essence the intellectual expert on mining law as a professor. You had people like Betsy Rieke, who was assistant secretary for water and science. Her expertise was water law. He brought Tom Lovejoy in from the Smithsonian as a science advisor. You had Bob Armstrong, whom I ultimately worked with, as I was his acting while he was being confirmed, was a legislator from Texas and was the Texas land commissioner and knew lands issues very well. If I contrast that with the political appointees of Bush 1, they were more political types that worked campaigns.

So there was a very different climate in Interior as we moved from Lujan to Babbitt, just by the nature of the people that Babbitt seemed to put on his team. Several of us came out of the bottom of the organizations and were career people. I had a Ph.D. and I had a number of

technical publications and other things like that on my resume, and they seemed to like that. That was another major turning point in my career, because if you go back to think about the time that I was skeptical about going to BLM to begin with from the Forest Service, here suddenly I'm sitting in the assistant secretary's office and having meetings with the new secretary of the Interior and his inner circle of people.

HKS: That's nice to hear that they're fully qualified and haven't been engaged in illegal practices somewhere.

MPD: I would say all fully qualified but in contrast to the team that was there in the Bush administration, it was a very, very, very different climate. The level of understanding of issues and the mode of operation was very, very different from what I observed earlier.

HKS: Was Baca still head of BLM at the time of the timber summit?

MPD: Yes, although I'm not sure to what level. I was involved with the team that was already doing the work after the summit had been convened. The direction from the president was to develop this plan within the limits of the law to provide jobs and so on. Suddenly we had this massive interagency exercise. That in itself was phenomenal because of what they accomplished. If you think of how long it takes us to do, either a BLM or a national forest plan and then suddenly we have an interagency plan covering twenty-four million acres and it's done in eleven months. That shows you that government can act if you've got focus, if you've got a presidential mandate. The thing that I find phenomenal about the Northwest Forest Plan was I have not seen another issue outside of war where you have the president, the vice president, and probably four plus cabinet members all convened at one time. And this was a conservation issue. I don't know if you can think of a time where there's been more top level political executive energy focused on one issue that's of all things, a conservation issue and not only a conservation issue but a regional issue.

HKS: Clinton was criticized in the press, because the next day he went on to Vancouver to talk to the Soviet premier and why he was wasting his time on something as unimportant to national security and national well-being as the spotted owl. This columnist, whoever it was, couldn't imagine Clinton's sense of priorities. He was another Jimmy Carter. Everything was important to Clinton. He couldn't separate world peace from the spotted owl. But anyway, he was there and spent at least a full day in Portland.

MPD: We talked about that within the agencies, and as I recall we speculated on two items. Number one is, of course, he made the campaign promise and he was wanting to deliver on the campaign promise. But number two, he lost a governor's race and was not governor for a term I believe and largely because of a timber issue in Arkansas. So we felt that he was very much sensitized to the importance of an issue like this and gave it the time and energy that he did.

Jamison Plan for the Spotted Owl

HKS: Have we skipped over the president's plan versus Jamison's plan for the spotted owl, because that was before Clinton? I don't know how important it really is, but it was very important in the oral history of Dale Robertson and the journals of Jack Thomas about Jamison's behavior.

MPD: I had virtually no involvement in the spotted owl issue. I was in California in the mid '80s, and we basically saw this issue coming and knew that there would be a train wreck eventually.

The thing that I found fascinating with the spotted owl issue is that there were several attempts to compromise with industry and others. The cut was say about five billion. The compromise of three billion couldn't bring the parties together. A compromise at two billion couldn't bring the parties together. Industry and the environmental community, the agencies, just didn't seem to have the will. I was removed from the thinking and all the details of things that Dale was involved in at the time. But the thing that I do know, which I also mentioned earlier, was that when some of the key decisions were made the Forest Service wasn't even at the table. It's fascinating that here you had Cy Jamison, John Turner, and Dale Robertson, with BLM having some thirteen or so percent of the old growth spotted owl habitat in the Pacific Northwest and running the show at the White House. And again I'm mentioning this for context since I talked about it in a little more detail earlier, that Dale was in Israel. George Leonard, who was associate chief, wasn't invited to the meetings, and some of the key decisions were made with the Forest Service being the major entity affected by this and not really at the table when big decisions were made and the Forest Service essentially getting rolled.

HKS: Maybe it shouldn't be called the Jamison plan as much as the Bush plan, if Jamison is wired to the White House at the time. John Sununu, according to Dale, was very hard on Dale for his lack of solving the spotted owl problem in some favorable way to the need of the Northwest economy. Maybe they saw Cy Jamison as the spokesman, but it really wasn't his plan at all. Might have been his plan, but it was endorsed at the White House.

MPD: Cy had proposed some things that his forestry staff put together, but they did not have a lot of depth. They were more socio-economic solutions that tended not to be nearly adequate to deal with the biodiversity, endangered species, all problems. My observation that what Cy really cared about was knowing that he wanted to run for office at some point in Montana, that he wanted to be remembered as somebody whose policies did not result in people losing jobs. Dale struggled with this same issue during his tenure as chief, the sort of resources versus jobs. Everybody knew that at some point the curve had to start going downward on timber harvest, but they didn't know just when and how it would happen—and it ended up that the court system did it.

I just have one anecdote that I want to mention associated with that whole issue. One time Cy called me into his office about five-thirty in the evening and showed me a letter that he had already signed that he was taking down to the secretary. It was the letter calling up the God Squad. I read the letter, and he said Mike, I wanted you to be aware of this. My response to him was you're going to get killed. We didn't talk very long, and obviously he didn't ask my opinion. Surprisingly enough it was probably Secretary Lujan who took more of the heat and the backlash during that whole effort, and Cy managed to stay either above or below the radar on that issue. That was, in essence, about the extent of my knowledge and involvement.

HKS: Jamison was portrayed as the person who derailed any hope of solving the spotted owl issue. Congress and others were looking for a loophole. How can we get around this, and Jamison said, I've been told, that it's faulty science. Really we can fix the problem, need to study it more. In that sense Dale was ahead of him, further down the road and said it can't be fixed that way. Everyone has to work together and industry wasn't helping and the Jamison plan certainly wasn't helping. So he was characterized from the Forest Service side, by both Jack and Dale, as the one who sabotaged any hope for success. Now there may not have been success anyway. Judge Dwyer's decision and all those things may still have happened and everything would have been shut down no matter if they had worked together. It might not have made any difference. Max Peterson in his interview blames the timber industry for preventing the Forest Service from responding in any useful way to the ow. issue, because they have enough political clout that they couldn't cover the cut. You've said some of these same things.

MPD: I had only a very small glimpse of what went on. I talked earlier about some of the things we did in the fish and wildlife programs, like INFISH and PACFISH, to bring the agencies together. When the owl issue really cranked up the relationship between Cy and Dale, it was obvious they were no longer the best of friends. Not perhaps that they ever were, but that there was really not much love lost, nor with Jack, because the debate really got intense and personal. That reflects the level of frustration and the desire to get on top of an intractable problem. You have various points of view and there was a clash of philosophies, a clash of personalities, and the debacle ensued. My response to your statement about Max, I wasn't aware of this, so I appreciate knowing that. I don't know if the timber industry wanted to get every last bit of timber that they thought they could or if they never believed that it would be enjoined like it was. But I really think the timber industry and their influence with Congressman Bob Smith, who was chairman of the Ag committee, really played a major role in that because I can certainly see Max's observation. No one was willing to compromise. Everybody was just driving everybody else in a corner, and it probably wasn't possible for the agency to solve that problem because I think they'd already let it go too far.

HKS: I may not remember this correctly and I may have read it somewhere else, but I think Max said industry wanted a train wreck because a train wreck would be so appalling to Congress that the Endangered Species Act would be amended in some way that would allow "a more reasonable" solution.

MPD: My perception is, that is probably what Cy felt; that the Endangered Species Act was really unworkable and that calling out the Gou Squad perhaps would put enough pressure to get it changed. In fact, during my tenure as chief early on, that was when we had the Craig legislation to basically reform the National Forest Management Act to try to push the system 'til it broke, that was when you had the debacles that occurred and the dialogue within the Forest Service, which we'll talk about later, about the rudderless agency and the muddled mission. That was the prevailing climate when I became chief—let's just prove that the current system doesn't work and then we can revamp it with our own rules. That was one of the reasons that I was never in favor of revamping the environmental laws because maybe the devil you don't know is worse than the devil you know and those certainly were not the kind of people that I felt ought to be revamping our environmental laws, especially after the '94 election.

BLM Director

HKS: Now you're acting assistant secretary. When do you become acting director of BLM?

MPD: Bob Armstrong was confirmed on, as I said, about the 25th, 26th of May. Jim Baca at that same time became director of Bureau of Land Management. Bob needed a chief of staff, and Bob and I got along well. Anybody that couldn't get along with Bob Armstrong probably couldn't get along with anyone. He was just a wonderful person with a very congenial style, wasn't reactionary, was thoughtful, a lot of fun to be around. We had developed a good working relationship, so he asked me to stay. Obviously I agreed and continued to work with Bob, helping him fill the deputy assistant secretary's slot. It was interesting that I was sitting in the same office for a time that James Watt did before he was secretary of the Interior. A lot of people used to tease me about having James Watt's desk.

Bob hired B. J. Thornberry as deputy assistant secretary, who had been the deputy chief of staff to Governor Roy Roemer, whom I believe at that time was either the most recent or current chair of the National Governor's Association. B. J. came in and had all these interesting political connections. She had a different mode of operation and really focused on the importance of

needing to keep the governors involved and the importance of the states in the decision-making process. Even though Babbitt had been a governor for eight years, B. J. really pushed us to do a lot more coordination with the states. She was a very, very demanding person to work for. If you're assistant or deputy or something like that you bear a lot more of the day-to-day office management and so on, which I did with B. J. Again, B. J. and I got along fine. We had developed good, trusting working relationships with the secretary's office.

The next thing that happens is their relations and problems with Jim Baca begin to increase. It was probably increasingly obvious to many people around the Department of the Interior that there were going to be problems with Baca. There were relationship problems between Jim Baca and Cecil Andrus. There were relationship problems between Jim Baca and Governor Sullivan of Wyoming. There was concern that even though Jim wanted to do all of the right things, his style was such that it was just rubbing too many people the wrong way. This is all concurrent with the president's forest plan being developed and the summit in Portland. Post summit I was sent out to Portland to meet with and work with the team that was now actually working on the forest plan. I got a phone call to come home right away. Didn't say why, although I had an idea. I went from the office midday to the hotel to get my bags and went home, and that was the time that they were in the process of removing Jim Baca. I got home and was instructed to be quiet about this, to lay low. Then Bruce Babbitt said to me, Mike, would you go down to BLM and settle things down for awhile? Again it was sort of a time for sweaty palms. I had an understanding of how the BLM operated, but the instructions were just to go down and settle things down. So I did.

HKS: I'm always interested in personal relationships. How well do you actually know the people you're working with and working for? First name basis, you socialize together, or is this strictly a formal office relationship where you're cordial and professional in your relationships?

MPD: It wasn't social at that time but it was pretty much office relationships. The style, especially with Bob Armstrong, was very relaxed. It was Bob and Mike. Tom Collier, who was Bruce Babbitt's chief of staff, was a real taskmaster. Yet I managed to get along with Tom fairly well, and I got called on the carpet occasionally like everybody else did. He was the chief operating officer of the Department of the Interior, which is one heck of a hard job. We got along fine and always had a respectful and I felt trusting relationship. There was never a time that anybody felt that you couldn't show your cards on issues. It's come back to bite me a few times, but I have the tendency to be open to a fault and lay out the pros and the cons of an issue. So oftentimes you're the bearer of bad news. But they weren't in the kill the messenger mode at all.

Of all the people and the political appointees in the Department of the Interior, Bob Armstrong probably had the best personal relationship with the president. He was truly an FOB, you know, a Friend of Bill. He and Bill Clinton went back to the early 1970s, maybe even back into the 1960s when they were young Democrats working on political campaigns. If my memory serves me right, Bob ran for governor of Texas and lost in the primary I believe the year that Clinton was elected governor of Arkansas. They apparently remained fairly close. So here I am a career employee and it's about three weeks into the new administration and the White House is on the phone with the president wanting to talk to Bob Armstrong. I took this message to Bob to call the president. The next day I said to Bob, did you get a hold of the president? Oh, yes, he said, he wanted me to come over and have dinner with him. He was a good social friend of the president, and they golfed together, and he slept in the Lincoln bedroom, and things like that.

HKS: When you read about it in the press you don't know if it's just a journalist making a good story, but I remember the antiquated phone system in the White House when Clinton came in and the antiquated computers. Everything was good enough for the Bush administration, but

when Clinton and Gore came, they had to have all the new technology. To the extent that that's true, it must ripple down to the agencies and all the rest where you got a better phone system.

MPD: We didn't see the spillover of the technology stuff in the agencies, because the different agencies had different kinds of equipment. There was basically no relationship between the outmoded technologies of the White House and the rest of government that I know of, but I do recall some of the stories early on about it that were fascinating.

HKS: Babbitt sent you over to settle things down in BLM, and you did that for three years. Is there any particular reason you can point to why that long tenure as acting director?

MPD: I was ultimately nominated by the president and sent up for confirmation. A couple of things happened in the meantime. The Republicans, of course, were now in charge both the House and the Senate and so you had this tremendous change in politics. Babbitt took on the grazing issue. I was supportive of that, worked hard on that, agreed with that philosophically. The Senate Resources Committee with people like Pete Domenici and Frank Murkowski basically decided not to act on my nomination, so they just let it sit. There was never a hearing. There was never any investigation or review. I was publicly on the record supporting these grazing reforms and those kinds of things and there probably isn't any way that they wanted me officially in that chair. Babbitt decided to keep me there through the entire first term of the Clinton administration.

HKS: Did you feel at any time that limited your ability to do your job, because you weren't actually appointed?

MPD: Not within the agency. The culture of the Forest Service and BLM, there are some very distinct differences. I don't think this would have worked with the Forest Service. It's almost as though my life revolved around getting thrown into these unusual situations where there wasn't a lot of experience to draw from. Some friends of mine had advised, they're going to appoint you acting director of BLM. This is going to be suicide in your career. Why would you ever accept something like that? Then you've got a cabinet member asking you to do something. What do I do, do I say no? It's really a tough situation. At any rate, I got together with Baca's former team who, of course, were not happy. There was a lot of strife between the Babbitt people and the Baca people over Baca's removal. Baca had been planning a major BLM summit, a meeting of all the managers of BLM, four to five hundred people, and here I am a new acting director not knowing if I'm going to be there a month, three months, six months. I never dreamed that I would be there even a year.

The first major hurdle we had to get over was should we spend a half million dollars on this summit. I pulled a team of a combination of Baca people, people like Geoff Webb, Les Rosenkrance who was the state director at that time in Arizona, Dean Bibles, and Ed Hasty. We spent about a week devising a strategy of how to move within BLM now with an acting director, and we made our presentation to Tom Collier. That was the year that we had an ice storm every nine days in Washington for about two months, and government was shut down a lot. There were a lot of times that there were just a handful of us in the building, mostly because government employees just couldn't make it to work and weren't required to come to work.

We ultimately decided to go ahead with the summit. We put together a team modeled after the incident command system of Larry Hamilton, who is now the director of the National Interagency Fire Center. He was head of the team. Larry is a wonderful guy. I believe Larry's got a Ph.D. in communications and his wife, Kniffy Hamilton, now is forest supervisor on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. At any rate, Larry pulled together in about two months a summit that we held on Lake Tahoe that was almost a spiritual experience for employees about what's working and what

isn't, the philosophy of the organization. We had the secretary personally attending. I was there and people like Jim Kennedy, Patricia Limerick. We just had top notch people there to take a look at where we're going with land in the U.S. and what's the role of the seeming underdog organization of BLM. BLM had been through a lot now if you think back through Reagan and Burford. Cy Jamison was a popular director. The employees liked him. Most of the programs grew under Cy, and I would say Cy's real problem was the spotted owl issue. But beyond that, the wetlands programs, the riparian programs, the range programs, the fish and wildlife programs all grew.

There was significant progress made after Burford, which was one of the reasons that Cy wanted a biologist or a research person to help with those areas. BLM has a wonderful staff and some tremendous people like Wayne Elmore. Wayne has probably done more for riparian management in the West than any other single individual. So there were a lot of good things happening with BLM, and the constituencies were largely happy. It was just this one single issue; the big fight was really the spotted owl issue that brought the tension between the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and BLM.

Most of the employees were glad to see Baca go. Here's a guy that wanted to do the right thing but was probably just too aggressive. I remember his first employee meeting after he was confirmed. He made a statement something like, while I'm director most of the top management of BLM is going to move on and we'll have new people. Baca was probably saying was he was looking at the age demographics of the organization realizing that in the next four years many of them were going to be retiring and he was going to be appointing new people. I think the grapevine and the rank and file read it as though he is going to get rid of them. And it was really from that very first day that I think any potential effect that Baca could have on the agency was declining. It was really sad to see because here you have a guy that has good values. That's the climate at BLM when I was appointed acting director.

One of the things that became kind of a tradition really started the first week I was in the BLM director's chair. I spent the first week on the phone, probably six hours a day, calling everyone from BLM state directors to field managers to staff people to people in Washington, basically saying, if you were me, what would you do. So I'm in this intense information gathering mode. I wish I had the notes from those conversations. I have them packed away someplace. One of the employees said to me, we don't know what's going on in Washington. We don't know what the director does. So I started writing letters to employees. I didn't have any staff review other than proofreading for typos; basically a friendly letter no longer than one page telling them a little bit about what I had done that week, a little bit about what was going on. I always tried to end the letters thanking them for the work that they did, the public service, and saying that the most important thing we do is maintain the health of the land. I started doing these every Friday. I'd set aside about an hour to write this letter and I would have Donna, my executive assistant, send it out. Here's an interesting story about the bureaucracy.

The first thing we found the system couldn't quickly deal with was the director's signature; it had to be authentic and it has to be recorded and you had this bureaucracy. I said hey, look, I'm signing this. Send this out, because I want people to get it before they go home for the weekend. We had to test the bureaucracy but at any rate, they figured out how to do it. I thought it was very comical how we hamper ourselves in organizations, and there's a lot more structure and bureaucracy in the Forest Service than there is in BLM. I knew that the BLM employees were reading these letters because I started getting feedback. One secretary from Wyoming sent me an email, and she said here you're doing all this traveling and we hardly have money to pay salaries, what's going on? There was honest interchange, at times critical. I continued writing these letters to employees virtually my entire tenure as acting director of BLM.

When I'd miss a week or be on vacation people would say we didn't get your letter this week. What's going on? That helped me connect with the rank and file of BLM in a very positive way.

One of the biggest challenges in managing a large organization is internal communication. There are so many rumors and so many interpretations of what the director or what the chief said or what the deputy did or what the secretary did, and then everything gets spammed out via email that it's a real challenge to deal with. At any rate, I've kept all these letters. As a result of the BLM summit we began developing what was called a blueprint for the future, where are we going. The fact is we knew we had to streamline the organization. Cy as director had begun an initiative to take BLM from a four layer to a three layer organization. We were able to complete that. I worked at all four levels of the Forest Service and really feel the four layer organization is a thing of the past. It's a World War I model that needs to be revamped, and we had some major achievements in that era in BLM. The first-ever, clean audit as the result of the 1991 ... the name of the legislation escapes me.

HKS: I've seen it. I don't remember either. I think maybe it's the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

MFD: At any rate, there was a piece legislation passed that required federal agencies to have the same accounting standards and level of accountability that the private sector had, and we were able to achieve that in BLM. In 1995 we put in the first-ever chief financial officer. We got more people with accounting skills. BLM was a much simpler, much less complex organization than the Forest Service, which is perhaps both good and bad. But we were able to do things. One year I reduced Washington office travel budget by fifty percent, and we moved that money to the field. I tried that same move in the Forest Service as chief, and they wouldn't even think of it. I mean I didn't even get to first base in trying to reduce the travel of the headquarters staff to get money to the field.

Jack Thomas was focusing a lot on ecosystem management at the time, and we in BLM were following suit and moving forward with ecosystem management. I mentioned Kniffy Hamilton earlier. She was head of the team that ultimately put together this document "Ecosystem Management In The BLM: From Concept To Commitment." Jack Thomas and I maintained very close contact on a lot of these issues because we felt hey, this makes sense. We ought to be doing it. The other thing that Jack and I initiated was the trading post concept where we shared expertise to promote co-location of offices. This really stemmed from Senator Mark Hatfield in Oregon wanting us to co-locate the Forest Service and BLM office in Portland just because it made sense we ought to work together.

The proposed co-location of the Forest Service regional office and the BLM state office in Oregon, for example; if somebody was coming for a permit or somebody was coming out on vacation they could get information as they travel from BLM to Forest Service lands because the boundaries on the land are artificial. They're not things that the people or wildlife take a look at very much and Hatfield earmarked money his last term in Congress to bring the two offices together. Jack and I worked on a lot of things like that early on that were in the spirit then of the Gore reinventing government approach and increasing the efficiencies of what agencies did. So we spent a lot of time on this blueprint for the future, reorganizing the agency—a lot of internal things. One of the efforts and one of the things that I learned is that we all know the agencies have too much to do and Jack had talked about we got to stop. We can't do more with less.

I worked hard with the leadership team of BLM to try to stop doing some things, and we literally got nowhere. One of the unfortunate things, when you compare government with the private sector, is the private sector can spin off their losers. They can return to their core mission. In government agencies we just keep on adding and adding and adding. Congress wants reports,

more reports. If a report is no longer needed, there's not a letter that comes out that says you don't have to do this anymore because eventually some narrow constituency becomes reliant on some piece of information that they want. There is tremendous room for increasing efficiencies and the way agencies are managed. But the thing that I learned in my tenure at BLM is that other than a handful of people, most people don't really care about inefficiencies and process. One of the thoughts that went through my mind when Dale Bosworth started focusing on the process procurement and analysis paralysis, that the constituencies for that are inside the agency. The American public doesn't really care. They only care when you are not doing a good job, but they assume that you're doing this right. It's sort of like balancing your checkbook. It's only a problem when you're not doing it.

What people really care about is conservation. They really care about the land and the water. If I had any take away lesson, macro lesson, from my three years as director of BLM, it was that the leadership of a natural resource organization should be talking about those resources. Most of the process that's in place is of our own doing. So going through all those exercises in BLM was absolutely fascinating. In BLM, the old power structure, and every agency has got them, was really very helpful. They didn't agree with everything I wanted to do and I didn't do everything that they recommended. But the internal politics in BLM compared to the Forest Service is very benign. I'm getting a little bit into differences in culture, but it's probably because BLM has been whipsawed a lot more than the Forest Service. It tends to be a more flexible organization that goes with the flow. For example, when Bob Burford came in and the renewable programs were dismantled or at least reduced significantly, a lot of the biologists came to work for the Forest Service. Some stayed in and some went into line management positions. So you really had a greater diversity of disciplines in line managers in BLM, for example, than you had in the Forest Service, even with Forest Service's consent decree.

HKS: The reinvention of government. You haven't mentioned that specifically, but you're talking about what's going on during that same time period, trying to become more efficient and so forth. Was there a very specific reinvent the government program at BLM? I know there was in the Forest Service.

MPD: Yes, yes, all of the agencies. We had a reinvention team that was focusing on efficiencies. There was a reinvention leader in the department who I believe was Elaine Kamak, who presumably reported directly to the vice president on these issues. In fact, the vice president's staff took this so seriously, the only formal meetings that I ever had with Al Gore, except for one on fire, were over reinvention, where the vice president would have the heads of the thirty largest agencies that had the most customer contact with the public, which included the Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Forest Service. We would meet personally with the vice president to talk about successes, to have him tell us what some of his expectations were on that. We had these meetings in the Old Executive Office Building in the Treaty Room, one of the nicer rooms, three or four times a year. I really had little personal contact with Al Gore on resource issues in my entire tenure as either chief of the Forest Service or director of BLM. So reinvention was a big deal.

Another one of the lessons learned was when Congress changed in 1994. You know, here I am this new acting director of BLM, still sort of with my kneecaps quivering as I struggled with how to deal with a lot of the issues and the responsibility. I had to start going up and do Hill briefings and I had to explain to people like Conrad Burns, Pete Domenici, Larry Craig, Helen Chenoweth what ecosystem management was and why it was important. Every time I mentioned the word ecosystem or biodiversity, you could just see them cringe. I was having a conversation with Conrad Burns, who was an affable guy with a good sense of humor and liked to tease but could be tough, but friendly and cordial, as most members of Congress were. We talked about hunting

and fishing and clean water and healthier riparian areas, and increased weight gain in cattle because of better range conditions and all of this.

I came to find out that the language we use when we discuss these issues is oftentimes the barrier. I basically stopped using the word ecosystem management and I switched to start talking about watersheds and watershed health and watershed function and, as I said, I adopted the theme in BLM of the health of the land. Our task is to improve the health of the land. I found that just the language you used made the dialogue so much easier, because it didn't bring the tensions out front and the differences immediately out front. All people care about and depend upon the land whether you're wilderness society or you're the hunters, fishermen, bird watchers, or the ranching community. Up to this day I always have talked about watersheds so much more because we don't have to use the technical words. Some people used to say well, have we dropped the concept of ecosystem management. I would use it in letters to employees occasionally, but I tried to shift us away from the more technical fuzzy dialogue because if you ask ten Ph.D.s what ecosystem management is, you'll get ten different answers.

A watershed is a place and everybody lives in a watershed and they understand that. They can connect with it personally. They can see it and I think we made more progress in some of those fronts as we have softened our approach from the purely scientific technical to a language more people could understand.

HKS: Dale talks about the word ecosystem. It caused rockets to go off in the White House, just the word, and you didn't get beyond that. But it was used by President Bush at the Rio Summit. I certainly agree that the language we use is important. The choice, are we harvesting timber, well, you must be a forester. Are we raping the land, well, you're an environmentalist. It's the same process, but it's the word we used.

MPD: I've long been a believer that the language of forestry needs to be changed.

HKS: You bet.

MPD: We should drop the term board foot and talk about the land and determine where we want to be on the land and then how do we get there, rather than talking about the products and what we take. We should talk about acres treated. My first year at BLM was another period of just absolutely intense learning and activity with starting the congressional hearings. I'm appointed acting director of BLM and in just a few weeks I've got to go up to do the Senate appropriations hearings and the House appropriations hearings. Of course, this is now in the midst of Babbitt's "War on the West," with the Republicans now in charge and very hostile public interchange at hearings from western Republican members. And here I sat, a person that didn't like controversy, literally being yelled at with the TV cameras rolling. What I found was that the personal relationships you have with members of Congress versus the public persona is very, very different. Much of the congressional hearing process is theatrics and rolling the tape for campaign purposes or for messages to constituencies back home, and that for me took a lot of the tension off the process. In fact, I sort of developed three rules for myself in dealing with Congress, particularly congressional hearings. I don't know how many congressional hearings I've gone to but my guess is probably a hundred plus in the course of my career. The most important thing is to remember it's their show, not your show. Always be respectful. Don't start a spraying match with a skunk on their turf. The objective is to get it over and get out of there because the policy really isn't made at hearings. The policy is really made in the behind-closed-doors negotiations. I did a lot of Hill visits with the perceived opposition, and obviously you work for the administration. You can only go so far with an issue, but just developing personal relationships with members of Congress is really, really important, and I think all the chiefs have done that.

HKS: They're extraordinarily busy. Most of them serve on, what, four or five different committees and they have to deal with their constituency, they have to go home every weekend. Whatever one might think about a particular member of Congress, it's not an easy job.

MPD: No, it's an incredibly difficult job. I had a friend call me not too long ago. He's about sixty years old, just a wonderful guy, said he was thinking about switching from the Republican party where he'd been to the Democratic party and running for the House of Representatives, with probably a good chance of winning. I said the country needs you, really needs you, but why you would do that to yourself is absolutely beyond me, because especially if you're a junior member in the minority party in the House of Representatives, it's got to be a really lonely and frustrating job. Because of the collegiality and the different rules, the Senate is very different. I got to know several of the members of Congress and a few senators personally very well, to the point where we'd sit down over lunch and sort of share frustrations and all of that.

One of the things that Jack and I and Roger Kennedy, who was director of the Park Service, did is send letters to the field encouraging involvement in professional organizations and scientific societies. I think you see somewhat of a difference in, as I mentioned, in the Bush Sr. administration at least and the Clinton administration and the way Babbitt and Dan Glickman approached it. They wanted our employees to be involved and active in their professional societies, the cutting edge of issues. I was a life member of my professional society, the American Fisheries Society, and I convened a session at one of the annual meetings on watershed restoration. That ultimately culminated in this book that I coedited with Jack Williams and Chris Wood called *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*. So what Jack Thomas and I did, and the various partners that you see listed here that provided funding, is ultimately get this book published. It's a collection of twenty-eight chapters, thirteen case studies and thirteen policy papers and recommendations. One I coauthored with Jack Thomas, another couple of papers with some others. We were very proud of the fact at that time that we were really moving the agencies to scientifically based management, empowering the science people, the technical people. Even though I was no longer a practicing researcher or scientist, I was thrust into the administrative aspect of what we do, and we were very much behind the science underpinning all of the policies I'm proud of.

One of the reasons that we have the set of coauthors that we have, as I describe in the preface of *From Conquest to Conservation: Our Public Lands Legacy*, was when we finished the watershed restoration book we decided we were going to do another one. In fact, a couple of the publishers that I talked to were critical of me, said why would you have coauthors. It's much harder to market a book with coauthors. I said well, we had an agreement and I was bound to stick to it. Our intent though is we thought we'd have another book done a lot sooner than we did but also at that time when we made the agreement, I didn't know that the opportunity to be chief of the Forest Service was in my future, so other things started taking up all of my time.

New World Mine

MPD: Let's talk just a little bit about the New World Mine. From my perspective sitting as acting director at BLM, this is the way I saw it. The White House wanted something as an environmental gesture that was meaningful, and ultimately how meaningful it was, history will tell us. Someone, I don't know who, must have suggested the New World Mine. The Forest Service was concerned about even proposing the New World Mine. The Department of the Interior opinion prevailed at the White House and the decision was made that we're going to go ahead and buy this thing out. It seemed as though from where I sat that the Forest Service could never accept the fact that it lost. It continued to fight that issue even though the orders were

there from the president, and this is what we're going to do. Then one of the staffers at CEQ got involved with the concern of how are we going to pay for this thing. We're talking about a multi-million-dollar effort to buy this out. All sorts of things were thrown on the table, including BLM land, including national forest land, which was like a siege on the Forest Service and the Forest Service culture. The staffer that was working on this wasn't very well informed. We were looking a lot at federal coal in Montana in the exchange process, the value of the coal that was under BLM lands and other things like that.

The only reason I bring up the New World Mine again is I think it's a lesson in poor management in the fact that the Forest Service wasn't close enough to the White House to be at the table when the actual debate occurred. It probably wasn't aware of all of the factors that were involved in the debate, and then reacted in this negative way and never really did give up the fight, even to the very end. At the time that I became chief of the Forest Service the people in the region were still doing studies as to why this was bad and why this wouldn't work. There were extremely strained relations between the forest supervisor, the superintendent of Yellowstone, the regional forester, and the various players involved in this issue. I think it's another lesson in the importance of relationships. Then the Forest Service really did not accept that it had lost that policy decision but yet wouldn't stop fighting the administration. The New World Mine was one of the things that really strained the relationship between the administration and the Forest Service, that and I think also the salvage rider, to the point that the agency just wasn't trusted, was viewed as this unruly troublemaker that had to have its own way.

HKS: The version I heard began when the Canadian corporation that bought the mine was making plans to reopen it that Mike Finley, the superintendent for Yellowstone, apparently on his own, began publicly attacking the Forest Service for allowing this to happen. What I couldn't understand is that Jack Thomas said he had a good relationship with Kennedy as director of the Park Service and a very cordial relationship with Bruce Babbitt, how this loose cannon in Yellowstone was allowed to make all these challenges. Well, hearing your story I can see how the superintendent thought it was a done deal. I mean he was in a pipeline to the White House through whatever steps there were. This is all an assumption on my part after hearing your story that Finley was standing on a much different turf than it appeared. He wasn't a loose cannon. He may have been too outspoken to say this about the Forest Service, but he wasn't making decisions that weren't supported higher up.

MPD: I think it's a little bit like the spotted owl issue, like the relationship between Jamison, Turner, Robertson, and Jack Thomas, and it got personal. Once something gets personal then you've got ever bigger problems because then nobody really wants to solve the issue. Then it turns into a win-lose issue.

Going back to the congressional hearings that I mentioned earlier, I failed to mention one of my rules and that's never to take any of this personally, because if you do it will drive you nuts and you need to find a new job because it will ultimately bring immense frustration into your life and take all the joy away from any positive things that you can accomplish in these debates. I think a lot of the New World Mine debacle was really unnecessary and it turned into a turf battle. Forest Service culture takes a lot of pride in saying we're apolitical. The Forest Service has a career chief and as a result we're apolitical and maybe the feeling might even be that we are more pure because of that. But there's downsides to that, and the spotted owl issue is one debacle that the Forest Service was in a very different position and as was New World Mine because it really wasn't plugged into what was going on and some of the top level decisions that were made. And the fact is, it might have even been that the secretary of Agriculture didn't even know all the details. You never really know who's at the table when decisions are made and you don't always know how information gets passed down once the decisions are made. That's why it's important to maintain these connections as best you can.

HKS: I looked at the web page for the Gallatin National Forest a couple of years ago and New World Mine is presented there as a great thing. I thought boy, this is a switch from what they were saying when the controversy was going on.

MPD: My personal opinion on New World Mine is, given the level of development in the United States that we have now, anything that preserves wild landscapes generally is a good thing because once you loose it, you can't get it back. I've taken a lot of heat for that personal philosophy and that in a sense goes back to some of the stories I told you about seeing areas opened up with road building and areas that were pristine and wild and some of the few places you could go where you couldn't hear the growl of a jeep if you wanted to get away to hunt or hike. That doesn't mean that jobs aren't important, but we really do need to take care of our wild places because they ain't making them anymore, as Will Rogers said.

Grazing

MPD: We could talk a lot about grazing. Senator Domenici so cleverly labeled Bruce Babbitt's grazing policy as "War on the West." It's interesting that you have a secretary of the Interior whose family was in a ranching business and owned a large ranch in the West who would be positioned this way, but he was. I think that a couple of things happened that were unfortunate in the grazing issue at the beginning of the Clinton administration. One is that when Babbitt came forward with that issue, a couple of senators got real nervous. One was Senator Max Bacus from Montana. They privately got to the president early on, which was probably like March or April, in the very first months of the Clinton administration. The president blinked on grazing and that really, really took the steam out of the boiler for Secretary Babbitt to be successful in the grazing issue. And really once the president blinked then it became a series of compromises and long protracted meetings. Governor Roamer got involved in the development of the advisory committee concept. There was tremendous debate over grazing fees. We had tenacious hearings on grazing issues where I would be sitting next to Jack Thomas and sometimes other agency heads, in front of the House Resources Committee just being drilled over this grazing debate.

Right after the '94 election and the switch in the power structure of the Congress, Bruce Babbitt and I were alone in his office making a series of calls. He and I were on his speakerphone calling members of the environmental community basically saying how much energy will your organization put forward to help us with this issue. Most of them said it wasn't their highest priority. Both he and I were disappointed knowing that he was going to have to backtrack even more. Some of the environmental community oftentimes became critical of Bruce Babbitt. I found this interesting and another lesson, that here was their champion in the administration, going up to Congress crawling out, all beat up and was even being kicked by the environmental community for not being successful in an issue like this or maybe not having the right approach. I believe that he and others read this issue as the fact that enviros were just plain unreasonable. So when we think about how to work with the environmental community versus industry, they're both challenges. Ultimately you really can't depend on either one because they've got a whole set of players and politics and internal issues that they have to deal with as well.

I found grazing fascinating and I want to tell a story. I've told this story to Jack and others, that I went to South Dakota when I was doing a lot of traveling and a lot of hearings with the secretary. I went to South Dakota with Curt Johnson, the land commissioner. We're talking about grazing fees, and he was telling me in South Dakota state lands get anywhere from seven-fifty to eighteen dollars an animal unit month and the lessee had to pay the equivalent of the taxes as well, so there wasn't an in lieu of taxes problem there. Then I went to the old Fort Meade just

east of Rapid City. It was the headquarters of the U.S. Calvary for a time, then it reverted back to the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM has the authority to auction off the grazing fees there. We auctioned it off. That year we got something like a little over eighteen dollars an animal unit month. Grazing fees in general were a dollar thirty-four and we proposed an increase in the grazing reform issue. There was this hue and cry that this was unreasonable, that we couldn't afford it, that you would put ranchers out of business.

I came back home after that trip and I said to Jack Thomas and Bruce Babbitt, why is this grazing issues on public lands when you and I travel, all we do is get beat up on the issue. What they really ought to be doing is throwing a big party every time we show up, because they're getting such a good deal. We had many, many hearings, some hilarious, humorous hearings as well over the grazing issue.

After much dialogue the grazing advisory board concept was deemed a good thing because ultimately you had community-based governance, if you will, where you had grazing advisory boards, this is on BLM lands made up of about fifteen people. So you had representatives of industry there. I'm talking about the ranching community and other interests. You had representatives of the general public or government, which might be tribal representatives, county commissioners, representatives of the governor, and the environmental community and conservation constituencies that would ultimately develop guidelines. And they worked very well except in the state of Wyoming. You had one resource advisory council in the entire state of Wyoming and it ultimately was very politicized. Even in places like Idaho that were strongly anti-fee, this process worked and I think it brought the government closer to people and people closer to the government in helping people get involved in the decision-making process.

HKS: Jack wrote in his journal several times that he was certainly in favor of the principle of Babbitt's proposal to make range management more responsible to protecting the land and all the other resources that are associated with grazing. But he kept saying that Babbitt was encroaching upon the Forest Service, that Forest Service is in Agriculture and the secretary is talking about grazing in general. Glickman was nowhere to be seen and Jack was very frustrated about that. Given that bit of summary on my part, was that a fair assessment that Babbitt was a little predatory?

MPO: I didn't see it that way. The one thing, Jack wasn't getting much staff help on grazing. The Forest Service staff, I think, tried to distance themselves from that. They knew it would be a fight and they were watching the spotted owl and all of this other stuff, and the last thing they needed was another battle. I remember going over to Jack's condo early one Sunday morning, and he and I went through the Domenici grazing bill line by line doing an analysis of it. I took the notes home and typed them up and gave them back to Jack. It struck me as odd that in this huge organization that the staff wouldn't have done this kind of analysis for Jack. In fact, Jack made a nice breakfast that morning and we probably spent six hours together or maybe more than that. After that event Jack did get more involved and vocal on the grazing issue.

But again, this turf between the Forest Service and the Interior and Agriculture is always there. It was there even more during the fire season, which is a whole other issue area that we need talk about. So grazing was a challenge. One thing I've got to tell you is that the western ranchers are some of the nicest people I ever met. You can be on totally different pages on policy or philosophy but yet they welcome you to their home and treat you just like one of the family. They're a culture that's worried about just being pushed out of the scene like the buffalo, and in a sense it's a little bit of herd mentality, no pun intended. They're trying to hang onto a way of life that's just sort of slipping away. In reality we should have never had grazing on ephemeral rangelands to begin with. In time people's livelihoods and their financial positions, ability to get

loans linked to a federal permit and ephemeral rangelands, it's one of the unfortunate things that evolved in the U.S. over the course of the last hundred years or so.

Columbia Basin Issue

MPD: As the Northwest Forest Plan was unfolding the question was, what about the rest of the Columbia Basin. And some big thinkers thought we ought to get something rational for the entire basin. Little did we know that would lead to more irrationality. Let's do an assessment of the entire Columbia Basin and basically come up with a plan. If we can do this twenty-four million acres in the spotted owl area involving multi agency lands in eleven months, let's just go ahead and do the whole Interior Columbia Basin. Dean Bibles was a strong proponent of that. Jack Thomas supported the concept. I supported the concept. Jack and I traveled to Walla Walla to meet with the interagency group. We had put together this interagency scientific assessment team to begin gathering information. As I look at an analysis of that decision, I think we were somewhat exuberant thinking that gosh, we got this Northwest Forest Plan, so we can do the whole basin. But we really didn't go through a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of that approach, and ultimately it was a bad decision since a basin-wide plan was never completed.

It was too big a bite over too diverse an area in a part of the country that was as strongly anti-federal government as you could get. That was compounded with the switch in Congress where we then went from the Democrats to the Republicans in 1994. Again we have this political opposition in Congress and we ended up spending millions of dollars on the Columbia Basin assessment. I don't view that as a complete failure at all. I view that as a success, because even though we did not get a plan out of the Columbia Basin effort, we got the best information on any large basin or large tract of land in the world, and that's of tremendous value. Let me go back and say that's one of the least appreciated values of the whole Columbia Basin initiative. Other decisions that were made since then, much of it was based on information that was gathered, historical information, condition of the landscape. Everything from fire to grazing to roading to exotic species was based on that scientific information base that we got out of the Columbia Basin assessment that was very valuable. Yet, politically it was like a firecracker waiting to go off. The perceptions in the communities are the feds are going to come down again and they're going to tell us what to do. The timber industry was scared. The grazing industry was scared. The mining industry was scared. Some thought the enviros were going to be taking over.

As chief of the Forest Service in 1998 having a private conversation one day with Bruce Babbitt, we agreed we ought to let this thing die. There was Senator Gorton, chairman of the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Craig, George Nethercutt, a member of the House from Spokane, all opposed, strongly opposed to this effort. We could have not funded it, because they didn't want it funded. We probably should have let Gorton and Craig kill it.

We have a lot of dialogue now and a lot of analysis but it was an effort that also caused a lot of interagency strife and disagreement between the National Marine Fisheries Service over salmon, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the BLM, the Forest Service. Regional leadership was involved in the Columbia Basin effort and we did the EIS's [environmental impact statements] and then the supplemental EIS's and this mass of environmental analysis that went into it but it never really bore fruit. Then the challenge from the planners point of view was what kind of plans are we going to come up with. Are we going to do joint BLM and Forest Service plans. We had the authority to do it, by the way, and probably should have. Are we going to basin plans. Are we going to go back to the forest boundaries and the BLM districts and areas. We had some great opportunities that could have come out of the Columbia Basin but they were largely missed because of the intense politics and perceptions around that issue. It goes right back to the family

simple concept that it was just too big a bite in probably one of the most controversial areas of the country.

Increasing Influence of Biologists

HKS: Talk about the increasing influence of biologists over land management.

MPD: The increasing influence of biologists over land management is a result of our increased awareness of the importance of ecosystem management and the need to look at things over the larger temporal and spatial modes, the awareness of cumulative effects. It's a little bit like the perceptions of clearcutting when Americans took to the air and started flying over Seattle and Portland and seeing the large clearcuts. My view is that the biologist is probably either the messenger or the change agent involved here.

Earlier we talked a little bit about the people in Wisconsin and other states when the state conservation agencies were all run by game wardens. Suddenly in the '30s and '40s you've got biologists and biological sciences and now you have fish managers and hydrologists and parks and waterways. Then you have this change in influence over traditional forestry, which moved from pre-World War II forest conservation, to the can-do attitude of getting the cut out, to the point that a lot of people in the leadership of the Forest Service today tell me as young foresters they were really scratching their head with some of the size of the clearcuts they were laying out but yet it took something like the Bolle report or the Monongahela case to really bring this to the forefront.

This begs the question, how does change in a bureaucracy like the Forest Service really occur? And if you compare it to who changed the U.S. automobile industry. The reason you see all the Japanese and foreign-made cars on the streets in the U.S. today is because of the unresponsiveness of the U.S. automobile industry. The customers decided they had had enough with planned obsolescence or the junk that was being produced by the large automotive industry, and that left an opening for Japan to come in. Sometimes resource management is a little bit like that, too. We talked about this earlier, as well, a little bit about why was it that particularly in the 1970s the third branch of government began to get involved in big resource management decisions. Part of it was we weren't reading the tea leaves quite right and hindsight's always twenty-twenty, but part of it's also the fact that we may not have even been aware that we should have been reading the tea leaves.

Forest Fires

MPD: Right from day one as I moved into the director's chair of the Bureau of Land Management fire was really a tremendously traumatic issue to deal with. Right out of the box in 1994 were the fatalities at Storm King Mountain. I can very distinctly recall being on the phone with Jack Thomas several times that night. We knew people had died. We didn't know exactly who they worked for and we didn't know exactly how many had died, but the one smart thing we did is we decided to fly out immediately, first flight we could get to go out there and see what was going on and talk to employees. The interesting thing from an agency head's point of view, neither of us had any counsel as to what to do in a crisis situation like that. There wasn't a policy manual. There wasn't any sort of guidance like the military might have as to what happens when you have a bunch of fatalities.

Figure 8: U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck visiting fire crews in Montana (August 1999).

Jack and I hopped on a plane and flew out. Since Bruce Babbitt was out there already and Governor Roemer was there already, our objective was not to do anything with the press but just to visit with employees. One of the first places we went in the morning was to the hospital to see Eric Heykey, who was one of the survivors that was badly burned. Then we went to the Holiday Inn at Grand Junction where the survivors were all gathered. Jack and I walked in, he in a Forest Service uniform and me in a BLM uniform. On the way in I said to Jack, there'll be a handful of these firefighters that know who you are, nobody's going to know who I am, nor will they care. Well, I was wrong. It was this tremendously emotional roller coaster in talking to forty or fifty employees, some that had had a couple of beers too many already, some that were crying, some that were laughing, some that were embracing, some that were talking about what happened, and some that couldn't face it.

Jack and I decided we needed to buy a round of whatever they were drinking and just started milling around and talking to people. Three big smoke jumpers came and started talking to me. All three of them were a head higher than I was and one said to me, you're the director of BLM. I said yes. He said I'd like to talk to you about grazing fees, right in the midst of this. I said where are you from. He said I'm from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and my family are also miners. I thought, wow, this is going to be a rough night. He said the most amazing thing to me. He said Mike, I don't think it's fair that miners don't have to pay a royalty while ranchers have to pay grazing fees. So we talked about that. In fact, I teased him a little bit and said we need to send you home so you can get the cows out of the creek.

Between Jack and I, we talked to every individual there. The psychological counselors were there and the firefighters said get these guys out of our face. We don't need shrinks around. The next morning we went back to Glenwood Springs and did some more visiting with employees and made another stop at the hospital. This time there were some family members there, and it was one of the most gut-wrenching experiences. There was a father of one of the firefighters that died, a BLM employee, and they hadn't found the body yet. Jack and I both knew that it was very unlikely that anybody could be alive up there. To see this father, elderly father, and a couple of other members of the family just grasping for any straw of hope. After that dialogue, Jack and I went in another room and we both cried. It was absolutely incredible to see people in such pain, grasping for any hope. We knew that we just couldn't offer them any hope at all. We went to visit Eric Heykey again. There was a reporter there that had been sent out basically to look for sensational stories, some sort of muckraking press. He was putting a fair amount of pressure on Eric to try to say whose fault is all this and what's wrong. It appeared to be beyond ethical journalism.

Then I flew back to Grand Junction and was getting ready to catch another plane back to Denver to come home to D.C. I see the big smoke jumper in one of the hangers ready to go home to Idaho—one of the survivors and the same guy that talked to me about the grazing fees and the mining royalties. Mike, he said, I just want to tell you how much we appreciate your coming out here, and he took his smoke jumper shirt off and handed it to me. That was one of the most touching things I ever had happen to me. Recall earlier, walking in with Jack saying none of these people know us and they may not even care what we do. Well, the fact is they did care and they were just so grateful that we were out there. As soon as I got back to Washington I called up and I said find out who that guy was, find out where he lives and what his name is and his phone number. It turned out to be Mike Morgan that worked at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise. So the next time I went to Boise I took Mike and his wife out to dinner. We often think of the smoke jumpers and the hot shots in a sense a culture in their own. Mike Morgan had a master's degree in English literature and was from northern Idaho and was very well versed on the many issues.

HKS: Jack's journal articles are full of passion but the several on the Storm King Mountain Fire are so emotional. I still get choked up. While you were giving your rendition, I was remembering what Jack wrote and my throat got tight. As you did this moment, he captured the emotion of the moment.

NPD: Early that morning before we left for Glenwood Springs Max Peterson called just to talk and offer some counsel, which I very much appreciated, even though he had never quite been through something like that himself.

Nineteen ninety-six was another really challenging year and then the year 2000, the last year that I was chief, we essentially burned more acres than we did even this past year, 2002, which was a really tough fire year with the Biscuit Fire. But you see this dichotomy and how much the people appreciate what the agencies do. There are signs up, God bless our firefighters. I was in the Hamilton Valley. I'm trying to think of the name of the town, Darby, maybe. I spoke at a dedication to firefighters in the year 2000 and got a standing ovation. I came back to the office and somebody said to me that's probably the first time ever that a government employee has got a standing ovation in a small western town like that. So there's another dichotomy with fire that for six months a year we almost throw money at it and the other six months we plan on how to prescribe fire. Yet we spend most of our time in the emergency room mentality dealing with fire suppression and it will continue to be a big challenge for the agencies. The bottom line on Storm King, though, was that reporters and everybody else was looking to place blame, discover whose fault it was.

One of the real challenges was the agencies ought to cooperate with each other a lot more than they do and ought to work together a lot more than they do. You mentioned the concern about Bruce Babbitt being involved in grazing that also impacted Forest Service lands. As the reports indicated after Storm King Mountain, there really needed to be better interagency coordination. We spend too much time on turf. We need to spend a lot more time breaking down barriers between the agencies and working as one. If any lesson was learned in the spotted owl issue, and many, many other issues, it was by the time we got done with the interagency coordination, it takes so much time and energy that there's almost no time and energy left to do the real job. And any advice that I have to any cabinet member or governor or president that manages numerous agencies, is you've got to demand coordination. The public does not care if we're BLM, if we're Forest Service, if we're Park Service, if we're Fish and Wildlife Service. And yet if it's the Columbia Basin, if it's the spotted owl or many of these issues, we spend so much time on turf that leads to tremendous inefficiencies and oftentimes hard feelings and personal debates, as with New World Mine, that I wish there were a way we could get beyond that because it leads to such tremendous inefficiency.

Fire, in fact, is the area where we probably have the best cooperation because the whole concept of the incident command team, coordinated resource management planning, much of this came out of southern California in the 1950s that really is a model of government coordination. And yet, when it comes to sharing your resources and other things like that, the coordination is a problem. It was also a factor, maybe not a major factor, but a factor in the Cerro Grande Fire, the escaped prescribed fire that ended up burning two hundred and forty-three homes in Los Alamos with the questions about deploying resources or sharing resources with another agency. There is a lot of room for improvement.

HKS: I was on a fire about 1960 over in the Grande Ronde Basin. My sector went across the border between Oregon and Washington, a barbwire fence. We could backfire on the Washington side of the sector, but we couldn't backfire on the Oregon side. That to me was rather ridiculous. That sort of coordination of how to fight a fire was long overdue.

MPD: Ted Stevens is often seen as a strong opponent of, or critic of, the public land management agencies and, in fact, he is. But I've been on both sides of Senator Stevens and issues a number of times. One day I got a phone call to be at hangar number whatever at National Airport to fly to Alaska with Senator Stevens. The Big Lake Fire was burning at that time, and I was acting director of BLM. It was the first time I'd ever been on one of these small military aircraft, the same color as Air Force One but it's a small, about twenty-passenger jet. I was on there. James Lee Witt went, who was the head of FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency; he was there and some other government people and Senate staffers. We left Washington about seven in the morning. About nine-thirty we landed in Juneau to pick up the governor of Alaska, and by eleven we were at Elmendorf Air Force Base. Then we were helicoptered by the military over to the site of the fire. We were all making the rounds and I was really impressed with the efficiency of the FEMA organization. James Lee Witt and his team deserve great credit for really increasing the efficiency and changing the image of what once was viewed as a stodgy organization that couldn't react to any emergency into really a customer service oriented organization to help people.

Here's Senator Stevens, at that time probably seventy-three years old. We get this early start and do meetings and visit people all day. We had a dinner with members of the community. Senator Stevens said to us, do any of you like to fish. Of course, it didn't take me long to say yes to that. James Lee Witt liked to fish. Stevens said, I'll tell you what, let's go fishing in the morning. That sounded like a good idea, but what we found out is morning at that time of the year in Alaska comes about one thirty A.M. So we go back to our hotel, we sleep for about an hour and a half and we fish with Senator Stevens. Nobody caught anything but we had a good time, fished from about two in the morning until about six. Came back, showered, had breakfast, and spent all day on the fire and flew home that night. I was absolutely amazed at what a wonderful host Senator Stevens was to all of us. Here we have this seventy-three-year-old man that literally worked around the clock and didn't even bat an eye. He might have taken a nap on the way back. That's sort of the personal side of people who are oftentimes your opponents and critics that you get to see. When I got back home a couple of days later I got a nice piece of smoked salmon with a note from Senator Stevens--thanks for coming to Alaska and helping me out.

HKS: That's very nice.

MPD: The gratitude expressed by what's oftentimes one of your harshest critics.

HKS: Who arranged for that flight? I mean that was a federal plane. Does a senator have that kind of clout to say I want to fly?

MPD: I don't know how that works, but I can tell you that Ted Stevens is a very senior member or chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. I never had such royal treatment traveling anywhere in the Forest Service or BLM as I did with the way the military people treated us when we were with Senator Stevens. We did not touch a suitcase. They did it all. We put on flight suits, got in the helicopter, went out on the fire, and everything was delivered to our hotel. They didn't miss a beat.

Through the course of my tenure in the agency head chair I had a similar situation with Senator Domenici with the Cerro Grande Fire where we flew the fire. I also flew on Air Force Two with the vice president in 1998 to fires in Florida when they were as bad as they were. In Florida we had a public meeting in a cul-de-sac where there were about forty homes and about half of them were burned, were just nothing but ashes. I was amazed that the vice president would even have a meeting like that because obviously these homeowners were just mad. I mean, how would you feel if your house burned down? To see the vice president of the United States in this very casual form in one of the homes at a public meeting. I was at this time chief of the Forest

Service with a Forest Service uniform on. If it was a technical question about fire behavior or something like that the vice president would say well, we've got Chief Dombeck here who will answer that question. It was very striking to see that level of government involved in those kinds of issues.

The Cerro Grande Fire was another one that was a real challenge because it was a Park Service prescribed fire that escaped, ultimately burning down two hundred and forty-three homes. And I don't think I've ever been any place where there's been more press than in Los Alamos.

HKS: Part of that I think was due to the nuclear secrets.

MPD: Right, this was the big concern. Research at Los Alamos had been going on for a long time, and we had no idea what was down there and what the impact would be. I was the senior official out there from U.S.D.A. as Forest Service chief and Bruce Babbitt was out there. Of course, Babbitt really focused on the fire issue. He knew the fire issue very well, and we decided we had to do something so at that time we made the decision to call a halt to all prescribed fires west of the hundredth meridian, as a way to sort of calm things down. Interestingly enough, that was in the year 2000, which was a tremendous fire season. We had a couple of other escaped prescribed fires but yet the awareness and the education that went on in the year 2000 I found just phenomenal. We had the Willie Fire, Red Lodge, Montana. The Willie fire was started by a motorcycle accident, a guy that was going home after a Willie Nelson concert and ran off the road with his bike and started a fire. Tom Brokaw broadcast about half of his evening newscasts from the Willie Fire, and it was almost as though his broadcast had been written by a fire ecologist. Oftentimes we were frustrated with the press but yet in this case the press was doing a good job. In fact, they interviewed a couple who said they knew because the Forest Service had told them that where their house was that it was at high fire risk. They decided to buy it anyway and that if it burned, that would be one of the consequences. Telling the American public that story I thought was so important because what's new on the land is our houses. The forest evolved with fire for eons. It's our structures that aren't able to withstand the fire.

The Tuesday Afternoon Club

HKS: Talk about the Tuesday Afternoon Club.

MPD: I had never heard that phrase before, and I wondered where you got that.

HKS: That's what the Forest Service called it. If I recall from Jack's journals, his staff named it because every Tuesday afternoon he would go over to McGinty's office or wherever they took place. It's a derogatory thing. It wasn't a nice thing. But Jack said you weren't there that much, and he was surprised that the BLM was getting off. You had the same scope of responsibilities of protect the environment and so forth. But the Forest Service always had to be there.

MPD: I recall all these meetings. I don't recall Bruce Babbitt being at any of them or very rarely but I wasn't at many of them either, probably only two or three. Part of this was really focused on the ISC, the spotted owl committee and the aftermath of the salvage sale debacle and the 318 sales. The few times that I was there, Jack was there. But what I found as an agency head, I wasn't contributing anything. I wasn't seeing any results come out of the meetings. There was a lot of debate and a lot of dialogue, and what I started doing was sending my chief of staff, Nancy Hayes, to the meetings. She would go to the meetings and deal with it, and there was never a point that anybody said hey, Dombeck, you should be here. And that led me to wonder, what is the role of an agency head. Should somebody else from the Forest Service have been

going instead of the chief? Because when you get your final decision maker at a meeting, you leave yourself no decision space. Particularly in the Forest Service, when there are tough issues, too many get shoved onto the chief's plate to the point that it literally smothers him. There's nothing magic about the person or the personality or any magical powers or knowledge that an agency head has that staff do not have. But I felt in that case that there is no reason in the world that one of the deputy chiefs couldn't have handled those meetings. So I sat there as acting director of BLM and basically said somebody else can do this. There's too many other things going on and that, I think, was a basic difference.

HKS: I don't know. He certainly would agree with you that nothing much happened. Half the time was spent bringing people up to speed because they missed the last meeting. I mean it was just a loose sort of a bull session, but there were important people and important issues on the table, but there were no decisions made that weren't questioned the next time there was a meeting. There was a lot of frustration about the Tuesday Afternoon Club.

MPD: As I said, when I saw it in your outline that was really the first time I'd seen it called that, and I don't ever recall Bruce Babbitt being at any of those meetings. In fact, I would say Bruce Babbitt and Katie McGinty probably weren't all that close. Babbitt was a former governor and he was used to running his own show and did. This might be a good time to make another observation. I've mentioned Babbitt a lot, but he had an interesting management style. Interior is a huge department just like Agriculture with agencies of everything from the BLM to the Park Service to the BIA with these tough issues to deal with and you wonder how a cabinet member can be on top of that sort of thing. He would immerse himself in two or three issues for two or three weeks, read voraciously, and by the time he was done with an issue, he knew more about an issue than his staff did.

He liked to go on fires. He had a red card and was out on the fire lines sometimes to the dismay of the folks in the Forest Service. But you know, it impressed the firefighters that here was this guy, fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven years old and he would go through the trouble of getting a red card and pass the step test to meet the physical requirements to be out on the fire line. And he read the most mundane safety manuals and district fire plans and just immersed himself in issues. Now if you think about this, over the course of the years he's got maybe twenty or thirty big red-hot issues. In a year he probably knows most of them in detail, as opposed to another management style where you sort of react to the issue of the day. Babbitt usually left that to his staff. I was always impressed to see his command of the issues, but he worked at it and he really would immerse himself and not get distracted by the urgency of the day but focused on the issues that he thought were important.

HKS: The way that Dale Robertson describes being chief isn't anything like anyone expects. A chief is supposed to take the long view but you're caught up in all of these things, day to day. But it looks like Babbitt figured out a way to be able to do that. Maybe a cabinet member has more clout and can say I'm not going to be distracted.

Chief of the Forest Service

MPD: This sort of transitions us into my moving closer to the time that I was asked to be chief of the Forest Service. I got to know Jim Lyons while I was head of BLM, but only on a professional basis and then in a very limited way. Jim and I were on the podium a lot together at the National Cattleman's Association meetings and Mining Association meetings where Jim would be representing U.S.D.A. and the Forest Service and I would be representing BLM. Jim was usually critical of the BLM and positive about the Forest Service and it's sort of the tradition at the Forest

Figure 9: U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman (left), U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck (middle), and Undersecretary of Agriculture Jim Lyons at the announcement of Dombeck as chief (6 January 1997).

Service to view BLM as the weak sister, if you will. And, in fact, BLM is a very underfunded agency compared to the Forest Service. Compared to the BLM the Forest Service is a rich agency, it just doesn't know it because it doesn't appreciate what it has because it hasn't known poverty to the extent that BLM has.

It was springtime of '96 when Jim Lyons' office called my secretary and Jim asked to meet with me and wanted to take me out to lunch. We met at the Smithsonian just across the mall from Jim's office. At that time he asked me if I'd consider leaving BLM and coming back to the Forest Service. I asked him what job that he had in mind. He said he didn't know for certain but that Dave Unger was probably getting close to retirement and if I were offered the associate chief's job would I take it. My answer was no. Why would I leave an agency head job to move into that level of uncertainty, even though by this time I knew that the Senate wasn't going to confirm me as BLM director. My guidepost was, did I feel I was being effective or was any part of it fun or was it all drudgery. When I looked at the challenges across the street at the Forest Service, I was better off where I was.

The next thing that happened in the transition from acting BLM director to chief of the Forest Service is Jack Thomas and I spent a fair amount of time together, both personally and professionally. I'd known Jack for years and, of course, really had a lot of empathy for him. After all, he had health problems. His wife had died. I mean what a way to come into a pressure cooker like the chief's job is. So Jack and I talked a lot about a lot of stuff and he said, I look around the Forest Service and I'm not sure this administration would find any of the top team of the Forest Service acceptable for the chief's job. I'm going to give the secretary a list. Can I put your name on that list? That sort of caught me off guard. I said let me think about it a while.

I was at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation meeting where traditionally a lot of Forest Service people go. Butch Marita was one of the directors of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation who was a regional forester that I had worked for, and interestingly enough, we grew up about thirty miles apart in northwestern Wisconsin. We were not close friends but we knew of each other, and I think Butch had a fairly high regard for me. He pulled me aside, he said Mike, I hope you will consider being chief of the Forest Service. He said the Forest Service has got to do something different. He said I don't know who there is in the agency that would be acceptable. A few others called me and talked about the same thing, and I would occasionally have lunch with Max Peterson. I'm having lunch with Max and Max is sharing how concerned he was about the future of the Forest Service with the strained relations with Congress and the strained relations with the administration and the low morale within the agency and that it may not last much longer the way things are. But these agencies have a lot more staying power and a lot more resilience than any of us realize when we're in the heat of the battle of the day.

In June the secretary of Agriculture's office called and said would I come over there for a meeting. It might have been July; I'd have to check my calendar. They wanted to talk to me about the chief's job. I'm not one to burn bridges or close doors, so I went over. There was a meeting with Secretary Glickman, Rich Rominger, the deputy secretary, and Undersecretary Jim Lyons. Brian Burke was the deputy assistant secretary. Gregg Frazier was the chief of staff at the time. They talked about the frustrations that Jack was having and he was considering leaving, would I consider coming over as chief. I said I'd get back to them soon. I went back and talked to Bruce Babbitt and a couple of other people. I think I probably talked to Max and called them back and said no, that Jack needed to stay and that I would help them encourage Jack to stay.

I'm not sure that they were convinced that Jack ought to stay but I thought Jack ought to stay. The real thought that was going through my mind was that I'd probably be the shortest tenured chief in the history of the Forest Service coming in in that kind of circumstance. I went over to the chief's office about six-thirty the next morning and met with Dave Unger, and Jack bought

breakfast from the cafeteria downstairs and I basically said to Jack that you've got thirty plus years and a tremendously successful career, you ought to stay. We talked about that and ultimately I think Jack's frustration waned a little bit for a time and then he did stay 'til then end of the first Clinton term. Then starting in October or so they came back to me again and said now will you consider the chief's job when Jack leaves?

I had several meetings with Gregg Frazier, none with the secretary personally yet and I think Gregg was sizing me up and he would walk over to my office, the BLM director's office. We would have these two-hour lunches talking about everything from my philosophy to my perceptions of what the challenges of the Forest Service were, comparing Interior and BLM and I was always forthright. Then when Jack formally resigned, the secretary's office interviewed several people for the job. They never really did tell me if they were going to offer me the job, nor did I tell them if I would take it if offered, until the cabinet members were sworn in for a second Clinton term. As soon as the cabinet members were sworn in that morning, that afternoon the secretary's office called and said we want to appoint you chief.

I was home with a cold that day and really had to hustle to get in town in time to the secretary's office for the announcement. They probably called me about ten-thirty or eleven in the morning and wanted me to be in the secretary's office spit shined and with acceptance speech in hand and so on, by one in the afternoon. We had a conference call with the leadership of the Forest Service, with Jim Lyons and the secretary and I, saying that I would be announced as chief at two o'clock and then afterward we went into the press conference and that's sort of the way all that unfolded.

HKS: That explains the gap. Jack left I think about December 1 and you came in early January.

MPD: My first day on the job was January 6th. In the intervening time between the announcement and reporting for work, I had many, many meetings and really focused on Forest Service strategy. One of the advantages that I had since the first interview with the secretary in June or July, I really had a lot of time to think about whether or not I would take the job, under what circumstances I would take the job if it were offered to me. What that did is that gave me time to think about strategy, and I also had time to talk to Jack about what things I should demand if I were chief.

For example, one of the things that Jack and the Forest Service was concerned about was the lack of ability to make personnel decisions. I got a commitment from the secretary that the chief would have authority on all non-SES personnel decisions. And I did. Of course, I'd had some practice with Interior dealing with the secretary and obviously the secretary has final authority over all Senior Executive Service positions. I described to Glickman maybe eighteen SES position appointments that I made while I was acting director of BLM. I would almost always go to the secretary's office with three people on a list, ranked in order of priority of my preference, and prepared to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each of them. Only one time did they not give me my first choice, and this happened to be an individual who was working on grazing issues, and it was either the chief of staff or the secretary that said we think that we ought to keep this person here in Washington for about another six months or so.

When I looked at the process that the Forest Service was taking to the secretary's office, they take a candidate and they get a yes or a no. So just by the simple mode of operation if they don't get the yes, then it turns into a confrontation. When you go to approving authority the logical thing to do is give them some decision space, and there's got to be more than one person that's fit for a job. So there's differences like that in the way the organization operated that I think just automatically caused tensions that were unnecessary. I mean there's enough problems to deal with, let alone things like this. I asked the secretary to be more visible at the Forest Service, to

come over once in a while and meet with the employees and the importance of the chief and the secretary to stand together on issues. If we got a tough issue we'll both be at the podium and he would be visible. There were a number of things like that.

They really agreed to all of my demands, which ultimately led to my saying yes. I really got a lot of encouragement even from people with the Forest Service to the point that they felt well, if we don't build better relations this time this might be our last chance. Well, the reality is it wasn't the last chance. They'll have a lot more chances and there will be subsequent chiefs that are going to deal with the same kinds of issues with the same kind of climate as I dealt with.

HKS: If I remember correctly from Jack's journals, well before that June meeting, your first formal meeting with Glickman, Jack had submitted a letter of resignation, and the secretary had persuaded him to stay on until after the November election. But the letter of resignation was always in Glickman's hand. So Jack had resigned but it wasn't accepted. So it must have been interesting in Glickman's mind, with all the things he has going on he's got a resigned chief still going to work every day and still saying I want out.

BLM and Forest Service Cultures

HKS: To backtrack just a little bit, we haven't talked specifically about differences between Forest Service and BLM cultures, although you mentioned it several different times. I'll start this by saying that reading in your book last night where you characterized the context of the spotted owl issue, that the BLM is much less centralized than the Forest Service, which is contrary to everything I've ever heard or read. Talk about the Forest Service myth of decentralization.

MPD: The Forest Service has so much more organizational horsepower than any other land management agency. It certainly dwarfs the BLM in size and budget and so on. I think the culture and structure of the Forest Service worked to it's advantage until the 1980s, somewhere in that decade. I saw power moving out of Washington generally in many, many issue areas, with local land advisory groups evolving, local watershed coalitions, the Four by Four group, the Owl Mountain group, the Applegate, the Trout Creek Mountain group that were solving issues sort of in a different way. The Forest Service had more difficulty adapting to that. The national forest has a boundary and the BLM deals with all the intermingled lands, sections and even 40s and townships here and there intermingled with private lands. I believe the BLM is more decentralized in the way it operates, and I think it's more adept at working with local communities because of the land pattern is very intermingled with private lands, versus the generally more solid ownership pattern of the national forests, especially in the West, less so in the Weeks Law forests of the East.

The grazing board advisory concepts that really emanate right from the Taylor Grazing Act with Farrington Carpenter putting together these local grazing boards, which first were really evolved to make peace between the sheep men and the cattlemen. It wasn't until the late 1940s where you had the blizzards out West and you had the huge antelope die-offs in the wintertime that wildlife began to become a concern for BLM. But just by BLM's mode of operation I think it is much more flexible and much more in tune with the local communities. Forest Service had authority for advisory boards and, in fact, had them but it chose to eliminate many of them. I think that moved them further away from the changes and social trends and communities, and although in the East we had, for example, Friends of the Huron-Manistee Forest and other similar citizen groups. You had informal advisory groups that were helping with the planning process, doing some of this coalition building. I think the Forest Service and most federal agencies have very inflexible cultures. The Forest Service wasn't accepting or wasn't reading the changes in

social attitudes, and from say the, maybe 1960s to 1990s it had moved further away from really understanding the mainstream of public opinion. We were still more into the attitude, we're the trained professionals. We're very good at what we do. Trust us, we know best. But the public wasn't buying it.

The classic example is clearcutting with the Monongahela case. Were we never tuned in to what the public was perceiving when they saw these mountainsides clearcut? They didn't like it. They may not know why and yet little was done on the part of forest management to change this. We waited until the heat of the battle was so intense that we went into the courtroom to deal with the issue. That general approach has repeated itself a number of times with clearcutting, with the spotted owl issue. My attempt with roadless was really not to take the issue that far. I think another issue that's headed that direction is the off-road vehicle issue, and I'm glad to see that Dale Bosworth is focused on the issue. He did sort of a pilot run while I was chief, dealing with the off-road vehicle issue in Montana.

Let me tell you a couple of stories. I was new to the BLM and Ed Hastey, the state director in California, invited me out to speak at a training meeting. I'm in the hotel, it's probably in Sacramento, and there's a new young female biologist in the hotel room across from me. Her boyfriend's with her and she's participating in the meeting and the boyfriend is participating in the meeting and they weren't married. The boyfriend went on the field trips with us, participated like he was an employee. And the thing that struck me is that he was welcome in the group. He wouldn't have been welcome in the Forest Service. In fact, somebody probably would have counseled her not to have a significant other staying in the same hotel room. And I've told that story many times to a lot of people, and I think that it is my view after spending most of my career in the Forest Service with a six or seven year hiatus in the Department of the Interior at BLM, that the BLM is a much more people-oriented organization. It's a much more people-friendly organization in its culture than the Forest Service is.

HKS: I asked John McGuire somewhere in the 1980s when I interviewed him to talk about decentralization and compare it to a non-decentralized operation of government so I could understand it better. He said his favorite story was running power lines across national forests and other federal lands. Utility companies are always asking for rights-of-way to run power lines. He said in the Forest Service the district ranger issues a use permit. Whoever goes across lands under the Department of the Interior the permit goes to the secretary's desk for a signature. That was his example of how centralized the Department of the Interior is compared to the Forest Service, and that would be lost in a reorganization he felt. If you merged all those agencies that the U.S.D.I. culture would predominate and the decentralization would be lost. But you've just turned that around.

MPD: I think the culture of the Forest Service is much more rigid. I think you're right, on many process issues. But from the standpoint of the way the employees behave and what's considered right, there's a lot more kissing of the ring in the Forest Service. I want to tell you another story. I was probably in my second or third week as acting director of the BLM. Jack was already in Washington as chief. We had a hearing at a hotel by the L'Enfant Plaza with some of the Native American tribes from the Pacific Northwest. It was a formal hearing with the director of the BLM and the chief of the Forest Service sitting at a head table. I usually walked by myself, I walked across the mall carrying my briefcase, got to the meeting first. Then here comes Jack with about three staffers following him. Phil Janik, with whom I had worked with and had a relationship for a long time, said to Jack, would you like some coffee. Oh, and he said oh, by the way, Mike, do you want some coffee, too. So that's another striking difference.

Another difference is the reverence of the chief in the Forest Service versus the director of BLM, and I'm not saying any of these are good or bad. It's just sort of the way it is. I'm not a picky

eater by any means and I eat whatever's the fastest. Going around with the staff of BLM, I don't care, you want to stop at McDonald's, you want to stop at Subway or a deli and get a sub sandwich or something, that's fine. So the BLM is much less formal than the Forest Service is what I'm getting at. If you think about the trauma that the BLM went through in leadership changes in the Clinton administration, and you overlay it on the Forest Service, it would be interesting. Look at this picture. New administration, in comes Jim Baca. Eight months later, in comes Dombeck. Three years later in comes Pat Shea. Eight months later, out goes Pat Shea, in comes Tom Frye. They went through Jim Baca, Dombeck, Shea, and Frye; four directors in eight years. Some of them really not knowing much about the agency at all as political appointees, although all with good resource credentials, or at least some level of resource credentials. Think of how the Forest Service as a culture would shudder with that kind of whipsawing. So I think that BLM ends up being a lot more flexible and less labor intensive. There's also differences in the way people travel that I noted in one agency and the other.

The Forest Service compared to BLM is a rich agency. The culture just doesn't appreciate it. In BLM, you see more carpooling. You see more concern over expensive meetings. For example, we were short on money in the field. In BLM at one of the directors meetings I suggested we ask the Washington office staff to cut travel by fifty percent and we'll move that money to the field. So we were faced with a similar situation when I was at the Forest Service. I made that suggestion and it didn't even get out of chief and staff. They said well that's absolutely unworkable. There's a level of rigidity in the culture that brings on a challenge in the Forest Service that is part of the nature of the entity that causes it to be less adaptable. All of this can be good and bad, depending upon circumstances. We've talked about a lot of issues already where the lack of connections to the decision-making process at the White House resulted in problems with the spotted owl issue, with New World Mine, with many, many other issues.

HKS: I have to ask this. Bruce Babbitt obviously was a very experienced politician, managing people, recognizing talent. Wasn't he somehow involved in selecting all these BLM directors that didn't make it? Why weren't these people successful?

MPD: I don't know.

HKS: I can see Congress say we're not going to give Dombeck our approval. Babbitt can't help that, but you stayed on. But the other guys are in and out. It's a revolving door, and somewhere there's a judgment lapse in that selection process.

MPD: I really can't comment on whose people they were or how they were selected. There was always the rumor that there were Babbitt people and there were Gore people and there were Clinton people. It could have been that somebody said you take them. Then it could have been this is the person I'd like to have. In the Forest Service culture, at least the theory is that every employee has a shot at being chief, the ideal Forest Service employee would aspire to be chief. But in BLM people aspire to be a state director. I think the view of the employees is that the power is in the field in BLM. That's my perception from being inside BLM and knowing a lot of the personalities that ran the agency.

You have your opinion leaders. If you take a look at people in BLM like Dean Bibles and Ed Hasty and Dale Vale, all state directors when I was acting director, they probably hired half of the agency. We talked about pros and cons earlier about the Forest Service being in Interior and competing versus in Agriculture, the budget process, the connections to the White House. When you get into the conversation should the chief be a political appointee or not, it probably doesn't make a whole lot of difference because ultimately, even as much as many wouldn't admit it, you're right at the political interface in any agency head job and there's no way of avoiding the political controversy, dealing with the political fallout and having to be responsive as best you can

to both Congress and the White House. Some chiefs have probably been more responsive than others depending upon the issues.

HKS: I thought the core argument against political appointees was you weren't sure you were going to get someone who had any knowledge or even interest in the subject. There was a letter, I always wished I'd copied it, in the national archives from the FDR administration during the New Deal. One of his political supporters, campaign manager from California or some state, was ready for a political favor, an appointment of some kind. So he wrote the president, said I don't want much, how about making me chief of the Forest Service. Isn't that part of the Forest Service worry? Are they really qualified to head an agency and know enough about the land issues in general from either where they lived or what they did in order to have credibility anywhere? The political appointee doesn't have to have credibility in that sense.

MPD: That's definitely a strong argument for a professional in the chief's job that I strongly support. This is only comparing a couple of administrations that the Democrats, at least in Clinton, tended to appoint scientists, technical experts. For example, Bruce Babbitt brought Dr. Ron Pulliam in to head up the National Biological Survey. Here we have this eminent scientist from the University of Georgia at Athens. He wasn't a political campaign worker. Whereas, in Bush 1 you saw more people in assistant secretary jobs and others that largely came from a political base, as opposed to being conservation sts or others like that. I mean if you look at some of the assistant secretaries it's interesting. Look how well versed Jim Lyons was. He has a master's from Yale in forestry overseeing the Forest Service. He probably turned out to be one of the less popular assistant secretaries with n the rank and file of the Forest Service, although probably no assistant secretary is very popular in any agency. That's almost universal. So the administration having a political appointee certainly gives the administration the latitude of bringing a political hack into an agency head job, and that would be very unfortunate.

HKS: John McGuire recounts when he was chief that Senator Jackson from Washington introduced the legislation to put the chief of the Forest Service and other land management agencies under the advise to consent requirement, because Jackson was really disgusted with Nixon's appointee for head of the Park Service, who was his campaign advance man in Californ a or something. Can't remember his name now, but he was a disaster, only lasted a few months. McGuire went over one Saturday morning and talked him out of it, the senator. At least leave the Forest Service out of this because if you do this, inevitably you're going to bring raw politics directly into the political selection process because you only will pick someone who'll be acceptable up on the Hill and so forth. Anyway, the Senior Executive Service came along after that, which in McGuire's opinion more or less resolved the issue of qualifications for agency heads. Of course, that was before the flap over Jack being not a member of SES.

MPD: I want to mention two other things that I tried at BLM that worked fairly wel but really were not successful at the Forest Service. At the BLM summit I established a field deputy position who could come in for a two-week period in the director's office and participate in any meeting they wanted to other than a personnel consultation that would be private. Basically they could go any place a deputy and associate director could go. And they could also bring in an idea to streamline something, fix something that wasn't working in the field. It was a very popular program and worked very we l and we solved lots of little petty things that bothered us, process things. I thought I'd try that at the Forest Service but really it didn't get much support. There was more dia ogue of well, who's going to pay for it. My hope was that this would be another way that we could bring in district rangers, forest supervisors, a staff director from a forest into the headquarters to really get to know the people and see how things work and be inv ved in the chief and staff meetings. It was interesting again that the cu ture of the agency was resistant to that kind of move.

Another thing I tried was to start a grants program for field projects. We're all concerned about how much money is involved in running the organization, in the process, and how little money actually gets to the land. So at BLM I started a director's grants program, whereby, you as a field manager could propose a project. We had some guidelines on it. It had to be on the ground, no meetings, but fixing up recreation trails or eradicating noxious weeds or something like that. My first year as chief I took ten million dollars and reallocated it. We had a grants project. Leslie Weldon, who was my executive assistant, managed the program. We got a lot of applications. I found out later, given the bookkeeping system of the Forest Service, that in Region 3, when a district got a grant the region pulled back an equal amount of money. Now I don't know if that's centralization or decentralization, but what this told me is we were operating somewhat out of the comfort zone, the norm of the bureaucratic structure, and the reality was there just wasn't support.

Reynolds and Reimers Reassignment—A Broader Context

HKS: If you want to talk about the restaffing issue, I have a question from Jack Thomas. I was talking to Jack about his journals. I told him I'd be interviewing you and did he have any questions. The exact question I forget, but ask Mike why he allowed the manipulation of staff. He was referring to Gray Reynolds and Mark Reimers. "Allowed" is his verb. Jack was in a very difficult situation when he was chief, that Jim Lyons several times tried to reassign Reimers and Reynolds. Gray I know a little bit, Reimers not at all. Why they would have been selected by Jim Lyons as someone to be transferred out of the deputy chief's job I don't know. Their lack of loyalty or whatever it was but obviously they were on Lyons' list. I say obviously from Jack's journals, I know two were on Jim Lyons' list for transfer, and Jack resisted and you didn't. This is the question we're asking here.

MPD: One of the commitments that I had from the secretary is that they weren't going to force my hand on this kind of stuff. Before I get to the answer of the question, I think some background is important. At the time that I was announced as the next chief of the Forest Service and the time I actually started work, there was a two- or three-week interval in there. I went into this intensive information gathering mode and I had a conference call with the SES leadership of the Forest Service. Many of those that were in Washington, they came over to my office at the Department of the Interior—my BLM office. Then we got the regional foresters and station directors and others on the phone. I have the script of that phone call. Then I asked them how do we create an atmosphere that's needed for the Forest Service to be successful. Different people have told me about all the strained relationships and I observed a lot of them. I mean strained with Congress, strained with the administration, strained with the undersecretary's office, and all of this, every place you looked there was a fight, and I can certainly understand why there was a high level of frustration. Why have the chiefs spent so much time in controversy and this goes back to essentially both Dale and Jack.

You mentioned the Tuesday Afternoon Club meetings and things like that. In my view the chief is supposed to be the chief forester, the chief forest conservationist of the country. During the conference call I asked why is it that there's this hostile atmosphere and this strife, what's leading to all of this? I asked them all a series of questions and I wanted to do it while everyone was together so they would all hear the same thing. Then I had individual interviews where I scheduled over the course of that two-week period or so, one-on-one with all of the individuals. Here are some of the questions I asked. Where is the Forest Service today and how did it get where it is? Why are relationships so strained, if not broken, with the administration and with Congress? Neither the administration nor the Congress have confidence in the Forest Service's ability to act or deliver. Why are local relationships strained? How can the Forest Service

reconnect with local communities? Why are long-term friends and supporters of the Forest Service abandoning it or at best, skeptics? Why is the Forest Service leadership not functioning as a team? How can we fix some of the dysfunctions?

I'm one who believes that the Forest Service must solve many of its own problems and have a strategy to control its own destiny. How can we get back on track and then what role can you as a member of the leadership team of the Forest Service best play on a team to move in this direction? They all came back very well prepared. Some had written answers that they gave me. Some had notes and some just talked. I have discussed all of this at the first couple national leadership team meetings that we had, but I just want to read you some quotes from some of these interviews.

This is from the regional foresters, station directors, deputy chiefs and I've got lots more than we would have time to read but here are a few. This is not Mike Dombeck talking. This is the leadership of the Forest Service advising the soon-to-become chief that "the Forest Service has a history of the absence of a functioning team." "We are not functioning as a team." " Internal competition is hurting us." "You, chief, need to get the team to make big decisions." "We spend too much time reversing each other." "There's no trust for Washington decisions." "We need a board of directors, not fiefdoms." "Atmosphere in Washington is far too competitive." "It's a very surly environment." And they're talking about the Washington Office of the Forest Service. "Headquarters is an intimidating environment." "There's a need to focus on the Forest Service itself, not on individual entities." "There's no corporate view." "The agency is slow to recognize what society wants." "The agency doesn't like being questioned by the public." "The agency is too commodity oriented." "The Forest Service is over administered and under managed." "Too much competition between National Forest System, Research, and State and Private." "Employees have technical skills but lack the soft skills, the people skills, and the political skills needed." "We lack people who can work across the political career employee interface." "The 'can of the chief is a cop-out, too much command and control." "Mistakes are often used as self-fulfilling prophecies." "Too much micromanagement from CEQ and NRE [Natural Resources and Environment in the Department of Agriculture] or the undersecretary's office." "They place blame without facts." "We are in a survival mode." "The toughest job is working with Congress." Another quote, "the toughest job is working with the administration." "Financial management is a major problem." "We don't do a good job of signing the national forests." "State and Private and Research always play second fiddle to the National Forest System." "As long as dollars come from timber, the agency won't change." These are direct quotes for any of us to interpret. "State foresters expect the chief to lead all of the forest issues, not just the national forest." "Civil rights will sink us." If I stop there. We could go on to many, many more.

That's one set of issues to consider. The next set of issues is the dialogue within the Forest Service and the Forest Service community. At the time that people were saying, including Jack, that it was a rudderless ship. The Forest Service was great at getting from A to B, if we knew where B was. And the agency had lost its mission. So this was a real handful to get into. On January 2nd, 1997 Jack Anderson ran a column in *The Washington Post*, which is titled "Resisting Reinvention at the Forest Service," and it starts out "Vice President Gore has apparently found a government agency that even he can't reinvent." So that was the climate. I came to work four days later and I asked people at the Forest Service how they felt about that article, and there were two distinct camps. One camp was "the bastards did it to us again" and this is a quote. Another camp was why do people feel that way and what can we learn from this. I think that clearly defines a very defensive posture of one group and another group that's saying hey, why do people feel like this. The fact is the Forest Service must be a learning, changing organization.

The fact that people feel like this is what's really important and what can be done to change that, because really only the agency itself could change that. There isn't someone from the outside

that could change that. I did not get the opinions of all of the staff directors. Many came in and said hey, we have people at certain levels of the organization that just can't function in their jobs. I saw Jack going to meetings at the CEQ, and here you have a couple of deputy chiefs that are persona non grata. With the interviews I found out that it's more than Jim Lyons that have problems and have many people that they can't work with in the Forest Service, that there was the widespread feeling that they were actively undermining any direction that this organization needed to go or that the administration wanted to go, so there was basically a lack of trust. Ultimately when the time came to decide what to do, I'd had a lot of dialogue with a lot of people, including Mark Reimers and Gray Reynolds, who are dedicated to the organization. But they appear to be in a mode that they, even though we had another four years of Clinton and the Clinton administration, there was no desire to want to figure out a way to work with this group. It was, here chief, this is your problem.

I realized immediately that I couldn't function like that, that I had to have a top team of people that could face those issues and that were welcome at a meeting with Katie McGinty, Dan Glickman, or Jim Lyons. The BLM seemed to operate that way and it worked okay. All the deputies had to be welcome in these various places and they could truly represent the agency in a way that we could move forward. So the reason for the reassignments, which I ultimately made, was because in the interviews there was no evidence given to me that there was a willingness to want to mend fences and get on with leading the Forest Service. The desire was really to just to continue the dogged effort and fight for another four years. My view was that wasn't going to help the agency or take it where it needed to go.

My attempt was really to try to do the reassignments in as benign a way and as a friendly way as I possibly could. I basically gave them all a choice, said you pick the job you want in the Forest Service, any job except the job you're in. And Mark and Gray elected to retire. They were eligible for retirement. They didn't like it but both of them told me they were not surprised. I didn't like it but how do you run a big organization like this if you have a team that is so entrenched that you can't move the organization forward. My view is they had Jack hampered and they in a sense were almost holding the chief hostage. If you were my boss and the way I was acting was forcing you to resign, I would think the thing that should have been done is they should have had this dialogue with the chief and say hey, I know this is a big problem for you. This is a problem for you and it means this is a problem for the agency and offer to move aside, especially when we knew we had another four years of this to go through. So that's how I worked through this.

HKS: I knew Gray just slightly. At least when he was around me he came off as the old cowboy type, the way he talked. He was personable and down-home and salty and guy of the earth and all that. It was before he was deputy when I knew him.

MPD: I want to reemphasize Mark and Gray are good people with tremendous careers. This is certainly no reflection on their skills, but going back to the question why are relations so strained and can we spend another four years with that level of tension and mistrust. My conclusion was no, and I certainly wasn't about to be the referee or caught in this vice between the debate between say deputy chiefs and the administration. Obviously I couldn't change the administration.

HKS: I could never understand where that came from. You've explained it and I appreciate your putting it on the record of what Jim Lyons aimed to do. There may have been others on the list, but the only two I'm aware of are Reimers and Reynolds.

MPD: This is a behavior that's repeated itself and that we talked about earlier. We think about New World Mine and we go back to the spotted owl issue, that the differences got so intense it

got personal. I've said this many, many times to employees, whether it's knowing that you're going to go up to the Hill and get chewed out at a congressional hearing or whatever, when the debate gets personal you can no longer be effective. Not only that but you're just going to be miserable in every aspect of it. It was pretty much of a clinical organizational management decision given the realities of the day, the cards on the table, and the options that I had.

HKS: Officially you make a recommendation to the secretary for these transfers, or does the chief have that authority to transfer someone?

MPD: The chief recommends for all Senior Executive Service personnel actions. I thought long and hard about replacing Gray. I liked Gray and I'd known him for a long time. I like Mark. Mark is a wonderful, caring man. Both are dedicated employees. I mean this is hard stuff to do as chief of an agency, knowing that there would be fallout from that, in the way people perceived me. I just didn't know how much. Bob Joslyn coming in after Gray with his reputation and experience really did a wonderful job in helping mend fences. Dale Robertson called me the first day I was in the chief's chair and congratulated me. He said to enjoy this day. You're going to be most popular your first day at work. He said every decision you make from here on out somebody will be mad at you for and your popularity will go down. Other people warned me and said hey, if you go into a job like this, there's a lot of controversy. If you're going to do anything at all you better not be one that needs popularity. In fact, Jack Thomas told me I was going to catch a lot of hell no matter what I did so I might as well do what I believe in. From the standpoint of the resource issues that he dealt with and that level of controversy or tough issues, this is just part of the job that you've got to deal with. It's the buck stops there. For the four-year period it was the best thing for the agency. I didn't like having to do the personnel changes, but I still think it was the best decision.

HKS: It's probably a minor point. Jim Lyons is now undersecretary. He came in as assistant secretary and Mark Rey came in as undersecretary. Is that a grade inflation? Is that secretarial job more important than it used to be because now it's an undersecretary rather than assistant secretary? What happened? Does that mean anything?

MPD: It doesn't mean anything to me. I think their level or authority or clout depends upon the relationship they have with the secretary and the secretary's staff and the deputy secretary. I think that's much more important than the title. I think it's very personality dependent. Some assistant secretaries care about turf, others don't. My management style is I really don't care about turf. I want to be able to work with people in a positive way on issues.

Changes in the Chief's Office

MPD: While we're on personnel, let me discuss one of the other advantages that I had. From June of 1996 in my first interview with Dan Glickman where he asked will you consider being chief, I obviously was thinking a lot more about the Forest Service and had an opportunity to really think about a strategy as to what one should do when you got into an agency that had the challenges that the Forest Service had. I felt somewhat uncomfortable because I'm a cup-is-half-full person, but keep in mind this is someone going into an agency that's full of problems and challenges. One of the challenges was getting the culture to face the challenges and help them understand the need to change.

I made some other changes in the chief's office as well. Some played well and some didn't. For example, I brought three people with me: Donna Janisch, who had been a secretary of mine for the last three years at BLM and was just a dynamite person; Francis Pandolfi, who is a Harvard

MBA, was a private sector CEO, very successful, to provide expertise on the business accountability side, because in addition to the relationships problems and the natural resource challenges the organization faced, there was also this financial accountability challenge that was just monumentous in the Forest Service; and then Chris Wood, who had actually worked with me since the early '90s and just a very bright, hardworking young guy that was involved initially in communications. He's one of the best writers and communicators that I've ever seen and very dedicated to natural resource management. We got to be close friends. I brought these three people with me, and that stunned the organization that I would bring people with me. It's not as though I was a lot of people. I kept the chief's secretary; a couple of people had asked me to. It turned out if I had to do it over again, I shouldn't have done that because her loyalties were never to me. They were to Max Peterson and Dale Robertson and the culture of the organization. In hindsight you always have a better view of how you could have or should have done things differently.

HKS: This may not be a parallel, but people were transferring into the Forest Service like the woman Kathy that Jack married transferred over to be a deputy chief for administration out of I forget what agency now. People were making lateral transfers. In a sense you were making a lateral transfer. Is it just the symbology of the chief's office that made you different?

MPD: I think so.

HKS: You weren't an outsider, where Kathy certainly was an outsider coming into a responsible, high-level job.

MPD: I think it's how people view this. Sometimes people will say of an appointment, well, that's political. When I asked Jim Furnish to come in as deputy chief for the National Forest System, those that opposed Jim said gosh, look at this guy. He hasn't been a regional forester. He hasn't had all these other experiences that a deputy chief typically has. The reality is what people were telling me is that the headquarters office didn't have enough sensitivity for the field, and I felt one of the ways to help get beyond that would be to bring somebody with fresh field experience that had been a very creative, a very energetic forest supervisor. But because I didn't follow the tradition, there were those that didn't like it and said this is a political move. This despite that many of the comments I got from people in the agency said that headquarters is disconnected from the field. Yet when you bring somebody in from the field, if you're breaking with tradition they look with suspicion on that.

HKS: Do I remember correctly you didn't fill the associate chief's job? Was that vacant? I remember some of the gossip, as it were, that you put a CEO in charge instead of associate chief.

MPD: Dave Unger decided to retire, not at my request; he said Mike, I think it's time. I believe Dave was sixty-four at the time, and I wasn't in a position to tell somebody they can't retire when they'd been as dedicated and as helpful and constructive and loyal as Dave Unger was, who I had tremendous respect for, yet it was a big loss. But basically what we did was hold the associate chief's position open for a time, and I rotated the deputy chiefs as actings through there on a one- or two-month basis. I asked them to evaluate the position and make recommendations to me.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: The end result of that was we learned that too much of the process, too much material was coming too high up in the organization. The Forest Service had all these problems and challenges to deal with, and the organization just sort of shoved all this up on the chief and the

associate chief's desk. If you looked at the stack of paper that came into Dave Unger's office on a daily basis, it was absolutely astounding and much of this really we felt could and should be handled by the staff directors, the deputy chiefs' staffs, and others. So we attempted to push much of that workload down in the organization. I really felt that we had to get a handle on the organization and split the associate chief's job in two and have an associate chief for natural resources and have a chief operating officer who was responsible for the business and financial aspects of the organization. The Forest Service is a big corporation. It would be on the Fortune 500 list, four-billion-dollar operation, thirty-five thousand employees, yet with very complex business management practices that no one could get their arms around.

HKS: So the deputy chief for administration had traditionally handled the finances of the organization? Who did that job before you reorganized it?

MPD: Well, nobody successfully, let's put it that way.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: The bulk of the responsibilities would have been under the deputy chief for administration.

HKS: Okay.

MPD: In the dialogue with Greg Frazier, once it got closer to the time they asked me to become chief, we had an opportunity to think through a strategy. Also I talked with people like Max Peterson, spent a lot of time with Jack Thomas talking about what the issues were, how we deal with these personnel issues and other kinds of things in the organization. It was a climate where nobody really felt things were going very well.

HKS: Why does the deputy chief bump things up to the chief's desk? I can imagine you had too much paper, and first I thought you were going to say the regions were sending too much in. You said instead the deputies could have handled a lot of that. The chief doesn't need to make those decisions. Is it just the culture that so much went to the chief?

MPD: I think it's a combination of a lot of things. I think it was the mistrust of the undersecretary's office. Therefore, they were afraid if they made a decision they'd be called on the carpet. I think part of it's tradition. Jack struggled a lot with timber sales. I had one timber sale come on my desk and I sent it back. There's a whole staff of people that know a whole lot more about timber sales than I did, and I never had another timber sale on my desk. It was easier to bring an issue up to the chief than to resolve it, and that became the norm.

What is it that the chief should be focusing on? How can the chief best serve the agency? The culture of the agency is to use up the chief, to totally consume the chief internally, and I think that's a very natural thing. They respect their leader. They respect leadership. In fact, they revere leadership. One of the comments I mentioned was the icon of the chief is a cop-out. We had external problems. We had administration problems, and I made a conscious decision that I would try to allocate about a third of my time dealing with external relationships, about a third of my time dealing with internal issues, and about a third of my time dealing with policy stuff, and that would be the stuff that people would normally think sort of the big picture stuff that the head of a large organization ought to be doing. That had some interesting ramifications. I soon developed a reputation of being closed door, because people were used to running up and discussing issues with the chief.

One of the great equalizers is we all have twenty-four hours a day, and no more. We all have to sleep a little and eat and take care of ourselves. And my view was that the internal culture of the

organization was essentially using up the chief's time and consuming the chief, and part of the result was some important issues went unattended. For example, the first few months when I would sit down with the traditional chiefs handlers, about all I would hear was the need to do employee meetings and the need to go visit Forest Service units. That's very important, but what that told me was it was almost a completely internalized perspective.

I started having chief's breakfasts where I invited members of Congress. Ralph Regula who was chairman of the House Interior appropriations committee, I asked Ralph if he had ever been to the chief's office. It's one of the nicest offices in town. He said no. I said why don't you come over and have breakfast with me, and he did. Secretary Glickman would come over and have breakfast, and various other members of Congress came over. Even some of those that disagreed with me came over. I would have Mark Rey who was working for Frank Murkowski at that time, Doug Crandall, various Hill staffers would come over, every week or so we'd have a breakfast. Bruce Babbitt would come over occasionally. Since I was the first agency head in place for the second Clinton term, the first thing I did when the other agency heads got in place I started hosting agency head breakfasts to try to build relationships with the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Bureau of Land Management. Bob Stanton of the Park Service almost always came over. When you do things like that, that leaves less time for employees, and this essentially was a new thing. Even though I tried to explain this to employees, evidently I didn't do a good enough job at it or just they simply didn't agree that it should be a priority. So there were a variety of changes like that that I made and got a fair amount of criticism for, but I felt it was the only way to go.

The chief gets to do some wonderful things, and I was invited to raft down the Smith River with the forest supervisors from Montana. I love rivers and lakes and fishing and couldn't resist. Besides, it was important and I wanted to do it. We were sitting around the campfire probably having a beer, visiting, very casual atmosphere. There was dialogue but no real hard questions. Finally the second day I said I know there are things on your mind and let's have some hard questions about how you're really feeling and what you're thinking. Nobody is going to get canned. We had an interesting dialogue and they talked about a lot of things. We talked about moving the deputy chiefs. We talked about the people I brought with me. They talked about the impressions, and I asked them questions, and I said consider the atmosphere as a result of the departure of the last couple of chiefs. Do you really want me to operate the same way? Obviously the answer was no, absolutely not. What I'm getting at is you've got this strong tradition, the culture and the tremendous success and talent of a powerful organization on one hand, and then bringing about change and changing direction, how you deal with issues in the face of conflict, and what we were dealing with on the other hand; that is no doubt the hardest part of the job.

HKS: How about looking the other direction. How was Jim Lyons and the political appointees? They obviously were observing this, and you had already told them you were going to make some changes and so forth. Were they supportive? Did they protect you if you had outside criticism, say from congressmen?

MPO: I did have outside criticism. I got a draft letter from Larry Craig's staff, one that he hadn't signed, basically being extremely critical of the personnel moves. In fact, I think it was Ted Stevens at the Appropriation hearing who said to me, Mike, you've purged the Forest Service of its professionalism. My response was I moved three people out of thirty thousand. That doesn't sound like purging an organization to me, but this I think portrays the level of intensity of these kinds of issues and the entrenchment of the culture, that in many cases is perhaps one of its biggest challenges is to be flexible and change and move into the future and be able to adapt to changing administrations.

HKS: We are talking about your first couple of months. Did these feelings continue?

MPD: I'd say they never completely went away. I think in some circles they probably got worse. The two biggest challenges that I had both as director of BLM and as chief of the Forest Service were internal communication and time management. The internal communication job in the Forest Service is much more complex and much more difficult, because every camp of opinion that's in society is in the agency. In addition to the complexity compared to BLM is you've got a large research organization. You've got a state and private organization. You've got an international organization. Plus you've got the geographic span from Florida to Alaska, from Maine to California. So it's a much more complex organization. I would rate the level of complexity of it probably to be a lot closer to be the say the secretary of the Interior versus the director of BLM. Those were the big challenges and impediments that I had to deal with throughout my entire tenure. In spite of the intention, different people interpret things in different ways.

Chief's Overviews

MPD: I want to talk about the chief's overviews just a little bit. One of the things we developed is a schedule for the chief and immediate staff and deputies to travel to every region and every station. We would be briefed on the issues, asked a series of questions about accountability, and basically help develop a strategy of where we go from here. We did all of them, and they were absolutely a wonderful experience. It was a way for people in the regional offices and the stations and state and private to get to know me and other members of the team, as well as for us to meet them and learn a little bit more about them and see a lot more of the Forest Service. The trips were very, very constructive. It was obvious Region 2 felt as though it had been underfunded for years. You had Region 6 being the former big timber region that was being cut back. There were these kinds of inequities that some of which the agency is still struggling with today.

KV was down significantly. A large proportion of Region 1 staff was funded by KV, but then timber harvest levels went down. We did the last buyout really to prevent having to do a RIF in Region 1, and that helped with some of the financial woes that we were dealing with. One of the things that struck me in the chief's overviews was when we were reviewing the deputy for administration area. One of the characteristics of I think any bureaucracy is when you have a problem you build a process around the problem to help solve it. But the process may be just a Band-Aid or it may sometimes be a smoke screen instead of really dealing with the root of the problem. I watched for this at other overviews, and what we found is that, as someone once told me, the Forest Service was a master at the art of complexity. That really what we're dealing with is this complex bureaucracy and these labor processes that didn't solve the problem. If you look at personnel selections and all of the committees that take a look at what we're really doing and are we really considering diversity appropriately and is the process fair, when all is said is done, when a manager recommends somebody it's probably not a whole lot different than it was before. But yet we're burning up a lot more organizational energy, a lot more time in the layers of bureaucracy, plus adding tremendous levels of inefficiency to the organization, just simply by adding these processes that may not be getting us better results.

HKS: For personnel, some of that's mandated by statute? I mean you have affirmative action and so forth and you have to show you're not discriminating?

MPD: Some of it's mandated and comes at us from a variety of places. Some of it's mandated from the court system. Some of it's mandated by merit system protection cases, other kinds of

things like that. But the levels of complexity that I observed in the Forest Service are far beyond what I observed with the Department of the Interior. When we talk about the process, believe me, it's there big time. Most of it is self-imposed and a portion of it is imposed from the outside.

HKS: I remember your presentation at Roslyn on how complicated the Forest Service is and how it makes many of its own problems. You had asked the other day how many airplanes we had, and no one could answer. I mean it's not a matter of going out to the airfield and counting one, two, three, four. Somehow everything has become complicated. You went on to other examples. This was at the management policy seminar, and you wanted the folks to see what some of the issues were.

MPD: The weekly letters to employees went so well at BLM that I thought I'd try that at the Forest Service. And the interesting thing was I got hardly any employee feedback. That puzzled me, and I never really did find out why. Either they didn't care or maybe they didn't believe that I really wrote them. But I stopped doing them, just because it didn't seem to make a difference. The culture of the Forest Service was to sign by position rather than by the person. When you signed a letter, it's the deputy chief for National Forest System; yet Bob Joslyn is a person. We really talked about this and attempted to humanize that. Again most of the letters that went out of the chief's office, the staff wanted letters to be signed by the chief. If everything is signed by the chief, how do you really know what's a priority? How does the employee in the field know if the chief even read that letter, that it wasn't singed by the signature machine? By the way, the only thing I used the signature machine for was awards and mass mailings, never for any other letters was anyone authorized to use a signature machine. They probably thought this letter is just coming from somebody else. I think the employees on the ground really didn't know who was doing what. The chief's office, the headquarters office, was one solid entity that was impersonal to the field. Another observation in comparing agencies.

Dealing with Congress

HKS: Talk about Congress. Dealings with Congress, rebuilding credibility, interaction with Congress, all the hearings, your first year as chief, and so forth. Do you want to talk about that now?

MPD: My goal the first year was to do all the hearings, on no matter what issue, and then after that really taper off and delegate the hearings to deputy chiefs and staff directors. I did this for a couple of reasons. Hearings really force you to learn. It's like having your Ph.D. prelims sometimes twice a week and also getting to know the members and the issues. There were some weeks I had three hearings. I'm a morning person, and I would oftentimes be up at three-thirty pouring over the hearing notebooks 'til six or six-thirty and then going to the office. I'd have a set of questions of things that I needed more information on that the legislative affairs staff and others would provide for me, and then review the testimony one last time. I would practice my opening statement and go on to the hearing.

Hearings were tenacious sometimes, sometimes hostile, but as I look back now, maybe one of the more enjoyable parts of the job, if you didn't take it personal. They could get pretty harsh. I'd come back and the staff would say gee, Chief, how can you handle that. My answer was always this is a healthy democracy in action. Nobody says we're all supposed to agree. Obviously my wife and I don't agree with everything, and we've been married for a long time. But to go up there and have this dialogue as long as it's civil is not necessarily a bad thing. There are countries where there isn't dialogue, and it's called a dictatorship. So it was us, the stewards of the land, entering the debate.

The secretary always urged me to come to the sub-cabinet meetings. He said look, he said you're the biggest agency in U.S.D.A. The other members of my team ought to know who you are and even though we don't talk about your issues very much you ought to be there. And I went to about one a month. A lot of times I was traveling and we didn't always have one every week, but if I was there and my schedule was free I went and I usually said something about what was going on in the Forest Service, just to try to be part of the U.S.D.A. team and be present with the secretary's inner circle. After one of these meetings I was talking to Greg Frazier, who was chief of staff. We had just come back from a hearing on the Smith bill. One thing that I'd seen even at BLM the last several years that somebody would propose legislation and we would say in sort of a mealy-mouth response, we agree with the objectives but we're opposed to the legislation because—and then we'd give some minor reasons. I said isn't it time that we started proposing some stuff. Isn't it time that we developed a strategy of how to deal with the forest health issues.

My very first hearing as chief was in front of Bob Smith in Sun River, Oregon, on forest health. With the preparation and information I'd gotten from the staff, I got up there and said you know we've got forty million acres at risk. And this was based upon the ecosystems and the habitat type more than inventory data, but it was an indicator of the forest health issues that we were dealing with. Here we are almost a year later, and I said to Frazier that we still don't have a strategy. About that time Secretary Glickman walked through from the meeting, stopped and said hi and listened to the conversation. He said Mike, I want you to develop a strategy, something that makes sense that we can go with. And that was essentially the beginning of what we called the Natural Resource Agenda that was developed by the national leadership team at a series of NLTs, which is short for national leadership team meetings. For this one the bulk of the work done was in St. Paul on the campus at the University of Minnesota. When they first brought the draft to me from the policy analysis staff, they had it labeled the Chief's Agenda. I crossed off the word chief and I said no, this is not my agenda, it is a Forest Service agenda.

The whole team was involved and the basic elements of the agenda were the elements in the speech that I gave called "The Gradual Unfolding of a National Purpose," which is really a quote from Chief Robert Stuart, one of Chief Stuart's statements about this is a gradual unfolding of a national purpose talking about the Forest Service. We were talking about the elements of recreation, of watershed health and restoration, sustainable forest management, and dealing with our roads issues. That began to turn the ball game around, and the Forest Service then began to take the lead on issues. And I have this theory in Washington, if you're dealing with controversial issues it's either you keep them busy or they'll keep you busy.

Roadless Areas

MFD: The bottom line was that a lot of stuff was coming at us from Congress and we said well, we don't disagree completely but we don't like it well enough to embrace it. That led me into the roads and roadless issue. A lot of people didn't realize that we had a letter from about a third of the members of House of Representatives saying stop building roads in roadless areas. The fact was that there was a tremendous budget decline on the roads program, and less than twenty percent of our roads were being maintained to environmental safety standards because of money. When you really take a look at the roads and the roadless issue, just like owls, I believe both are really a surrogate for "let's not cut anymore old growth" in the opinion of many people in the country. The roads and roadless debate was about old growth and wildlands in saying hey, we're going to cut your roads budget so you can't build anymore roads in roadless areas. So

Figure 10: President Bill Clinton (left, at podium) and (seated, left to right) U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck, Senator Gaylord Nelson, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner at the president's announcement of the Roadless Rule in Washington, D.C. (January 2001).

what do we do about this tremendous maintenance backlog, which is ultimately a taxpayer liability that we're sitting on.

It was probably in December and I called Larry Craig and told him I was probably going to do a moratorium on road building in roadless areas. Obviously he did his best to talk me out of it, and one of his statements was Mike, don't do that. If you draw that line in the sand we'll never get beyond it. When we did finally make the announcement of a temporary halt of road building in roadless areas, the explosion was fairly intense from the opposition. We made some mistakes in the way we rolled it out. We should have engaged the field more, in letting the forest supervisors know exactly what was going on. In fact, one supervisor said you should have got me out of bed at three in the morning and told me. In discussing this with Bob Joslyn he said it had really been a long time since the Forest Service had rolled out a major national policy decision publicly and the fact is, we as an organization weren't very good at it. But we learned. We learned from that experience because what we did was we put our forest supervisors on the spot. They were getting calls from the press and they didn't know what to say. Perhaps some cases the press could have known more about it than anyone else. That's the downside.

The upside is that we dealt with a tough issue. If you have to deal with an issue that that's intense, we would have had a long protracted dialogue about whether or not we should do it, and the extremes would have taken the debate away from the Forest Service. We would have had no choice because that had happened in the past on many issues. So you do have to maintain an element of nimbleness. The challenge in a large organization is how do you include enough people so the issue doesn't get away from you. We erred on the side of maybe forty or fifty people in the leadership team and a lot of the chief's office knew about it, but we didn't spend enough time with our forest supervisors and district rangers telling them what was going on. If anything, it surprised the Congress that the Forest Service would make such a bold move in a major national policy issue, and yet this roadless debate was weighing down so many forest supervisors because of the intractable debate around it. I won't say too much more about roadless because a lot has been written about it, and I'm not sure how much we can add to that. (I've got a chapter in the book on roadless that you'll see. It's the only chapter that gets into a little more policy detail than the others because of where we were.)

I said to the engineering staff and others, on the roadless issue, if we have a four to five hundred million dollar roads budget in ten years then all this will have been worth it. If you look at the budget numbers since the announcement of the moratorium on road building in roadless areas, the roads budget of the Forest Service has been going up. Prior to that time it had been going down, and it was this food fight with the environmental community going after the forest roads budget as a way of saying hey, stay out of these wildlands, stay out of old growth. As I look back at it now, all we probably did is articulate what was reality, that a good number of forest supervisors in the West and other parts of the country really weren't going in roadless areas because it was just too much trouble. It was just certain selected portions—Idaho, Montana, some other places in the West—where this was a hot issue. As Jack said, if Montana and Idaho would just deal with their wilderness legislation the Forest Service really wouldn't have these problems.

Another thing that happens to agencies is when you have tough debates, Congress is unlikely to act on these problems, so agencies like the Forest Service or BLM are left holding the bag with the public yelling at them from all sides. It's like being caught in a vise, and at some point somebody has to act and make a decision and move into the fray. So with roadless, some forest supervisors called up and said hey, chief, you know you've really stirred up a hornet's nest. Other forest supervisors said thank you, chief, for getting this monkey off my back.

One of the criticisms of some of the counties and local communities was that this was the heavy hand of D.C. But where are we going to get the money for an eight billion dollar liability? Is any local community willing to step up to the plate and say we'll bring the roads up to snuff? Not one. In a sense it's a little bit like death by a thousand cuts where you've got the CEO of this organization with this tremendous backlog that's mounting. Your choices are to watch it continue to unravel or attempt to do something about that, and that's what we did. We coupled this with the transportation policy that we worked on at the same time. The administration wasn't involved in this initially. I made probably three trips to the secretary's office telling Greg Frazier that this is going to be fasten your seatbelt time when we do this. This is not going to be a powder puff issue, because I wanted to make sure that the secretary wasn't surprised, and that he was completely aware that we were going to move into some fairly intense debate over this issue. As soon as the administration saw the support for the moratorium on road building in roadless, then they began to get interested. As we moved then to develop the rule on a permanent ban on road building in our roadless areas, they became more involved. The environmental community became more involved, and the thing unfolded with the president asking the Forest Service to take a look at roadless and develop a policy.

HKS: Jack Thomas several times expressed his disappointment in the environmental community for never supporting the Forest Service. In his colorful way of saying it, "You won the war now you're roasting the battlefield bayoneting the wounded." Why don't you help us so we can do the kinds of things you want? Did you find the environmental community, which I realize is not a single block, unable or unwilling to support the Forest Service on some of these things?

MPD: Once we took the roadless issue on, I think they became very supportive. I think that they were surprised that the Forest Service would do something like this, and I think we really gained a lot of trust and demonstrated also to the Forest Service employees that the Forest Service could lead. The problem we ran into is that the traditional forestry community felt we have to manage. The same philosophy opposed the Wilderness Act, because they felt it took away their ability to manage.

One thing that the environmental community does do is they push you a lot further maybe than you can go. There was pressure to ban all vegetation management, all timber or potential timber harvests in roadless areas. I said no to that. Sometimes we've got to do some things that we may not even know about today. Then, of course, on the timber industry side, well how can you possibly do anything without a road, was the other side of that issue. But the environmental community certainly wanted to push us as far as they possibly could.

Once we laid out the rule to the public, public opinion and the public meetings and the hearings pushed for a more preservationist approach than in the original proposal. They'd say how could you not include the Tongass when we are criticizing other countries for cutting down tropical rainforests, and here you've got a temperate rainforest and you want to do clearcuts in it. We exempted forests with up-to-date plans, and there were debates on that. Industry was worried about tracts five thousand acres or above, but the environmentalists wanted us to go down to tracts of five hundred acres and obviously that wasn't practical either. Industry was even more concerned about being shut out of the smaller tracts. It's truly seeing sausage made from the inside of the grinder.

HKS: Is it generally correct that most of the fifty-eight million acres of roadless are not economically accessible to the private sector? I mean it's too remote, development costs are too high, that on the commodity-production side nothing was lost by the roadless pronouncement? Is that too sweeping a generalization?

MPD: I wouldn't say no commodities were lost. I think it's more a symbolic issue. The fact is, there's a reason these roadless areas are roadless. The timber values are low. They're tough to get into. There are places where you have pockets of timber on the Clearwater, for example. Some places on the Boise, the Kootenai, but by and large, the easy stuff is gone and has been gone for a long time.

Bad and Good Times

MPD: I've been talking about a lot of problems here, but let me switch gears and talk about some of the fun times. I want to tell you about my most tense hearing and then I want to tell you about one that was kind of fun. The Tucson Rod and Gun Club shooting range issue was tenacious. The Coronado forest supervisor, John McGee, was being sued both professionally and personally. Somehow the political influences in Tucson were connected in some high places. Bob Joslyn as deputy chief of the National Forest System, John McGee, forest supervisor, and I had probably one of the most tenacious hearings in front of Don Young from Alaska who was chairman of the House Resources Committee, Helen Chenoweth from Idaho who was sub-committee chair of the Forestry Committee, and they were really the only two members at the hearing. To get two committee chairs from other states to be dealing with a local issue and have a hearing where they took about six hours was incredible. It really was fed bashing. It was very uncomfortable. John McGee had his attorney along and they would not allow his attorney to speak to him during the hearing. The climate was well, you scumbags.

HKS: McGee was also involved, I got this from Jack, on the endangered squirrel at the observatory.

MPD: I left that hearing as a citizen feeling this can't really be happening in a democracy. But the fact it was, and it was probably my most uncomfortable hearing, one I try to forget.

HKS: What was the issue, national forest range?

MPD: The issue was that the shooting range was a special use permit, and as development was occurring on private land, houses were getting closer and closer to the shooting range. We had local homeowners having shot falling in their backyards. Of course, the pressure was on the Forest Service, this is a safety issue. You cannot extend this permit. The powers that be at the shooting range, as I said they were connected in some very high places, because I know certainly for the congressional delegation from Arizona really this was a hot, intense local issue for them to deal with and ultimately all of us. It was an issue almost my entire tenure as chief, and I don't know if has been resolved completely to this day. I hope it has.

The other interesting hearing that I went to was a Senate Appropriations hearing with Senator Gorton as chair and the first appropriations hearing I had as chief. It was a tough one. We didn't do as well as we could have or should have. Typically the Senate has more challenging hearings than the House, and the Senate Appropriations hearing and the oversight hearings in front of Senator Murkowski were the toughest. Almost all of the Republicans were there, and Senator Byrd who was a ranking member from West Virginia was there by himself. Senator Domenici walked in and he saw Senator Byrd sitting by himself, so he got up and he said I want to go and sit with Senator Byrd so he doesn't get lonely. Everybody laughed and Senator Byrd who has got a great sense of humor said well you know, he said you know the quality now on both sides of the table has improved. Everybody laughed, and they got to telling stories and Senator Byrd got to telling how he went to a one-room school. And Senator Gorton got to telling how he went to a large school, and I said I went to a four-room school. This kind of dialogue developed and some

humor and the tone of what could have been a very controversial tough hearing really turned out to be a very delightful experience with humor. Yes, they asked some tough questions, and then another vote was called and Senator Gorton turned the gavel over to Senator Byrd who was a Democrat, who a few years ago was chairman of that committee, and Senator Byrd quipped, he said if there's a photographer in the room would you please take my picture sitting in the chair with the gavel. There's that kind of human interchange and personal relationships that also develop with members of Congress that to the agency, they feel that it is always tough and tenacious but it's not. There is lots of satisfaction and fun.

The White House

HKS: I'd like you to talk about your relationship with however you define the White House, whether it's the president or CEQ or whatever the White House is.

MPD: I talked to Katie McGinty before I was chief about the chief's job. I think a lot of people were skeptical about me going into the chief's job, because they probably felt I hadn't done enough at BLM. And the lesson I learned at BLM is when you go in there as an acting and you don't go in there with an agenda. You go there to mind the store as an acting, waiting for the secretary to appoint somebody else. Three years later you're still acting and it made me miss a lot of opportunities to get things done. I mentioned earlier that being an acting didn't seem to diminish support from the secretary's office or support within the BLM. But since I assumed my role as acting director would be short-term, say a few months, I didn't focus on a longer-term strategy or on conservation issues beyond Babbitt's. As a result of that experience I wanted to make sure I did take on some issues and particularly deal with conservation issues, bearing in mind Jack's advice that you're going to be in trouble no matter what you do so you might as well do something you believe in. Doing nothing is not an option. As I said, I had some meetings with Katie McGinty. They were always positive. We had a cordial relationship. But it wasn't long after I was in the chief's chair that Katie left that job and George Frampton came in. I can only speculate how resource issues might have been handled when Katie was at CEQ. She obviously had the confidence of both the president and vice president, because it appeared as though she had the decision-making authority, at least no one questioned her decisions. But as an agency head had I never knew if she talked to Al Gore or the chief of staff or the president about an issue. But by the time we started taking on issues, after the first year I was chief, George Frampton came in and the whole dynamic really changed. George always asked us how we felt about issues.

HKS: He was undersecretary of the Interior?

MPD: He was assistant secretary of the Interior [for Fish, Wildlife and Parks], then he moved to be head of CEQ. Then the dynamic changed again when John Podesta became chief of staff, because I think John and George both had a personal interest in our issues and that's when the president started to take interest in some of the issues, like roadless. Although they had obviously been involved in the monument issues with Bruce Babbitt and BLM, invariably at a meeting George Frampton, or John Podesta when I was at meetings with him, would say how does the Forest Service want to proceed on this or that issue. I felt though as I had built a good relationship with the administration and hence, when we got to something like the roadless rule and we were criticized for getting the roadless rule done too fast, the fact of the matter is, when the president and the White House get involved in an issue, a lot of the coordination problems and bureaucratic stalls that I talked about earlier just sort of fall away. That was the case in the development of the Northwest Forest Plan. I mean on any forest plan we take years and here we

had an interagency plan, not just a single agency plan, an interagency plan that was finished in eleven months.

HKS: A friend of mine in the Washington Office said that Dombeck had the closest ties to the president of any chief since Pinchot. Does that surprise you?

MPD: The president got involved and took an interest in our issues. The only casual conversation we had was when I was on the tour of the Burgdorf Junction Fire briefing the president. We were standing around at the helicopter, like in this picture, waiting to be picked up by the Secret Service folks. He was friendly and cordial and very astute. But why Bill Clinton suddenly became interested in issues like roadless, I don't know what his personal feeling was, or if he did it because he was truly committed to keeping wild places wild or if he knew it was popular in public opinion. Only he can answer that question, but the point being that George Frampton, John Podesta, and then Bill Clinton got involved and took an interest in some of these issues. Sometimes I had meetings in the chief of staff's office in the White House three times a week, usually without Dan Glickman. I had built the confidence of the secretary, and Jim Lyons was comfortable with my initiatives. If the White House would call me, usually they would go through the secretary's office to follow the chain of command but, you know, when you want a meeting in a hurry sometimes that just doesn't work or somebody's on the road, and I would always call and tell them that I was going to have a meeting at CEQ, and I would usually call Glickman's chief of staff or Jim Lyons or both if I could.

HKS: Where is CEQ physically in Washington?

MPD: It's in the Old Executive Office Building.

HKS: Okay, it's right there. It's a fairly small organization, right?

MPD: Yes.

HKS: Thirty or forty employees or something?

MPD: Maybe not even that many. There were really only two to three people, attorneys, that handled our issues. I wasn't always the one going to these meetings. Sometimes it was a deputy chief. Sometimes it was the associate chief. Sometimes it was Chris Wood. Sometimes it was Al Ferlo, who was my counselor. Chris Wood was a policy assistant and did a lot of the communications and policy work for me. By the time years three and four came around, we finally had a team of people that really were very good and had the confidence of the secretary's office and others in the administration, so we were really able to do a lot of things.

Let me just give you one example of a challenge that we had. There was a meeting in John Podesta's office about what to do about the liability for the homes that burned in Los Alamos as a result of the Cerro Grande Fire. It was a prescribed fire set by the Park Service. We had OMB there and we had some CPAs and number crunchers there. You had the members of Congress responding to their constituencies, saying to the Administration, you've got to pay for this. You started this fire and they lost their homes. The homeowner is only going to get the value of the home, and he's either going to get that from his insurance company or from the government. The challenge was if the government pays, basically all we're doing is letting the insurance companies off the hook. I found that to be a fascinating policy discussion, how do we work our way through this kind of issue, and where's the equity for both the homeowner, the taxpayer, as well as the insurance company. They routinely involved me in discussions about fire issues, the discussions about roadless, and various forest issues. It was interesting to be there in the chief of staff's office, and the president might walk by or the vice president might walk by. As I think

back in my career and where I came from, it was just a great opportunity to see how all of this works. I found it absolutely phenomenal.

HKS: I would have thought Al Gore would have been more visible in roadless and so forth, given he was getting ready to run for office and all of that. He was part of the environmental team there, but you say Mr. Clinton himself got interested.

MPD: The only natural resources policy discussion I ever had with Al Gore was when we were down at the Florida fires in 1998. There was one more meeting with him, a brief meeting with him in Secretary Glickman's office where we talked about what could we do for the victims of the fires. I've had numerous discussions with him about reinventing government. He led conferences where he invited the private sector and agency heads to an all-day workshop on reinventing government, and he'd host a dinner usually at the State Department that we all went to. But from the standpoint of the natural resources policy, fire was the only issue I had a personal conversation with him.

I mentioned the relationships with the White House and meetings with George Frampton and John Podesta. If you go back to the dialogue we had about my entrance interviews with the leadership team of the Forest Service and basically saying, what's working, what isn't, and what are your recommendations. One of the things they talked about a lot, and I was aware of as well, is the need to rebuild relationships it seemed like on almost every side. So the first day on the job I put together four relationships teams to come up with a strategy for the agency to rebuild its relationships with the administration, with Congress, with the external constituencies, and internally with employees.

We made the most progress in the first couple of years, I believe, with relations with the administration. After Frampton came into CEQ and John Podesta was President Clinton's chief of staff, they got more involved in our issues, and we went to them with many, many issues like the moratorium on road building in roadless areas. It really caught their eye when we moved into the development of the roadless policy, and the president's involvement with that. I always found the meetings with Frampton and Podesta very, very cordial. The dialogue usually began, how would the Forest Service like to proceed. Now we didn't always agree, and oftentimes they wanted to push the policies further towards the green side than I was willing to go, except in one instance. I suggested maybe we should take a look at off-road vehicles, and their immediate reaction was we probably have enough on the plate. As it turns out, that was good advice and we did not take on off-road vehicles, at least at the national level.

What we ended up having with regard to relationships with CEQ and the White House was we really developed a team of people that were welcome over there and that they were willing to work with. Chris Wood had been with me for about ten years and is an outstanding communicator. Just out of college Chris started working with my nephew for the Forest Service in research in Idaho as a volunteer doing stream survey work. Chris was interested in public policy, so my nephew Louie said go see Uncle Mike and Chris did and started working with me while I was at BLM and then came over to the Forest Service. Chris developed a nose for what was important and what wasn't in the guidance that he was able to provide us. Then I had Al Per a who I brought on as a counselor to the chief, and I believe Al was really the first counselor to the chief since Pinchot.

Al came at things from the legal side. Obviously there was OGC [Office of General Counsel] over in the Department of Agriculture, but OGC was more formal where I really needed some personal advice and guidance on how to deal with these issues. Jack had said that so much of the debate over planning and all of these other issues were really interpretations of case law. Of course, we had all of the litigation and lawsuits for which Al was able to provide tremendous guidance. Jim

Furnish as deputy chief of National Forest System was also on the team. In fact, Bob Joslyn prior to Jim's arrival, when Bob was deputy chief for National Forest System, spent time at meetings and Hilda Diaz-Soltero as the new associate chief for natural resources was involved. So we really had a team of people put together that could represent the Forest Service and represent the chief at a whole variety of meetings that went on at the Department of Justice, the secretary's office, CEQ, and the White House. I felt good about that because I saw Jack really struggling with all these things on his plate, yet he didn't appear to have the team of people that could really interact at all these levels, and as many said the Forest Service had lost its sense of direction. After we laid out the Natural Resource Agenda and took on roadless, I never heard us called a rudderless ship. Some didn't like the direction, but they didn't call us rudderless.

The same group of people that I mentioned, as well as others from legislative affairs and the staff directors, did a lot of work for us on the Hill that was so important. I really felt good about the relationships that we developed on that front. The relationships with Congress, especially when the Republicans took over, were really strained. They were really pushing the commodity interests and it was publicly an antagonistic relationship. But, as I mentioned earlier, privately it was usually a cordial, human relationship with most of the members.

Off-Road Vehicles

NPS: I had more field managers in both BLM and the Forest Service telling me that their most perplexing issue was dealing with off-road vehicles. I had discussions with some members of Congress. I recall a conversation with Senator Conrad Burns about off-road vehicles, and I also talked with Senator Baucus also from Montana about off-road vehicles. Baucus was relating to me where his brother, on the Baucus ranch just north of Helena, even stopped allowing people to retrieve game that was wounded and died on their home ranch just because he was having so much trouble with cut fences and other things like that. It was interesting in Montana that there were off-road vehicle regulations on state lands and, of course, the ranchers were concerned, but when I mentioned to Senator Burns whether or not the Forest Service ought to take on the off-road vehicle issue he was very, very concerned and said don't do it. When I asked him, do you know any rancher that lets anybody go anywhere anytime with anything, he said well, no, why would they. So we had double standards, if you will. As I said earlier, when I brought up the concern about the off-road vehicle issue to George Framstad, I didn't force the issue but it was clear that his opinion was you better leave this one alone, we've got enough on our plate now. And the fact of the matter is he was right, after I thought about it. We were also dealing with the county payments issue. We were dealing with the roadless issue. We had the planning regs on the plate. We had many big natural resource issues on the table, and employees were saying, hey, chief, this is enough, we really can't handle any more.

I remember a meeting I had with some of the coalitions of environmental communities where they wanted us to take on the off-road vehicle issue. I said we're working on more of the issues you're interested in probably than any other time in the history of the Forest Service. Don't push us anymore. Our plate is full. We just don't have the organizational capacity to deal with it. I'm delighted today to see that Dale Bosworth and the current team in the Forest Service is really focusing on the off-road vehicle issue. I think it has the potential to go the way of the spotted owl with litigation, if both we and the BLM really don't get on top of that issue. It's going to be a tough one. And it's going to play not in the arena of is it good or bad for the habitat, for the land, for the forest. It's going to play in the issue of this is our right, much like the gun control issue. So it'll be a tough one for the agency to deal with.

HKS: The goal would be to control and keep the vehicles on certain areas and not just going randomly?

MPD: That's right. It's a legitimate use. It's an appropriate use but it has to have some order to it because the reality is we've got more people going more places with more kinds of equipment than any time in history. We have to have order and we have to have quiet places. We have to have wildlands. We have to have places for motorized off-road vehicles, mountain bikes, and the whole array uses. But the point is, they just shouldn't be allowed to go anywhere anytime.

HKS: Are the proponents well organized, there are associations and they have lobbyists in Congress?

MPD: They're very, very well organized and also it brings different constituencies together than we are traditionally accustomed to working with as opposed to say industry whether it's timber, mining, grazing, oil and gas versus the environmental community. You get a whole array of interests with the off-road vehicle groups that will bring sort of different bedfellows together in the debate. It will be very challenging debate.

HKS: EPA I think is cranking down on that category of equipment for emission controls. Outboard motors are rather more expensive than they used to be because of this.

MPD: It's interesting that the Lake Association and the residents of the area have self-imposed regulations eliminating two-cycle outboards on Lake Tahoe because of the concern about the loss of clarity, which they see as very important to the quality of that lake. So it's good to see these local groups coming together and building coalitions like we see not only at Lake Tahoe but a lot of places.

Wilderness and Protected Areas

MPD: Might be a good time to talk about wilderness. One of the fun things I got to do was to participate in a ceremony on the Gila National Forest to dedicate a new interpretative center with the Leopold family on the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Gila Wilderness. I've been concerned that nobody's minding the store on wilderness, and also in our national recreational areas like the Sawtooth. The designation of national recreation areas was popular for a time, but yet the funding base and the support within the agency through the staff levels for a lot of those areas dried up. This left the field managers holding the bag. I recall getting a letter signed by a number of field managers saying, hey, chief, you better try to do something about this. This will ultimately be a problem for us. So we worked with the recreation staff and tried to push funding that way.

One of the things that I did was put together a field advisory group on wilderness to make some recommendations. This was an area that Jack had also put some emphasis on. I'd like to put in the record the results and the recommendations of the field advisory group. My decision to establish the staff group dealing with wilderness in the Forest Service and bolstering the resources needed to have at least a hundred new wilderness stewards out on the land working with people. If we don't have rangers and wilderness stewards out on the land helping people, we lose sight of what wilderness is and where it's going. It's one of the areas that I think we need to keep track of.

It's interesting how the mood of the country swings back and forth. When the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, the Forest Service leadership opposed it. The Forest Service almost invented

the concept of wilderness preservation. In 1924 the Gila was first established, but by the time the 1960s rolled around, the agency was formally opposed to the Wilderness Act. Yet we have probably the best and most wilderness in the country on our national forests. When we ask fifty years from now, what are the values of these wild places, both wilderness and roadless, we're going to have a market share of something that nobody else in the United States has.

HKS: Are the management issues fairly well worked out, at least in terms of this generation of management, like free burn of lightning-caused fires? To what extent do you actually physically manage a wilderness area other than to try to preserve its values by location of trails, campsites, and so forth? Is that controversial, the level of manipulation of wilderness to accommodate the use, or has that been pretty well resolved?

MPD: No. That's very much a mixed bag and one of the things we're concerned about is monitoring. This whole area of monitoring has been a challenge for the Forest Service and BLM. Many of the challenges that we have certainly aren't unique to the Forest Service, but monitoring use, monitoring changes on the land, providing the right information for people that are out on the land is key. We have got a mixed bag on how we react to fire in wilderness, depending upon where it is. I think given the serious fires that we've had, at least in 2000 and 2002, I really hope that this is going to get more attention than it has in the past.

One of the few areas where I got rolled by the undersecretary was the climbing bolt issue in wilderness. We've got lots of climbing bolts right now in wilderness areas, and the rock climbing constituency wanted more. I basically followed the Wilderness Act with the strict interpretation, whereas, Jim Lyons in his dialogue with the recreation industry felt that we ought to have more. That was the only major policy issue where Jim and I had a disagreement. I know Jack had challenges in getting along with Jim, but Jim wasn't an organizational manager. He was very bright, articulate, and really knew the natural resource issues. I think the one reason that I was able to get along with Jim for the most part was we rarely disagreed on natural resource issues. Our philosophies were very much in line with one another, and for all the issues we dealt with, Jim played a much more major role in the development of the planning regs. That was sort of his baby. As he said, the planning regs were sitting on his desk when he showed up, and he wanted it off his desk by the time he left eight years later, and he just barely made it. So he really took the lead in planning, whereas I took the lead in some of the issues like the roads policies, the county payments issues, many of the other issues. The one area where he rolled me was on the climbing bolt issue in wilderness.

HKS: Is it useful to talk about these in the context of the purity issue? Dale Robertson gave me an example where he thought the Forest Service was too stringent in its interpretation. Guides wanted to leave some of their camping equipment in a cache rather than hauling it in and out for each group. Eventually they could but it was a battle within the Forest Service hierarchy about whether or not this was proper. Jack Thomas talked about the difficulty of rescuing people, and could a helicopter land. It could fly over and find the lost Boy Scout but the pilot was denied permission to land and pick the scout up. He could only be rescued by land forces, as it were, and so on. Is that just because you have a lot of different people with management responsibilities, or is there some vagueness?

MPD: There's not agreement, but my hope is that we are applying common sense. There really is some decision space for the local managers. For example, the blowdown in the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters is a good example of that challenge. Jim Sanders, the forest supervisor, met with the various groups and when it came to rescue he had the authority to approve the use of chainsaws in that area, and the environmental community didn't disagree. If you've got an emergency and you need to get in and save somebody's life by helicopter, things like that, I think common sense measures must be applied. I think we need to be real

conservative with that, and I think it can run away with us. The Wilderness Act says something like where a man is a visitor he should not remain, and we need to honor that as best we can. It's one of the reasons that I made the decision against new climbing bolts in those areas. We have lots of areas where there are climbing bolts now. Let's leave them where they are rather than chip away acre by acre, eliminating the wilderness values. I hope we don't turn around twenty-five or fifty years from now and say gee, I wonder what happened.

HKS: I think I'm referring to what he said correctly. Dale Robertson felt that some of the management problems were from those who still were a little disgruntled over how the Forest Service got rolled on wilderness. A lot more wilderness was set aside. All right, buddy, it's wilderness. You go out there, if you get hurt you're on your own. And it was that ill will toward wilderness by the district ranger or the forest supervisor who was making some of these decisions. Do you have a sense that that could be true or an accurate statement?

MPD: I can only speculate because I really never personally observed that. I hope that we are beyond that. Take a look at the trends in how we as people interact with land. When the Pilgrims came here the forest was this tremendous obstacle and there were bears and cougars and other things that could hurt you. They wanted to clear the land to have a farm, plant crops, and forests were seen as this tremendous obstacle. I call that the tame and conquer era. Then we went into probably starting in the mid-1800s with George Perkins Marsh and Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt, the man over nature model. Today it would be man and woman over nature where we can make nature better. And our firefighting policies and much of the early Forest Service philosophy was part of that man over nature model. Then somewhere in the 1980s, 1990s, and on today we're really focusing on the ecosystem management model where we realize everything is interconnected and we're trying to look at a more integrated approach and interdisciplinary approach.

There are still people that are hung up on the man over nature utilitarian model. Part of the opposition to roadless, part of the opposition to wilderness was it's taking away our ability to manage, to perhaps make things better. Yet if we really look at the man over nature approach, whether it was damming the rivers, whether it was fire suppression, whether it was dealing with exotic species—cheat grass is a great example of that. We thought we were making things better just like we did when we were taking the wood out of the streams, and now we're putting it back in. But the fact is, we didn't understand all aspects of the ecosystems and probably won't for a long, long time if ever.

Jack uses the quote a lot, that ecosystems are not only more complex than we think, they're more complex than we can think. It makes sense to me to leave some things for nature to take its course. If you look at most of the wilderness that we've designated, most of it's rock and ice. It's not land that's of economic value. In fact, I've been a proponent of adding to the wilderness portfolio in the United States. We don't have any bottomland hardwood or tall grass prairie. I would have loved to have seen and tried to convince Senator Dorgan in North Dakota in the forest plan to let us recommend some wilderness, and our people wanted to. Much of the opposition to the roadless policy I believe was really from people that didn't want more land available out there that could be studied for wilderness designation, and if they could punch a road into this then it wouldn't qualify. Look at Secretary Gayle Norton's latest moves to remove millions of acres of BLM land from wilderness study. I mean it's a big controversy as we sit here right now in May of 2003. I think it's an unfortunate public policy that we are that callous and arrogant as humans to think that we've got to have every acre just the way we want it. We ought to have more confidence in natural processes that really shaped the land that we have.

HKS: I read in your book where you dealt with the creation of national monuments rather than wilderness areas or parks. There seems to be a shift on trusting the management agencies more

to protect the land if it stays under their custody. You don't have to make a national park out of something in order to protect it. Can we the people trust any agency in the long term given the changes of administrations and so forth?

MPD: I was director at BLM when the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument was designated and that was the first one that Clinton did. It came with an explosion of opposition on the part of some. But keep in mind what also was happening and had happened with BLM having lost so much of the California desert, some of it taken away from BLM and given to the Park Service. It was many, many acres then designated as BLM wilderness. If Senator Cranston had lived, the next step was going to be to do something like that with the Los Padres National Forest. The Colorado Plateau and parts of that are also at risk. It's the trust issue that you mentioned, but it's also that there's a large enough segment of the American public that support these transfers. These members of Congress aren't just coming out of the blue with an idea that only they or a handful of people support. There's a fair amount of support.

As acting director of BLM I did have a conversation with Bruce Babbitt about the California desert issue. He said he didn't want to see this kind of stuff happening to BLM, because if BLM truly ends up with the lands that nobody else wants, there will be no support base to manage the land, no funding base to do it appropriately. BLM is a very, very much underfunded agency. Land management and conservation is woefully underfunded in the United States today. If we go to Neil Sampson's study published in 1998, he said that in proportion to the federal budget, the allocation to conservation and agencies like the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Park Service, BLM, and others was fifty percent of what it was in 1962. So we're losing market share in essence. If we were a private sector corporation, we'd probably be thinking about Chapter 11. You've got to have some of these better quality lands in agencies like the BLM, and this is one of the reasons that Babbitt got the president to support adding all these national monuments to the Bureau of Land Management. Now one of the compromises they made is they said a management plan would be developed for these areas that could allow grazing and perhaps other activities. Well, we have grazing in wilderness areas, but it was an opportunity to allow for more flexibility in a planning process.

While we're on monuments, this would be a good time to mention the Giant Sequoia National Monument and really how that evolved. This really evolved with a dialogue that I had with George Frampton and just as one of the side bar meetings I had with him. This kind of thing had been talked about before, and I don't know all of the history of Mineral King but I think you probably do.

HKS: I know some of it, but certainly not all of it. It's been written about a lot.

MPD: The split of the Sequoia National Forest was really a result of the opposition to the Forest Service's deal with was Disney to develop this area. Then part of the Sequoia went to the Park Service, and we certainly didn't want to have this happen again. So A. Ferlo, who was counselor, and the recreation staff and some others put a small team of people together to take a look at this. Their recommendation was this would probably be a good idea. In fact, maybe one of the positive sides of this would be that we could put an independent scientific team together that would actually reduce some of the fuel load that could be a problem, and certainly would be a problem if there were ever a fire in the sequoias.

I think we had thirty-eight of maybe the seventy-five groves of giant sequoias left in the world, which were, of course, in that area of California. We probably had a hundred ton per acre of fuel on the ground in those sequoia groves, and we probably ought to have fifteen or twenty ton per acre. We had suppressed fire in there for a hundred years or so, and because of the debate with the environmentalists we had lost the ability to do any kind of fuel treatment, because there was

this fear that you're going to go in there and mow down the sequoias. With the forest supervisor, Art Gaffrey, and others we said we'll support this as a designation for a national monument, even though we knew that some in the Forest Service would be vehemently opposed to that. In fact, I got some fairly strongly worded letters from a few retirees saying you're basically giving away our ability to manage, again similar to the wilderness and roadless issues. On the other hand, part of that executive order that the president signed to designate national monuments was really to develop a plan for how we're going to operate. Part of the plan would be to put together an independent team of scientists that would make recommendations. Then hopefully the Forest Service would have the management ability to go in there and do some of this work needed to really truly protect the sequoias as they should be protected, as objects required by the Antiquities Act, which is how the president actually designates it.

HKS: What's the similarity between a wilderness area and a national monument in terms of management opportunities?

MPD: You have much more flexibility in a national monument because the executive order is based on the Antiquities Act. You have to designate what objects are you protecting or what is the purpose of the monument based upon the objects that are there. In this case it's clearly defined that the objects are the giant sequoia groves. I would say there's a lot more flexibility in national monuments than national parks because the national park really preserves the character of the scenic beauty and all of the treasures that are there. Whereas, the national monument, probably more like a national wildlife refuge, is focused on a purpose.

HKS: Who in the Forest Service bureaucracy manages monuments?

MPD: I think we have five national monuments, so the giant sequoia wasn't a precedent-setting effort.

HKS: But is this under general jurisdiction of the forest supervisor?

MPD: Yes.

HKS: But on the supervisor's staff there's no change in the staffing? There's already people there that have the skills required?

MPD: I'm really not sure how it's done on the other national monuments, but I do believe they develop a plan that's consistent with the proclamation.

HKS: Aren't most monuments under Interior?

MPD: Yes.

HKS: So this is not establishing a precedent, but it's not a common thing. Clinton did more monuments than other presidents.

MPD: The real precedent was the number of monuments established in BLM. It really, in a sense, was almost a mission shift for BLM and managing the land, the remainder of the public domain. Even though BLM has research natural areas and has other kinds of designations, to have the number of national monuments that BLM now has, the number of monuments that were established under the Clinton administration really is precedent-setting.

HKS: I realize you were not there at BLM at the time, or maybe you were. The California desert the Park Service manages for BLM, why not make that a monument and have BLM do it? Now I

Figure 11: President Bill Clinton (right) and U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck at the announcement of the establishment of Giant Sequoia National Monument (1999).

realize there's political considerations, but apparently BLM has matured enough that government trusts it to be able to handle national monuments. Why not handle the desert?

MPD: The California Desert Act was an act of Congress that really took a lot of the California desert away from the BLM and gave it to the Park Service. I think the number might be somewhere like 3.6 million acres of wilderness that was added by legislation signed by the president.

HKS: Doesn't FLPMA have some California desert written into that statute?

MPD: I don't know.

HKS: Seems to me it does. Just reading through it seemed like kind of a hodgepodge of things as opposed to the National Forest Management Act, because there was a chunk on the California desert. I may not remember it correctly.

MPD: I don't remember that detail.

HKS: Jerry Williams, the historian of the Forest Service, wanted me to ask you about the sequoia monument, so it's been asked. Jerry, there, you've been taken care of.

Performance Measures

MPD: I'd like to talk about performance measures. We have the whole topic of accountability and financial management that in my view is one of the three or four top challenges the agency has to deal with. I look at the chief's priorities that I had established with a team for me to work on in both 1997 and 1998, and we have in 1997 the whole area of civil rights, which we could talk about all day and that remained a priority throughout my entire tenure. I think we made a lot of progress. We had literally hundreds of complaints that were backlogged back to ten and twelve years. We put a team together that dealt with that backlog. The secretary had put together the civil rights action team. One of the very first major hearings I had was on civil rights with Secretary Glickman, Deputy Secretary Rich Rominger, and others. So civil rights remained a priority.

I'm not sure there was another chief of the Forest Service that had as many hearings as I did on that whole issue of accountability and financial management. I think the landmark was a hearing in front of three House committees at one time. The very credibility of the Forest Service was, in a sense, part of the issue, because when you start moving out on issues like roadless, like the planning regs, like policies on wilderness and others that some of the committee chairs and the western Republicans were opposed to, we had this weak underbelly of accountability to deal with. Some of the old timers said that one of the things the Forest Service stopped doing sometime in the 1960s or the 1970s was really tough field reviews. Some would say that was where Aldo Leopold really learned about the land was when he was in the Southwest as a field inspector, and these inspections really began to lose their teeth in the 1970s, and that the agency never really had a way to make sure that we were doing what we said we were doing or what Congress wanted.

HKS: I'm surprised to hear that. I thought the GII, the General Integrating Inspection, was part of the culture.

MPD: Well, they may have been.

HKS: A shift, like you said.

NPD: Some indicated to me that there was the shift, and we never really got back to having these kinds of inspections and reviews that had teeth in them. I can recall my days in participating in various sort of GNRs [General Management Reviews] and other kinds of reviews where when we had something that really wasn't working, it often wasn't put on paper. We'd have a private conference with the regional forester, the deputy regional forester, the station director and say hey, you'd better fix this. This is a problem. In one case I recall in Region 2 where I was on a wildlife review in the early '80s and then on another one in the mid-'80s, and really nothing had changed. Some of the harsher recommendations were not put on paper. In this case, we were dealing with the lack of fish and wildlife expertise on some of the forests, and so we came back five years later and nothing had changed. And I can only assume that probably most areas dealt with the same kind of thing. But I wanted to move us into what I call land base performance measures.

Harv Forsgren was part of this effort with Chris Wood and many others. We really had the objective of coming up with about ten measures related to the question of what's going to want the Forest Service and what we do in fifty years and why, and have common sense measures. We were almost to the point I thought we ought to go to some high schools and ask what is it you see on the land or what is it about the land you can support that is clearly visible. What we found is that when we take a look at our MARS [Management Attainment Reporting System] reports or any other kinds of data that's collected by the hydrologists, the biologists, the soil scientists, and all the disciplines, we were almost drowning in data but didn't have the information that we needed to make decisions. When all was said and done I felt that the ultimate measure for a land manager probably ought to be water and water quality. We tended to focus on board feet because they were easy to measure. There are land-based performance measures that talk about soil building processes, the function of ecosystems, biodiversity, water quality, and others. If we settle on about ten measures and then go to Congress and say these are the trends on the national forest. Because the reality of it is, public lands, particularly the national forests, are in much better shape in almost all cases than private lands are. Yet somehow there's a lack of appreciation of this.

The chief gets to do all sorts of neat things, and in 1997 we hosted the thirteenth international fly fishing championship on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. This was the first time it had been held in the United States. It was also the first time they caught native fish. It's really a tribute to the employees that preceded all of us and the foresight of those that established the national forests. I caught my first fine-spotted cutthroat during this event. They also had a contest for the hosts, and we had a number of Forest Service employees that participated. Jim Lyons participated, and we even invited Bob Armstrong, who was my old boss as assistant secretary of lands and minerals from Interior. Bob just loved to fly fish and when our team started, we were number eight out of eight teams and we managed in one day to pull up and we came in third. My rationale was, hey, it just wouldn't be polite if the host team came in number one. But I know that having people like Bob and some of the others that were really great fly fishermen on the team helped, plus we had a lot of fun doing it.

How is that we communicate what's happening on the land in plain and simple terms that the public can appreciate? Interestingly enough the chief and staff agreed on moving forward with development of the land-based performance measures. But then when we got into all the input from the headquarters staff and others, it was walking through tar when it's below zero. We'd just get mired down in the complexity and the detail, because every specialty feels that if their technical measures are not part of it, then it's not adequate. And yes, the technical measures need to be part of how we evaluate projects, how we monitor, how we do the technical things

that the specialists do. But when it comes to communicating to the public as to what the national forests are and what they do, I think we still have to do a lot of work on performance measures and how we communicate all that we do to the public.

One of the frustrations of I'm sure every chief and others is, eighty or ninety percent of the things that we do are positive, and yet why is it we spend so much of our time in a narrow zone of controversy. I think a lot of it is how we communicate what we do and what we talk about within the agency. So I had the team put together a long list of all the accomplishments and things that we did as an agency. I wish I could recall all of the numbers because it's astounding. The oil and gas leases, the special use permits, the miles of trails, the miles of road that we maintain, the number of campsites, all of the acres of thinning that we do, the assistance that we provide through State and Private to individual land owners that's so significant. I recall one of the numbers that it was probably '98 that we did over twenty-five hundred peer-reviewed technical and scientific publications. In one of the appropriation hearings I had this list ready for the dialogue. I was going through this long, long litany of accomplishments. Ralph Regula leaned over and he whispered to his staff, you know what, this is really impressive.

HKS: What would be ideal? I understand RPA has sort of dropped out of visibility, may not even be an effective law anymore and has been replaced by something. Would you like an RPA-like mandate from Congress based upon these performances that you're talking about? I mean soon as you work out actually how to do it. In other words, shift it from the commodities off the land to the land itself. Is that realistic?

MPD: I think we've got to do it in a way that communicates the values and the things that are important to the greatest cross section of citizens in a simple non-technical way.

HKS: I was thinking about the RPA assessment. You're talking about an assessment but measuring different things. I didn't know if it would be useful to the Forest Service mission to have a congressional mandate to shift to assessments like this.

MPD: I'm not sure I'd vote for any more congressional mandates, because if it's the right thing to do, there is no reason the agency can't do it. If we go back and take a look at RPA, the problem was we were never able to connect the budget to RPA just like we were never able to connect the budget to the planning process. Planning became this albatross where we set up high expectations. We had all these meetings, we were spending two hundred million dollars a year plus, and yet when the money came down it came down the same way that it did before, and it actually didn't change the behavior of the organization or the activities very much. I think of common sense conservation, and we ought to be talking about things that almost anybody on the street can understand and relate to. I believe that's the way we'll build a support base for the agency. I don't think we need another piece of legislation.

HKS: Maybe I was more specific than I intended, but you do have to get money to pay for this process, and at least some members of Congress threaten to withhold this fund and that fund because they don't like what you're doing, and to get Congress behind you would be important?

MPD: The dialogue in simple terms, if done right, will ultimately get Congress behind it, because I think it will build public support. Think of the assets the Forest Service manages. If we were a private sector corporation we'd be the envy of the world. With the product line that we have on the hundred and ninety-two million acres of national forest and the State and Private expertise. What we have and what we do are tremendous.

State and Private is a program that's woefully underfunded that does things that people love. One of my first tours as chief was to go out with the state forester in Maryland. We visited

Figure 12: U.S. Forest Service Chief Dombeck at the Thirteenth International Flyfishing Championship on the Bridger-Teton National Forest (1997).

various people and looked at projects that we have been partners in—the Chesapeake Bay watershed efforts, and other kinds of assistance—and it's totally positive. People love it. Then I go to Research, another woefully underfunded, underappreciated product line. The level of expertise that the Forest Service has, that's just absolutely tremendous. For example, at the Forest Products Lab in Madison. How many people know that the adhesive that's on stamps today was developed at the Forest Products Lab? It enables the recycling of thousands of pounds of letters and paper that formerly had to be rejected because of the old glue on the envelopes. The adhesives for the particleboard technologies, the plywood technologies that we have, the new joist truss systems for houses, and many other things that were developed by the Forest Service we don't talk about very much.

Tom Hamilton took it a long way when he was director while I was chief, in really giving visibility to what the Forest Products Lab does, because here you have this agency that does all these good things in this product line that literally would be the envy of a private sector corporation. And then you come to the National Forest System. Look at the product line there. It's timber, which is one of the controversial ones, and we need to be talking about water a lot more. Look at the recreation growth that's just been explosive on national forests. I always loved to travel, and from the time when I was guiding in northern Wisconsin when we'd take our vacations before school started in August, we'd usually fly into Canada and fish. But when we went out West, I almost always camped at national forest campgrounds because they were quieter, they were less crowded.

I was riding the Metro to work one day and sitting next to a guy, I thought he was probably an attorney or a professor. It's unusual on the Metro in D.C. to strike up a conversation, as opposed to when you're out in the country, but we did and he was just telling me about how he and his significant other just got back from a six-weeks trip. I said where'd you go. Oh, he said, we went camping, and he said we always go to Forest Service campgrounds because the atmosphere there is so much better than the National Park campgrounds where they try to cram a lot of people in a small area. I said I really appreciate that compliment, I'm chief of the Forest Service. It's amazing how people perceive the national forests and yet one of the perplexing things is so much of our time is spent in controversy fighting about whether or not we ought to cut trees. The one-liner I use a lot is that yes, everybody loves trees. Some like them horizontal and some like them vertical.

I see foresters and the Society of American Foresters often in a woe is us mentality that they won't let us manage the way we used to. Even when I talk to some forestry professors that are retired and they say well, we're losing our ability to manage. The question they really ought to be asking is why. What are the public attitudes that are driving this. Then you go in the urban areas, and the Forest Service State and Private tells us that there's room for another seven hundred million trees in our cities and towns in the United States. We ought to be out front promoting tree planting campaigns. The stress that the chief and the leadership deals with is we have all of these good things that we can be doing, we are doing, and many more we should be doing. I know in my time as chief I probably spent a greater proportion of my day just struggling with the controversies that were, in many cases, irresolvable that had been around for years like the old growth issue, like roads and roadless. I think about Jack and the salvage issue and Dale with the old growth issue and the spotted owl issue, when there's all these good things we ought to be giving more visibility to.

HKS: I'm obviously long out of touch but I'm not sure the foresters are losing the ability to manage, because there are new management opportunities replacing the ones that they're no longer able to do.

MPD: The way we manage and the expectations are different. I've talked to all of the professions over the course of my career, the range managers, the wildlifers, the fisheries people, the soils people, and I've got to say that of all of the professions and the professional groups and societies that I talk to, it seems like the most forlorn group are the foresters. Not all of them but some of them that sort of have the feeling well, if we could only go back to 1970 when things were good, life would be better.

HKS: Jack Thomas recalls he'd left a Society of American Foresters national meeting and went to a wildlife meeting and the contrast was significant. The wildlifers are younger, happier, more positive thinking. The foresters were glum, oh, woe is me, and so forth, and that's what you're saying.

MPD: I've observed the very same thing.

Chief's Summit at Grey Towers

MPD: One of the things that I wanted to do early on is to spend some time with the former chiefs. I also wanted to do something symbolic to help connect to the rest of the organization, especially since I had most recently come from BLM. I'm sure there were those in the organization that saw me as an outsider versus a longtime Forest Service employee, even though I'd spent more time in the Forest Service than I did in BLM. Probably the BLM job was just sort of getting my training wheels. I talked to the former chiefs and decided to call a chief's summit at Grey Towers, so when the weather got nice in May we all met in Washington and took the train up. John, Max, Dale, and Jack came and we really had a wonderful couple of days with nobody else taking notes except Ed Brannon popping in once in a while. There was nobody else in the room, and that tremendous environment of Grey Towers can be spiritual, especially when you're talking about forest issues.

We agreed that for the most part we weren't going to divulge any secrets or anything like that, but the kinds of things we talked about with each of the chiefs is what was the most over-arching lesson you learned as chief. What was the single most important decision you made as chief and why. What was the single most important mistake you made and why. What kinds of information do you wish you would have more of in the decisions that you had to make, and what single most activity or thing can a chief do to rebuild credibility of the organization. How would you describe the Forest Service of 2005, and here we are almost there now, and what we want it to be like. What processes and mechanisms should the agency put in place to better anticipate issues. How can we be more proactive and prospective, because many felt that we were in a totally reactive mode.

What I took home from that summit was the fact that there was complete agreement that we're not talking nearly enough about values, about the values of forest, the value of conservation to the public. It was largely as a result of the summit that I made up my mind as chief to really try to do what I could to use the bully pulpit that comes with the chief's office, with the chief of the Forest Service, that really no other agency head has. This is really, I think, the carryover of the Gifford Pinchot-Teddy Roosevelt era with the chief truly was the chief forester, the chief conservationist of the United States. As a result of the chief's summit I made a concerted effort with the communication staff, and particularly with the help of people like Chris Wood, to turn the image of the Forest Service around in the press.

You have successes and failures in everything you do in life to different degrees. One of the areas I really felt good about is over the four-year period that I was chief, we really turned the

image of the Forest Service around in the press. When I came in I was greeted by the Jack Anderson column that the administration had finally found an agency even it couldn't reinvent. There was a lot of negative press as a result of some debacles like the spotted owl issue and the salvage riders. We went from about eighty percent negative to eighty percent positive press for the Forest Service, and largely by talking about values and talking about many of the positive things that the agency does. Some of the decisions that we made to take on some of the tough issues like roadless and other things spiked the interest of the middle of the road conservation community. I really think we did rebuild some trust and take a hold of the agenda and set the agenda.

As I mentioned earlier in talking about relationships with Congress, we were basically responding to the Craig bill, the Smith bill. Saying well, yes, this is an important issue and we agree with parts of it, but when all is said and done we couldn't agree with your legislation. We moved to establishing the Natural Resource Agenda, the moratorium on road building in roadless areas. I really think that both within the agency and outside that people felt there was leadership, there was true conservation leadership beyond just the slogans and the coffee cups and T-shirts. A lot of that came out of the Chief's summit. I still have a copy of the letter that the five of us signed dated May 16, 1997, to all employees. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience to see John McGuire, the man of few words, but when he speaks, you'd better listen. I was teasing Dale, the time that I knew him as chief I never really saw him smile very much, and here was Dale smiling and happy, and it gave me hope that there was life after for a chief of the Forest Service.

HKS: Be as specific as you think is proper, but of the mistakes that were made, were there any surprises to you?

MPD: Not really. Most things we do in life, if we look at them two or three years later, we would do them somewhat differently. Some things I might not do at all. Take a look at the big issues that were problems for the agency like old growth, like the salvage sales, some of the other things like that. Most of these kinds of things are really the cumulative effect of a series of events that is a continuum that is constantly changing. It's not an on-off, yes-no type thing but it's really a continuum, a series of events, an equation with all sorts of interactive variables that are changing at different rates. The bottom line is the need to talk about resources a whole lot more, and I tried to do that.

Every once in a while you get a question from a reporter that you just never thought about before, and I had one of those questions when I was at the international fly fishing championship in Jackson Hole. I was fairly new on the job, I think this was probably September or October so I wasn't chief a year yet, but a reporter said what are you going to do about all the endangered species problems you have on the national forests. I had never thought about that question quite that way before, and my gut instinct was to respond these are not problems. These are opportunities. Think of the tremendous heritage that we have. Other developed countries aren't worrying about endangered species, because they've already been wiped out. At least we have some remaining places where we still have these species. This is not a problem. This is a gold mine, if you will.

Another question I was asked early on when I was chief that caught me off guard like this was, when you come back to Washington in ten years, what do you want to see different. My mind was racing, new carpeting, clean up the hallways, but my response was, I'd like to see employees standing around the coffeepot or during lunch talking about resources and resource values a lot more than they are. There's this old saying what gets talked about gets done. One of the reasons that I did talk about conservation, the importance of watershed functions, sustainable forestry, ecosystem management, is to really move forward with an aggressive conservation agenda that we called the Natural Resource Agenda. I was pleased to see Dale

Bosworth, now as chief, came out recently with the conservation priorities of the agency and their list is very similar. So they're on track on most things. I'm delighted to see that.

HKS: Eddie Bronnor told me about the summit. John McGuire was in a business suit and Jack Thomas was in a sweatshirt with a backwards baseball cap on.

MPD: And tennis shoes.

How to Use the Chief Better

MPD: One of the things that we talked about earlier is that the culture and the organization uses up the chief and takes up all his time. Tom Kovalicky was a progressive forest supervisor "before his time" and I think considered a renegade by some but an absolutely wonderful guy with a tremendous land ethic. Tom encouraged me not to allow myself to be scheduled by the traditional approach that, as he viewed it, didn't allow the chief to do what the chief wanted to do or needed to do but was used up by the organization. I made some changes as a result of that advice, as I mentioned earlier, where I had the thirty-thirty-thirty approach to how I managed my time with thirty percent internally focused, thirty percent externally focused, and thirty percent of the time thinking about policy. As it turned out, I wish I'd had thirty percent of the time to do the big picture thinking about policy. But two of the people that truly knew how to use a chief were Ariel Lugo and Frank Wadsworth in Puerto Rico at the Institute of Tropical Forestry.

HKS: I interviewed Frank.

MPD: We ought to talk about Frank with reverence. He is truly Mr. Tropical Forestry worldwide. Shortly after I became chief he was the only employee I ever gave a sixty-year service award to; we didn't have a sixty so we had to give him two thirties. Frank invited me to Puerto Rico and I went. Dr. Ariel Lugo, who's director down there, had my schedule just full of stuff. In addition to the meetings with employees and the briefings on projects, he took me to a green area in San Juan. San Juan is one of the most densely populated urban areas in the world, and this was a green space called San Patricio, fifty-three acres. It was historically a military base that had gone into disrepair and, of course, the tropical plants grow over everything if you don't maintain the urban atmosphere. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare had been given management authority, and HEW was looking for something to do with this. One of the plans was developers wanted to get a hold of it and build condos. Of course, since this is one of the most densely populated areas in the country, there was also a coalition of people that wanted it to be open space, forests, and natural areas.

Lugo set up a community meeting and a tour for the chief, in this case, Mike Dombeck. We had press there, and we made the front page of the paper. He had a meeting set up for me with the governor. I mean in Puerto Rico this is almost equivalent to meeting with the president. We also met with the leader of the Senate. A year later that area was protected as a fifty-three-acre forest in this large metropolitan area. This is fantastic. If people say we'll, what accomplishments do you feel the best about, this was one of them that clearly all of the stars were lining up. We were able to talk about forests, the importance of open space, some of the trends in forests nationally, and met with the political leaders and built community support. As a result we've got this fifty-three acre forest in this large urban area. I think that's truly one of the best uses of a chief of the Forest Service that we could have, an example of how the agency can be a conservation leader and make a difference in local communities. I talked to Ariel just a few

months ago. I said I'm coming back to Puerto Rico and I want you to take me to San Patricio and see what it's like now five years later.

I think about the challenges we have in Alaska and I've got to tell you, of all of the issues I dealt with, I think the most challenging was the Tongass National Forest, even more so than roadless. Look at the political dynamic in Alaska and the fights that we have up there and the challenges over the allowable sale quantity and timber harvest. Then you come down through the spotted owl area, the challenges that we have and the debate that we deal with. Then you come to a place like Puerto Rico, and it's almost like there's a continuum of appreciation for wildland and natural beauty. I ask myself why is it that in order to appreciate wild places, really appreciate them, we almost have to lose them, as was the case in Puerto Rico where the forests were trashed.

HKS: Has the parrot been saved yet? It was down to thirteen or something when I was there, and they were working very hard to maintain it.

MPD: It's doing much better and I've got to tell you that El Yunque or the Caribbean National Forest is really, truly a gem in what we have in the National Forest System. At leadership team meetings I always liked to do a little historical reading. In fact, that's why I had some of the things underlined in the book that you just autographed for me, the U.S. Forest Service history. But one of the pieces of trivia that I still ask people today is what's the only cloud forest that's a national forest. And, of course, it's El Yunque. But another question is what was the first forest reserve in North America. And hardly anybody, in fact I think that's one that I stumped the entire leadership of the Forest Service because normally you think of the United States and you're thinking well, it's got to be Yellowstone and what's now the Shoshone. But it's the Caribbean National Forest that was set aside as a reserve by the king of Spain before it was a U.S. territory.

HKS: When we had the centennial of the national forest conference in '91, Lugo gave an extraordinary presentation. He spoke from a few notes with a sense of humor. He's a dynamic kind of guy.

MPD: He brings an element of common sense and just a tremendous sense of humor, and what a wonderful host.

If I was having a down day, the thing that I'd do is walk around and visit with employees and see the excitement. Even in the Washington Office where some would say the mood isn't as collegial as it should be, when the chief comes around and visits with people, even if they don't like your policies, there's this element of respect and you can just see the excitement when they want to tell you what they're doing. The passion that they have for the job and the resources is just amazing.

Field trips were probably the best days that I had as chief. My first trip as chief I went back to the first district I worked on, the Munising ranger district in the Hiawatha. Many of the employees that I'd started with were still there but in a different building. I also visited the Leopold shack, given the fact that Leopold's roots really were in the Forest Service. Of course, this gave me an opportunity to come back to my home state and we visited the Muir farm also, which is just about thirty miles from the Leopold shack. But the field trips and visiting the districts, the research stations, seeing the state and private projects, was always such an uplifting experience for me because, as I said, even if employees disagree with policies they sort of forgot about all of that. The real challenge was to get enough sleep in jammed-packed days and dinners and other things with employees and constituencies. But I look back at that with just tremendous, tremendous gratitude.

I was asked about my support for the international program, and that was coming on the heels when the international program was defunded by the Congress. We had this strong swing toward isolationism, so that the international budget was basically zeroed out. The direction was we couldn't have a deputy chief for international anymore, and we had to make that a director level position. Jack and I stalled this as long as we could. We had a congressional mandate with the committees breathing down our necks, so we finally had to change Val Mezainis's title from deputy chief to director. But he never missed a beat, and he took it in stride. We did what we could within the authority that we had to keep international funded to the tune of about three million dollars a year.

They were such an effective organization in bringing outside dollars and being facilitators to what they did. I told Val that I'd do at least one major international trip a year, and the first one was to Israel, which was just absolutely phenomenal to see a land that was one time forested that no longer was and to see a country that the only forest they had was basically plantations, in essence, a human-made forest. Then going to Brazil. One out of five trees in the world is in the Amazon, and with a ten-day tour of Brazil we got to go to four of the five major ecosystems. We were hosted by not only the government agencies but also by the Nature Conservancy group that has this tremendous effort on the Pantanal, which is the largest wetland in the world. I was a delegate to the Committee on Forestry, and FAO in Rome. We had scheduled to go to Siberia, the other place in the world where there's one out of every five trees in the world. Unfortunately, that trip got scuttled because when Putin became president, he merged the natural resource agencies and dissolved the Russian Forest Service. So they were in chaos and they said postpone the trip. But Siberia is still on my list.

HKS: Siberia is kind of a big place. I'm not sure how you visit Siberia.

MPD: It spans something like six or eight time zones. Siberia is huge.

Alaska

HKS: You mentioned the Tongass. Do you want to say more?

MPD: From my first week as chief, probably about half of my time was spent on the Tongass. This was another example of a potato so hot that staff was almost afraid to deal with it, and hence it ended up on the chief's desk almost immediately. In fact, I think my first day on the job was Monday and by Wednesday I felt like I had my feet in concrete with the weight of the Tongass issue and the various negotiations. Here we had three committee chairs, literally half of the oversight in appropriations process of the Forest Service with Stevens, Murkowski, and Don Young. One of the major accomplishments of the Clinton administration was the buyout of the long-term contracts.

HKS: Each chief since McGuire has talked about Alaska as being a problem. Jack spends quite a bit of time on his journals dealing with Alaska, and you said it was your toughest problem. I'm not challenging that assessment. Obviously a lot of the problem is the extraordinary clout of the congressional delegation; it makes Alaska something you have to pay attention to. But in terms of the Forest Service mission, is Alaska that important? I mean the chiefs seem to have been almost consumed by that for a time. There are substantial references to Alaska in your book that's just out. The question is, is Alaska really important, or is it a political issue that chiefs have to deal with, therefore, chiefs talk about it?

MPD: It's both. First I think that the passions around Alaska and particularly the Tongass run very deep in this country. The American public views it as the last frontier or the last great place. Then they see this double standard where we are critical of Brazil and the Congo for clearcutting and doing damage to the tropical rainforest, and here we've got the temperate rainforest and essentially they see us as doing the same thing. Then you've got the point of view of many of the Alaskans, including the delegation, that we're different, and New Yorkers and those from New Jersey and L.A. should mind their own business and keep their noses out of Alaska. In fact, I always thought this was kind of ironic. Senator Murkowski would complain that Washington and the whole country is Alaska's business. But between Murkowski, Stevens, and Young they brought the regional forester and others from Alaska back to Washington over twenty-five times for hearings. I'm thinking to myself, who brought this issue to Washington and why didn't they have the hearings in Alaska more quietly rather than bring them to Washington where you had the national press and you had all the other members that were interested in the issue basically invited to play in that sandbox. We did make forest management mistakes in Alaska.

A lot of the mistakes were driven by the mandate of the congressional delegation like the long-term contracts and the roads to nowhere, if you will, many of them not maintained, the problems with fish passage, and then the below-cost timber sale issue. If there ever was a government subsidy, it was certainly in Alaska, and it probably would've been better and a lot cheaper just to send them the money. Alaska was a big challenge.

The interesting thing with Alaska and the environmental debate is that the timber harvest went from some five hundred billion board feet a year to the plan that Phil Janik developed while he was regional forester that brought it down to somewhere around two hundred. I don't remember the number exactly, maybe it was two sixty-seven. And then the controversial decision made by the undersecretary, by Jim Lyons that brought it down to one eighty-seven. As I said, it's been a while so my numbers might not be quite accurate. But the reality is, we were probably harvesting less than a hundred million a year. It was market driven in spite of all of the debate that we had and all of the hearings, it was really ultimately the economics that drove the timber harvest. Once the long-term contracts were bought out and we had the downturn of the economy in Asia and Japan, that market sort of dried up and even today the Forest Service is offering more timber than is being sold because of the economics.

Alaska is an important issue and is going to continue to be a big issue because of the frontier and wilderness values that the American public sees in Alaska. Yet the local politics and the Alaska delegation wanting to say hey, we're different. We need to develop these resources, when the rest of the country sees the aesthetic values and recreational values as equally important. Then you have the salmon issue with the salmon populations largely on life support on the West Coast. In Alaska we still have the Copper River reds as the most valuable salmon on the market, and the Copper River Delta is one of the richest resources that the Forest Service manages.

HKS: When I interviewed Jack a couple of years ago, he said he was under a gag order because of litigation continuing in Alaska. He wasn't free to tell me everything he knew about the situation. He confirmed that as recently as about two months ago, that the litigation is still continuing. So how was it settled with the buyout? First of all, describe the buyout. I don't know the specifics of that.

MPD: I was not directly involved in that. This was largely handled by the administration and by the secretary's office. The long-term timber contracts, the fifty-year contracts, were bought out to the tune of several hundred million dollars, and in my view that was probably one of the best investments and one of the best conservation policies that came out of the Clinton administration. Ultimately in the long haul, even though it was a lot of money, it was a good use of the money. I'm not sure what the Forest Service view of the long-term contracts and that

policy was when it was first passed by Congress. My guess is the Forest Service would have been opposed to it, but it was forced upon them. Do you know?

HKS: I thought I knew. McGuire said the mistake that was made was that no agency should have the authority to make a long-term contract on anything. That's the wrong level. Congress should make long-term commitments of U.S. resources or whatever it is. Doug MacCleery points to congressional authorization of long-term contracts in 1948. I didn't know about that and it's hard to imagine that John McGuire didn't know about it, but he said Congress was not involved in those contracts and that turned out to be a mistake, that the Forest Service can't handle the implications of changing markets and values over a fifty-year period. John's gone now, so all we have is what he said in his interview.

MPD: My impression has always been that this was a congressional mandate, but I'm not positive about that.

HKS: The Forest Service in the '30s was enthusiastic about Alaska in the broader concept of the New Deal and government involvement in solving social problems. Alaska will be our Sweden and we can make long-term investments in Alaska to see how it works out where we can actually balance resources with jobs and all the other things. But there was no actual blueprint. There was a concept that the Forest Service advanced during the 1930s that Alaska should be developed through upfront subsidies, and then once it gets going then it all pays for itself somewhere down the road. But I didn't really look behind that to see if there's much in the way of documentation.

MPD: I don't know the answer to that. My impression was it was a congressional mandate. The way times are changing now and the amount of change that we've seen and the rate of change that any of these long-term commitments are really risky because of the change in public values. We saw that with clearcutting. Most bureaucracies in all agencies are already slow enough to respond, let alone being hampered by a fifty-year contractual agreement.

Speaking of contractual agreements, I really think that one of the things the Forest Service ought to toss right out the window is the traditional timber sale contract. It buys us a lot of accounting problems and perception problems. I think where we're going and I hope we get there, the sooner the better, is to talk about what condition we want on the land, describe that condition, be able to issue an RFP [request for proposal] and go ahead and hire somebody to do the work on the land, whatever it is, restoration, rehab work, fuel treatment, thinning, harvest, and deck the wood and have a public auction and a clean set of openly visible transactions. I think then we get away from perceptions, including this below-cost timber sale debate, which is a red herring, that you're in bed with the timber industry and all of that kind of thing.

I don't know of a private land owner that would basically sell a private property interest on their land in this way. When we discover an endangered species or there are some archeological finds or some other insurmountable problem, then we've got this big challenge of having to buy it back. I think there's a better business model given where we are than the one that we're currently using, because really the timber sale contract is the primary tool for vegetation management on national forests. Stewardship contracting and where we're going today, I think, is a step in the right direction, but we need to change some of the other game rules. This whole idea of trading trees for dollars is also an incentive system that has gotten us into trouble over the long haul, because then we get areas where we essentially get hooked on these timber dollars, as we did in the big timber era and the KV programs and all of those trust funds. Somehow as times change we've got to be able to wean ourselves of that. The agency needs a new vegetation management business model.

Another thing is I think it's provided a false illusion to Congress and the American public that we don't need as much money as we really do need to manage. I think if the business model can be retooled that will help alleviate a lot of the controversy. If you think about what does industry need? They need a predictable supply of wood. Local communities need jobs and the forests need management in most cases, removal of fiber. You take a look at the fire risk today, there's not a whole lot of the forest that we can really burn that hasn't been burned routinely already without removing a significant amount of fiber, or we are going to cause a catastrophe. So who's going to do the work? It seems like we're sitting on a job market and opportunities probably second to none since the CCC era. And we've got light-on-the-land technologies and techniques that are very different than we had forty years ago.

HKS: Since the long-term contracts were bought out in 1997, what's the litigation that's continuing where Jack is still not free to talk about. I mean he's not been chief since '96, and he's still not supposed to talk about this.

MPD: I'm not sure that the litigation is still active. I have not heard anything about what's going on with regard to the buyouts for a couple of years, and both KPC and APC are done deals. A lot of people believe that in the case of the Ketchikan Pulp Company their intent was never really to get started back in Alaska but to operate in British Columbia. Their intent was basically to see what they could get out of the deal and move on. Plus they had a lot of hazardous waste problems. I really don't know the essence of the litigation that might still be active.

HKS: Maybe they just haven't bothered to tell Jack it's all over and he's still under this so-called gag order.

MPD: That could be.

HKS: I can see how that would happen. I haven't thought about it for twenty years, so I'm pretty rusty but the Bureau of Indian Affairs negotiated some long-term contracts on the Quinault Indian Reservation in Washington State. There was litigation and I was brought in as an expert witness on that. I don't know what was behind it, whether the bureau itself did that or Congress got involved, but it seems like there's no such thing as a long-term contract that can accommodate enormous swings in the value of timber, plus all the changes of public values. If we stay with the capitalism model, only the private sector can make investments directly so you have to subsidize them through cheaper resources or something.

MPD: In the same vein, when James Watt was secretary of the Interior when all the huge offshore oil and gas leases were sold, that turned out to be a real albatross around the government's neck and a very unwise way to do business. There are some parallels there with the fifty-year contracts in Alaska. You're exactly right. It's not a wise way to do business over the long haul. One is too long and the other one was too much.

HKS: You got out of the Tongass situation, even though it was the first thing on your plate?

MPD: It was certainly the most tenacious of the issues. Once the Tongass plan was done, one of the controversial decisions that was made by Jim Lyons was to further evaluate and reduce it. You always think things are going to settle down in the Tongass when the plan's done but the fact is, there seems to be always something there. Most recently there was a proposal by Ted Stevens, that was beat back in the Senate, to exempt the Tongass from the roadless rule. My guess is there'll be more chiefs and more regional foresters who will struggle with the issues in Alaska, just because Americans are so passionate about it.

HKS: If you buy out the contracts it seems to me that it frees up some timber base that was committed to those contracts. Did the Forest Service lose that timber sale ability altogether? I mean they were taking so many million board feet per year for the contracts. Well, the contracts are gone. Is the Forest Service free to sell that timber to maintain the local economy, if that was one of the issues?

MPD: I don't remember the details. There were some provisions in the settlement. But the bottom line is, it's really uneconomic in most situations to do a lot of timber harvest in Alaska, and the operators just aren't bidding on a lot of the timber we put on the market.

Funding Mechanisms

MPD: We ought to be thinking about the condition we want the land in, what do we have to do to get there, and apply the science, the technology, and we shouldn't ever be talking about board feet of timber. Every time we start with board feet it's going to take us right back into the cut/no cut debate. Acres treated as a performance measure is one, we ought to be using and talking a lot more about acres treated, especially as we move with the Healthy Forest Initiative. If we get drug into the cut it to save it debate, we're going to be right back to where we were ten years ago in the timber fight. I think there are ways to avoid that if we would just let go of some of our old processes and think about the language that we use to communicate to the American public. Forestry needs to change its language and the way it communicates. We hit a high of maybe 12.8, 12.9 billion board feet, was it '89 or somewhere in there and now we're down to about pre World War II levels, and the American public still has this perception that the Forest Service is selling all their big trees. We need to drop some of that language and adopt new language.

HKS: In some sense, the foresters—I'm not being critical, times change—brought it on themselves. This is not going to cost you anything. Bureau of Reclamation started out the water's going to be free. The feds will build the dam but the farmers will pay for the water and so the dam will be free to taxpayers. Of course, it never worked out that way because Congress didn't allow it to happen. But you built this perception that it's not going to cost anything. When you get caught in that, how do you ever expand beyond what timber sale receipts bring in and so on and so forth without running a "deficit?" We don't talk about below-cost interstate highways and so forth. Somehow the timber has got to pay for itself, and foresters brought it on themselves. It was probably politically expedient during Pinchot's time to say that because there wasn't a groundswell of support for national forests.

MPD: I would go on to speculate that it was expedient to say that in the post World War II timber boom, say from the 1950s, 1960s, '70s, and '80s when we were harvesting high value old growth trees. We got the brush disposal fund, we've got KV, we've got all these other kinds of funds then that we sort of cycled money outside of the appropriations process, and we didn't hide the cost but we created a perception in Congress that the Forest Service could operate with less money than it really needed. The purpose of RPA, as I understand the history of it, is that we needed some way to pull more money, more resources into the Forest Service, and we sort of got hooked on the trees for dollars, which could come back into the organization. Then we could hire biologists, hydrologists, other people, we could do wildlife work on the land and so on with this cycle within timber. What model really drives the Forest Service? It's not RPA. It's not the planning process. In my mind it boils down to about three things. Number one is the budget structure and the appropriations process. Number two, how employees are rewarded. And number three, the external pressures on the organization. If we ask ourselves has there ever been a forest plan that's been completely implemented, my answer is no. Part of the reason is

because we didn't change the funding structure of the organization, that when we had forest plans that were developed in the 1980s, there wasn't a connection between the plan and the budget. Some felt the plans emphasized timber too much; it might get ninety percent or eighty percent of the plan level of funding for timber but maybe only forty percent for fish and wildlife or recreation, which certainly was the case during the Reagan administration.

The Twenty-five Percent Fund

MPD: Since the time that Pinchot was chief, the Forest Service has returned twenty-five percent of timber sale receipts to the counties. These trust funds were an interesting issue and a challenging issue, and the twenty-five percent fund was one. In the first three or four months as chief, we had about twenty-five million dollars in timber sales enjoined in Texas. So that's about five, six million bucks that school systems were not getting because of the litigation. They were hopping mad, and we couldn't do anything about it. This was the situation with the court system and a judge's decision, and you've really got to ask the question that in this day and age should funding for an important social benefit like education or roads be tied to one of the most controversial programs in the Forest Service. My answer to that is no, it's outdated. We've got to find a better way to do business because it's just a headache for everybody. If you look at it from the timber industry's point of view, what better lobbyists could you have working for you than your teachers unions, your superintendents of schools, and the need to educate children, which everybody's in favor of, but yet we had it tied to timber harvest. So we started a dialogue to change that and the precedent had been set with the safety net that was part of the Northwest Forest Plan for the owl counties to get basically the same level of revenue for a ten-year period, even though the timber program had for a time been shut down and was greatly reduced in Oregon, Washington, and California.

HKS: I haven't heard the term owl counties before, but I can see how that name would come along.

MPD: We started a dialogue. I had dialogue with folks in the Forest Service that largely didn't think there was much agency support. They thought I'd run into a buzz saw. I started talking to some members of Congress, and started talking to the administration. Chris Wood was representing me in this issue. Lot of negotiations with Congress.

I showed up at a National Association of Counties meeting in Washington to be the luncheon speaker. They had invited me a couple of months before, and Larry Craig's staff got wind of this. I walked into the room and there sits Larry Craig. He had invited himself, and we sat next to each other and had a very cordial dinner talking about the twenty-five percent fund. When it came time to speak, I don't remember if he was first or I was first, but basically his response was we've got to keep people connected to the land. His quote was, "this dog won't hunt." In fact, this is a dumb idea and we've got to beat it back. I got up and gave my spiel, and there probably weren't a handful of people in the room that agreed with me. But we got the administration to support it.

Senator Wyden became interested and he was the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee with Craig as chair. Wyden was up for election in 2004, and the safety net expires about that time for the Oregon counties. Obviously this is the last issue that he wants to go into a campaign with his state having lost; I think Lane County alone is something like a couple hundred million dollars. So he very badly wants to do something. It really took us three years to work this through, and finally the third year we got Craig to cosponsor the legislation with Wyden and it was passed by the Congress, signed by the president. That was the only time that I was invited to the White

House to the oval office to witness the signing of a piece of legislation, and there was an interesting group of people that were there. Dan Glickman called me on the spur of the moment and he said Mike, I'm going over to the White House. You and the Forest Service were deeply involved in this, you ought to be there. So I got to witness the signing of that piece of legislation.

That was one accomplishment that I am proud of that I hope will make a big difference in the long haul. We made some compromises, but that's what legislating is about. You try to hold the line as best you can without losing the whole ballgame. One of the compromises was that the counties would have a choice as to whether they wanted to stick with the old system or go to the new system. Basically where the probability of the timber harvest would continue to decline, they would be better off by opting to take the average of the highest three years for the ten-year period versus counting on what the timber harvest might be in out years. So ultimately they got more money, and there was the talk that timber harvest would continue to increase, as is the case in my home state. They opted to stick with the old system and timber harvest has been increasing here on the Chequamegon and Nicolet. It's going to be controversial but that's the way a lot of these things were. What this piece of legislation provided is that the counties would receive their payments based upon the average high three years of the last ten years at a stable level and be guaranteed that amount, so if the timber harvest fluctuated a lot they would have a predictable amount of revenue. We really ought to have a per acre assessment of all public lands and payment in lieu of taxes funded at a fair level for the counties. But Congress refuses to do that.

HKS: Since the receipts from the resources go into the general treasury, except for that amount withheld for the states, where does this money come from under the new formula, general appropriations?

MPD: From the treasury. This accomplishment shows the dynamics of politics in Washington, whereas, in year one Senator Craig and many members were vehemently opposed to it, to keep on working the legislation through and be tenacious about it and carry on the dialogue that by year three he was a cosponsor of legislation that was ultimately signed by the president.

HKS: I can see there'd be an infinite number of issues, but in states where tourism is important a national forest is a generator of revenue, and that's not in the old equation at all. I can understand and am in favor of in lieu of taxes, but it ought to be much broader than timber sale receipts, and maybe we're headed in that direction now.

MPD: I agree. Congress could get the agencies and counties beyond all this red tape by simply legislating a fair payment in lieu of taxes program for all public land.

National Forest Values

MPD: It's basically all commodity extraction, whether it's mining or other kinds of things. But I couldn't agree more. There's a much broader value. When we say in the spirit of the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run, that's changed over time. Some would say if you asked the question what is the greatest value of national forests to the American public today, I'd say it's probably water, water and recreation and scenic beauty. And yes, these other values are important. This doesn't diminish the value and importance of grazing and timber and of other things, but some in California would say it's probably education. Because I believe that part of the reason that the national appropriation for conservation and natural resource management is fifty percent of what it was in 1962 is because we haven't done a good enough job of keeping the American public connected to nature and the outdoors and help them understand why land is

important. I have a publication here that I have been referring to in lectures and speeches. The title is "Conquest of the Land Through Seven Thousand Years" and it's written by W. C. Lowdermilk, Assistant Chief of the Soil Conservation Service.

HKS: Way back '30s, in 1930s?

MPD: It's USDA's bulletin number ninety, first published in 1953. His conclusion is that the reason for the decline of most major civilizations is soil and water problems.

HKS: Lowdermilk was a major consultant to Israel during the beginning of that nation. He was in China dealing with their food problems. He was quite a guy.

MPD: Back to my soapbox on why the land is important and what we need to talk about. Here we are struggling with timber sales and spotted owls and the Tongass and stuff. We ought to be talking to the American public, and the Forest Service ought to be a leader in this about why land is important, the soil, the water, the air. The average tree in the U.S. produces enough oxygen for a family of four to breathe, sequesters thirteen pounds of carbon reducing the effects of global warming with shade and beauty. I just wrote a op ed that I hope will run in *The New York Times* sometime this summer building on Greg McPherson's work. He's a researcher with PSW at UC-Davis, and during the California energy crisis he did some modeling work in California. He reported that there's some hundred and seventy-seven million trees in the state of California that provide an energy saving function, shade. The hundred and seventy-seven million trees save the consumer about a billion dollars a year in air conditioning costs, and they save the utility industry about a half billion dollars a year in wholesale energy costs. And if we planted another fifty million trees of the right species in the right places in California, that's the equivalent of seven one hundred megawatt generators. If we extrapolate that to the entire U.S., obviously there are variables and factors, we can plant another seven hundred million trees in urban America, all the trees then combined are the equivalent of thirty percent of the annual energy production of ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) for fifty years. On one hand you've got the Society of American Foresters and others feeling woe is me with the practice of forestry, and on the other we've got all these opportunities in the cities to help people appreciate what trees do for us. The management challenge and opportunity of growing trees and keeping trees in urban areas is just phenomenal.

HKS: You've commented several times about how important it is to change the vocabulary, because there's buzzwords. If you use a certain term, people will characterize you of being a certain way. The word "forest" strikes me as misunderstood. People see it being more commodity-oriented. I mean coming from long years with the Forest History Society, I wanted to change the name of the organization because I felt it didn't fairly represent what we did to the general public.

MPD: What did you want to call it?

HKS: I didn't have a precise name, but I wanted to get the board to agree that we had an identity problem. We were being identified with a very narrow segment of what our scope actually was. The reserves were set aside initially primarily for water protection. I'm not suggesting you change it to Water Service. I realize this would be a long, tough pull and might not be worth the struggle, but in my limited experience the average person thinks of a forest as being commodity or logging related. They don't see it as wilderness. If they talk about wilderness, they use the word "wilderness." But forest equals logging and it puts you almost immediately in a defensive mode explaining that we're not like that. Actually, we're doing this.

MPD: Didn't Jack try to change the title of regional foresters?

HKS: I don't recall that.

MPD: I thought he did and got shot down big time.

HKS: The chief was called Forester 'til 1935, and so I guess it's a holdover, the foresters. Did Jack come up with an alternative?

MPD: Is it in his journals?

HKS: No, no, there's nothing about that. I know I would have picked up on that because these issues have always intrigued me.

MPD: The sad fact is, the American public does equate forestry with products. I think a worthy goal for, say the Society of American Foresters, is really to change that, but it seems like maybe they don't want to. They might be the strongest holdover in not recognizing what the American public sees in this. If you go out in the street and you say the words Forest Service in New York and other places, the most common reaction you get is you're the organization that sells our big trees. That's unfortunate that they have that perception. Many, many forestry schools have changed their name.

HKS: That's right. And the alumni have universally opposed that, at least initially. Duke went through that. The School of the Environment raises twenty times more money each year than it ever did when it was the School of Forestry. The breadth of the Forest Service mission is vast compared to what the general public's perception is, the forest ranger riding out through the wilderness sort of thing and putting out forest fires and planting trees. It's a label problem.

MPD: I think the words forest and forestry have a far different meaning today to the American public than they did in Pinchot's time. He was really bringing science-based forest management to a country that had severe watershed degradation, the whole water issue, and the concern about the timber famine, which as I understand it didn't really leave the American mindset 'til the 1930s.

HKS: It was a 1957 publication, *Timber Resources for America's Future*. It was very controversial at the time for what it said and what it didn't say. But Chief McArdle begins by saying the timber famine is officially over. As late as 1957 they're still using that term, that according to our inventories we're growing more than we're cutting and we're on sustained yield and all this. I thought it was remarkable that late the chief was still explaining that to whoever got that book.

MPD: While we're philosophizing a little bit, ten years and twenty years from now we'll have a better idea how much progress, if any, was really made when I was chief. The reason I wanted to get us out of roadless is because of the amount of controversy it brought to the Forest Service and the level of mistrust. Probably the first major authorizing hearing in the Senate that I went to is I think where it was I made the statement. I had thought about it a lot because I was concerned about how the employees of the Forest Service would react to it. My statement was something like this. It's plain and simple that the American public doesn't trust us. And for that reason we ought to stay out of riparian areas, we ought to stay out of roadless areas, and we ought to stop cutting old growth. I believe this administration would be wise to make the statement we're going to stop all commercial timber harvest in old growth, and we're going to direct our silvicultural management technique to enhance and expand old growth values. That would be a legacy and that would put the Forest Service in a conservation leadership role again. Because the roadless issue, the spotted owl issue, many of the endangered species problems, these issues are surrogates for old growth. The fact is that there's none left in this state. Well, a

small amount on the Menominee Indian Reservation that I happen to think is one of the best managed forests in the country.

We've tried to take too much from the land, and it's high time we just face that fact. Cecil Andrus said to me at dinner one time, Mike we're living with the sins of the past. And that's okay, we just need to face it and move on. I made a fairly controversial speech, I can't remember if it was at Duke or North Carolina State, but I know that *The New York Times* ran a headline that was actually erroneous saying that forest chief calls for stopping of harvest of old growth. In fact, the phone was ringing pretty hot from the White House saying what are you doing, why don't we know about this. It was really a misinterpretation of what I had said.

What I had really said was I had reinitiated a Dale Robertson mandate to the agency to inventory the old growth. He made that request in maybe the last year or two in his tenure as chief, and the agency still doesn't know how much old growth we have. I don't really know why whether we're just saying well, if people know where it is, we're going to have more problems because they will want us to protect it. This issue of old growth is right at the heartstrings of the American public, and we need to face it and get on with life. The opportunities today are in the already roaded areas, in the communities at risk; I'd like to see us call it the community protection zones versus the urban-wildland interface. I think that's a term that isn't intuitive to the American public, what we mean when we think about the fire risk because a lot of work needs to be done in these areas, some of it expensive work. We tie it to the timber sale contract, the values aren't there because the old growth's gone and we've got to remove fiber that's of low value, in some cases no value. The Forest Service has all these opportunities in front of it, and it just somehow has got to pull out of this intense timber debate.

I have an analogy that I like to use—the red zone, yellow zone, green zone. There are three kinds of issues. There's the green zone. We all agree on it. You know, we all agree trails are good things and we all agree on everything, no controversy. Then there's the yellow zone, and the yellow zone's the area where progress can really be made. It's issues that are somewhat controversial but they're not polarized or personalized in any way to the extent that something like the spotted owl issue or the New World Mine that we talked about earlier, even though the New World Mine really wasn't a public issue, it was an internal interagency controversy. Then we've got the red zone, and the red zone is the areas that people are so entrenched that they just see red when you talk about them. I put the Tongass National Forest, old growth, roadless, some of these kinds of issues like that and maybe we just ought to set them aside for a while. These roadless areas aren't going anywhere. The oil and ANWR isn't going anywhere. The oil and gas on the Rocky Mountain front isn't going anywhere. It's going to be there. Let's set these issues aside, and let them cool down and focus on areas of agreement and build trust. And that's a big challenge.

Oil on the National Forests

HKS: This oil on the Rocky Mountain front, that's on national forest land?

MPD: Yes, some of it.

HKS: Gosh, I don't know anything about that. Is that something you want to talk about at some point or is that just a resource that's in the future? I don't recall it being on your list, so I don't know if it's important or not.

MPD: Well, now that you mention it. One of the things that I feel good about having accomplished is the withdrawal from mining on the Rocky Mountain Front, which many would say is the Serengeti of North America. Gloria Flora was supervisor of the Lewis and Clark. In the planning process she prohibited oil and gas leasing on the Rocky Mountain Front and her story is interesting. She told me how she struggled with that decision. Even though ninety percent of the comments and public supported her in the planning process, it was a different kind of a decision. It wasn't a traditional Forest Service decision to do that. After she made the decision, she got roses and thank-yous and accolades from the American public, and she said she was puzzled why was that such a hard decision to make when there was such strong public support. She said it was really a no-brainer. And it made national news.

Then the next year I made the request to the secretary of the Interior to withdraw the Rocky Mountain Front from mining under the 1872 mining law and again, that was in some circles very, very controversial but yet in other circles very, very popular. I think that exemplifies somewhat of the dichotomy or maybe the schizophrenia, if you will, in the way we view resources. But to protect that landscape for it's aesthetic values, fish and wildlife values, water values, historical, archaeological values to Native Americans, and spiritual values is really, really important. If you take a look at the energy demand in the United States today, and I'm critical of this administration's approach, particularly to oil and gas exploration. We're willing to sacrifice some of this country's best land for a few days of oil or gas supply to this nation. When we look back fifty years from now, we won't have the oil or gas and we'll have perhaps a less resilient, less healthy land as a result of that.

HKS: Was the issue the banning of exploration or the next step after exploration to actually start developing?

MPD: In the case of the action that I took it was actually to withdraw it from the 1872 mining law and all aspects of that, of the ability to mine.

HKS: One of the controversies that Jim Watt generated was exploration in wilderness areas or under wilderness areas and so forth.

MPD: With the Bush and Cheney administration, we see this increased emphasis, especially on BLM, for oil and gas permitting and coal bed methane development in Wyoming and Colorado and other places. The people that stand to lose from this are really the hunters, the fishermen, because a lot of the stipulations that prevent it now are, they might be elk calving grounds, they might be mating grounds of grouse and other species. And it sort of puzzles that we've since the 1980s the word conservative, which Theodore Roosevelt coined conservative conservation, wise use of resources, it seems to me saving something for future generations is being pretty darn conservative rather than trying to squeeze every last drop, every last dollar of resources out of the land that we can today. It's not very forward thinking. So we've been on this philosophical bent.

HKS: Well, it's important because it provides context for all the decisions that are made or not made, as opposed to just going down the list and talking about grazing à la context of the philosophy.

MPD: And it's more fun to talk about, too.

Public Hostility/Give the Land Back

HKS: Gloria Flora, you just mentioned her on that oil issue. She's been out in Region 5?

MPD: Gloria Flora went from the Lewis and Clark National Forest, where she did a wonderful job, made some good decisions, to be forest supervisor on the Humboldt-Toiyabe in Nevada, and then ended up resigning because of the public hostility towards government employees. This was, in my view, a very, very courageous step on the part of a public servant, because of the hostility that existed in Nevada that came out of the Wise Use movement to give the land back, the territorial sin, if you will, and the disdain for public employees. I talked to the governor of Nevada about this, had a number of meetings with Senator Reed and, in fact, in the entire Nevada delegation about this hostile climate toward government employees.

The shovels brigade is an interesting story. A road washed out and we had the, I think it was the bull trout, at any rate an endangered or threatened species. It was almost a road to nowhere. It became symbolically very important because of the consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Forest Service didn't feel it could rebuild the road. The local community and members of the county commission that were very much Wise Use local control wanted it rebuilt. So at the apex of the heat of the debate, some towns in Idaho and Montana send a truck bed of ten thousand shovels down to Elko, Nevada. Well, the citizens were going to go ahead and do it themselves. There was major concern over confrontation, perhaps, serious confrontation and downright out and out hostility, which fortunately never developed.

HKS: Well, Jack had some of that.

MPD: You recall the situation of the bulldozer that Jack dealt with and the bombing.

HKS: The bombing, I remember that.

MPD: They were such unfortunate tragic incidents. At any rate, it was after some of these events that Gloria Flora becomes supervisor. In Nevada there were situations where government employees didn't want to be driving, even seen in a government vehicle because they were worried about getting shot at, harassed, wouldn't be served at restaurants, didn't want to wear uniforms, wanted to drive their own private vehicles. There was out-and-out public hostility, and Gloria felt enough was enough and very publicly and openly resigned, saying this is a totally intolerable situation. I very much admired Gloria for, in a sense, sacrificing her career, because of what she believed in, in a public way. The misunderstandings, the Sagebrush Rebellion, it seems like that philosophy has about a twenty-year cycle, and sometimes it almost coincides with the grazing wars. There's about a twenty-year cycle when they sort of heat up and get hot and then they calm down again.

I start out my book with a story about my first meeting with a governor. I don't name him in the book but it was governor of New Mexico Gary Johnson when he was first elected. It's customary for an agency head to make a house call on the governor when you come to the state. Governor Johnson was anti-fed, this is sort of the crowd that came in with the '94 election that was less cordial than had been most of the politicians prior to that time. The first question he asked me is when are you going to give the land back. I was stunned that that would be the first thing out of his mouth. In fact, that's the reason that in the book right out of the box I wanted to establish that public land is public land and the history of it so people understand that. The Gloria Flora example I think is important to talk about because of the environment that some of our employees work in and have to endure, and yet, they do it day after day after day. But every once in a while you've got to say enough is enough and Gloria did that.

HKS: She's a talented person and found another job and is doing good things?

MPD: She's in Montana and living near Helena with her horses. She had a very tragic car accident and is recovering. She's lucky she's alive. But as I understand, she's on the mend and doing fairly well.

HKS: What happened to the public hostility toward the agencies in the Humboldt area? Did her resignation speech have an impact that you could see?

MPD: I think in the long term it did because I was just talking to somebody within the last month or two about Elko. Apparently some of the more hostile, anti-fed county commissioners are out now and there's a much more congenial environment. So I think that era has passed, thank goodness.

HKS: I live in Las Cruces now and BLM must have about ninety percent of the county. There's some of the same, why are the feds always interfering with our rights to grow high water use crops like pecans and so forth and why are they trying to tell us this and tell us that.

MPD: Catron County, New Mexico, was another one that was nationally known as being independent. There were some attorneys that were traveling around the country in my view just stirring this stuff up. They were passing resolutions on the need to maintain the custom and culture of the area, where development of the BLM and Forest Service lands or wild life refuges were impeding and causing problems.

An interesting thing that happened during this era is in Salmon, Idaho, at the time of the wolf reintroduction. A lot of hostility against the feds in Salmon, Idaho. I started a dialogue with some of the county commissioners there and visited there probably two or three times with them basically saying hey, we don't want to be perceived by the rest of the country that this is an unsafe place to visit or that we're just a bunch of outlaw renegades wanting to secede from the union. We had a very productive dialogue during this era of hostility in that part of Idaho about the same time that Catron County was boiling and the Wise Use movement in Nevada was at it's peak. I hope we're moving beyond that, although one of the things I see in this state now in the Midwest, known more as a tranquil part of the country, is there is somewhat of a backlash going on in the counties against Department of Natural Resources zoning and ordinances along lakeshores and stuff. The counties don't want the minimum setbacks and so on from the shoreline to protect water quality and scenic beauty. It's this resurgence of it's my land and I can do with it as I please. I think it's coincidental with the aftermath of September 11th and the fear of terrorism and the patriotic swing and the swing toward individual rights. Where do you draw that line? If we don't take good care of the land it basically impacts everyone. This will play in the off-road vehicle issue. It'll play in a lot of the issues that agencies like the Forest Service deal with. But the pendulum will swing back the other way as well I believe. It has in the past. The only thing we don't know is the timing.

Value of Public Land

HKS: Well, BLM is selling off land to developers in small parcels on the edge of suburban Las Cruces. It's causing a lot of controversy whether or not it's the proper use of the land. They're selling it at two thousand an acre, but the developers have to build roads to the area, plus subdivision roads, so it's a very expensive development whether or not it's the right price. Right now there's quite a controversy should BLM be selling this land to developers. Why should developers get all this, and then the same people are bragging about Las Cruces is a great place to come and settle.

MPD: Do you know what they're doing with the money for the land? Is it land exchanges or are they purchasing it or what?

HKS: Land exchanges, so far as I know. There's a peak, Picacho Peak right in Las Cruces that BLM wanted. It was a land exchange and they wound up owning that peak, which is sort of a landmark for the area.

MPD: Lands issues were one of the hot potatoes both while I was chief and while I was at BLM. This train is moving so fast we have a tough time to keep up. For example, for a conservative Midwesterner like myself to see land in Clark County, Nevada, which is Las Vegas and this is BLM land, going for three hundred thousand dollars an acre. How much does it rain in Las Vegas, four or five, six inches a year. You couldn't grow a garden to save your life and yet the values of this land is just absolutely astounding. I've got to tell you what our field people deal with in those areas is every land deal conceivable walks in the door on a daily basis. Every land shark and expert attorneys, and it has been very tough for the agencies to keep up with the various kinds of proposals that are made. You've got the Burton-Santini legislation where the Forest Service actually picks up land in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and the land is bought with money from land in Nevada, BLM land and other land that's around these large urban areas that was public land that sold. Of course, a lot of the riparian areas that have been picked up in places like the Kerys River with endangered fishes, high recreation value land, scenic beauty, hunting, fishing, those kinds of things. Those land exchanges are really resulting in some long-term public benefits to both Forest Service and BLM lands.

HKS: So BLM is providing the financial resources, in effect, for increasing the size of the national forests? Is that what you said?

MPD: Yes.

HKS: And there's no interagency rivalry there?

MPD: No.

HKS: Okay, everyone agrees it's for the public good.

MPD: It's for the public good, and it's the Burton-Santini Act that authorizes that that was passed probably it must have been the 1980s. I don't know the exact date.

HKS: Well, it's a tough one. We're one of the people that bought a house on land that I'm sure BLM owned twenty years ago. If the process continues well pretty soon between Las Cruces and the Organ Mountains it's going to be all subdivision, if BLM continues to sell a piece at a time. Where do you stop? I don't know what the answer to that is.

MPD: I don't think selling is the right way. It should be for a long-term public benefit.

HKS: It's going into subdivisions.

MPD: They're land exchanges, so the determination is made that apparently the best use of the land is to continue to fuel the subdivision, which we can debate. Then they pick up land in other places as you try to deal with getting rid of isolated parcels to create larger blocks of land in other places. That brings up another point that I think is worth mentioning. If we ask ourselves what are the big long-term things that are important when it comes to land—we talked about roads and the incible footprint that they leave on the land. The land tenure pattern is another thing that's exceedingly important. Take a look at the checkerboard lands of the O&C that BLM

deals with, and a lot of the Forest Service lands also have this checkerboard pattern. When you have somebody else owning every other section and then you take a look at ecosystem management and access and it's really a problem because you've got different values and different uses and different pressures from private landowners and corporate owners versus what the public land management mandate is. Land tenure pattern is one of those big picture things that's exceedingly important.

I can tell you something that surprised me a little bit and I experienced this right here in my home state of Wisconsin. Shortly after I became chief my phone started ringing from people in Sawyer County where I grew up. Apparently the Forest Service had been working on a land exchange with a large landowner. They were getting ready to pull the trigger, but there wasn't public support anymore and there probably was when they first started maybe ten or fifteen years earlier. Basically the objective of the Forest Service was to get rid of isolated parcels and block in areas where you had a forty, an eighty of private ownership in a large block of national forest land, which only makes sense to do. That's why this land tenure pattern is so important. What it boiled down to was- and the locals that aren't necessarily pro-government or pro-fed—they knew these isolated parcels were public land. They didn't have to worry about no trespassing signs. They could hunt there. They could fish there. They had access there. Basically what they were doing is they were trying to preserve their access. As it turned out, the Forest Service acquired some of the lands through another means, but it wasn't able to dispose of those isolated parcels because the local public wanted it to stay in public ownership.

We've seen in this part of the country, and I think most of the East, a tremendous increase in appreciation for national forests and public lands because of the access and recreational values. Look what's happening on private lands. No trespassing signs are popping up all over the place and so we're forcing a larger population on the public lands because they can hunt and fish and hike and bike and camp, except for developed areas, basically free and they don't have to belong to a hunting club or they don't have to buy a hunting lease or a use lease on private land and don't have to worry about no trespassing signs. So the values are changing, and I see at least compared to my home country on the Chequamegon growing up, a tremendous increase in support for the national forests, even the realtors. There were only a few realtors when I was a kid. Now you look in the Hayward paper and half the paper is real estate ads. The values are higher, much higher where you have access to national forest land. You don't have to worry about no trespassing signs and it's got this tremendous recreational value.

HKS: I know. We just bought a cabin in the Lincoln National Forest. Our house is 19.7 feet from the national forest boundary and that made it more expensive for us.

MPD: Now you're sure that's the accurate survey, you guys aren't in a trespass situation? [Laughter.]

HKS: Being backed up to a national forest is like being on the water almost in terms of value, because no one's going to build behind you and we can hike in the forest.

MPD: There's an interesting debate going on in this state, and it's really going to get hot. We've got this tremendous state budget deficit like most states do and there have just been some recent proposals to sell state land. This reminds me of some of the federal land disposal proposals and it's a ludicrous idea.

HKS: The asset management of the Reagan administration.

MPD: Early in 1994 Congressman Jim Hanson from Utah introduced in the House a bill to sell off public land, and even the state didn't support it. They couldn't afford to manage it. In Montana

Conrad Burns floated this bill as well. He pulled it back in about a week because of the tremendous opposition that I think surprised him. His statement was well, I was only floating the idea. But you know who opposed it, it wasn't the greenies, the Sierra Club, the environmental groups, it was groups like the Billings Rod and Gun Club, the blue collar, the hook and bullet crowd, the hunters and the fishermen, and it was over access.

HKS: Marion Clawson did a study, must have been forty or fifty years ago, where he made an analysis, would the states be better off owning the national forests like they used to say. He did the twenty-five percent receipts back and forth, and he said the cost to manage the land is more expensive. I mean the states would lose economically. That always stuck with me that the states are better off financially having the feds manage that land, accepting fire responsibility, and all the other things for it.

MPD: Oh, absolutely. Randall O'Toole comes up with a model, how to make them profit making ventures and the corporate model. I don't know where it's written that the national forests are supposed to be profit centers. The Organic Act said that no forest reserve shall be established except to protect the forest within the boundary, secure favorable conditions for water flows, and provide a sustainable supply of timber. Sometimes we make money on stuff and sometimes we don't, but I think the driving force should be what do we want this place to look like in twenty years, fifty years and how do we maintain it, how do we get there.

How to Develop New Policies

HKS: We talked about earlier the problem of switching from the Forest Service doesn't cost the taxpayers anything concept. I'm not sure there ever was a time that it didn't cost them anything, but during the '50s it was close. The revenues were so great, and how to get away from that idea that that's what we ought to have.

MPD: As a new employee on the Hiawatha National Forest in the 1970s, the perception that I had and the dialogue in the office was that we were proud of the Forest Service because it was one of the few moneymaking institutions or nearly a break-even situation for the American public. We talked about that a lot. The everyday dialogue around the office was also anything that could in any way impede a timber sale, that program was a timber constraint. The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act was passed in, what was it 1960?

HKS: Uh-huh.

MPD: The focus was still on the post World War II. Get the cut out.

HKS: Wildlife is a problem that you had to deal with in order to carry out the mission of the Forest Service. It wasn't part of the mission.

MPD: Well, obviously it was considered a timber constraint.

HKS: That's right.

MPD: Scenic beauty was a constraint. I think one of the big challenges of the culture of any organization is how do you keep up with the times. I think the bigger and the older an organization is, the more entrenchment you have. When do you let go of the past, and how do you move forward? We've got to hang onto our values. I remember reading one of Max's speeches, where we've got to change with the times but we've got to hang onto our values. I

don't think we always do that. There's another very natural thing that we've got to be aware of, and that's organizational loyalty, which is very important. But organizational loyalty can ultimately become an Achilles heel for an organization. This is the case in some of the military organizations and to a certain extent the Forest Service and the Park Service. To a lesser extent BLM because I think BLM has been whip-sawed more.

As one moves on in your career in an organization, I think your loyalties gradually shift from the reason you want to work for that organization to the loyalty to the organization itself, and there's really a big difference. You want to work for the Forest Service because you like the land. You like to be out. You like forests. After you're in the organization for fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years or so, you're so loyal to the organization that it's difficult to see the flaws. It's sort of like the family that we all have, we all may be on top of the black sheep of the family, but when somebody from the outside criticizes the black sheep then we're all over the critic. I wrote a letter trying to address that at the end of a national leadership team meeting that we had in D.C. the end of June of 1998. I signed the letter on the hundredth anniversary of Gifford Pinchot's first day on the job, which was July 1st, 1898. I ended the letter saying that if we are to redeem our role as conservation leaders, it's not enough to be loyal to the Forest Service organization. First and foremost, we must be loyal to our land ethic. And that stirred a little bit of controversy.

We probably have too many people in leadership positions where their ultimate loyalty is to the culture and the organization. Therefore, it's more difficult for them to see the real challenges and the real problems and accept those and want to change them within the organization. I can remember an employee telling me how much they loved the Forest Service. I don't know if I've ever had an employee tell me how much they loved the land. I mention this because I think it's an important dialogue for the agency to continually have in the leadership. One of the things that I used to say to the leadership at leadership team meetings is where do the Aldo Leopolds come from? Where do the Bob Marshalls come from, the really big ideas in natural resource management? Where are the big ideas? And the fact is, the organization and culture suppresses them. We force them out because they're outliers, they don't conform. Yet, isn't conservation leadership about big ideas. I recall early on in my tenure wanting to start a dialogue about withdrawing the Yellowstone ecosystem just like we did the Rocky Mountain Front. The response I got from one of the regional foresters well, why would we do that. It's not a problem. It would be like picking a scab. When the fact is, when it's not an issue is when we really should do it rather than when it does become a problem. If we look at what people most admire about Gifford Pinchot, who will likely always be the most popular chief, the most revered chief of the Forest Service, it was really the big bold ideas. The opposition from the delegations in the West was virtually the same as the opposition today. One of the things conservation is about is being ahead of the headlights, and what is the mechanism in the Forest Service to stay ahead, to have some programs that are truly ahead of the headlights.

HKS: Could the research arm perform that function? It might need to be retooled in a certain way and recruit different kinds of people to staff that function but have a policy research program. How does the Forest Service develop policy, ad hoc?

MPD: A lot of different ways. In some instances I think it's a very thoughtful, systematic approach and in other instances it's sort of a reactive adjustment or building a process around the problem, and a lot of it's dictated by the circumstances.

HKS: An issue comes up that you don't quite have a handle on, and you pull in people from the field. For three months they are on assignment to Washington, D.C., to help deal with an issue, and then the issue goes away, it's resolved. The guys go back home, and the next problem comes along and you bring in another group. And maybe that's the best way to do it. I'm asking is that generally how the Forest Service responds to issues is bringing in people from the field

who have the best tools at hand to address a new policy and new planning regs, whatever it is you need to have, as opposed to using the Washington Office staff?

MPD: It's really a combination of both. The Tongass National Forest Plan was developed almost exclusively in Region 10, with experts going up to Region 10. Once we got into the final negations the Department of Justice was involved. The CEQ was involved. The secretary's office was involved, and headquarters was involved. If we look at issues like the Giant Sequoia National Monument, one of the new staffers in Washington had just come from the Sequoia and had working knowledge of that, worked in those programs. I worked with Al Ferlo, who was essentially my representative on that issue, and I chose the counselor because Al was an attorney because it was largely a legal issue area to work through, and then the forest supervisor and his staff.

I know from what Art Gaffney has told me there were very strong divisions on the Sequoia as to whether or not there should be a national monument. There was one group that was very much opposed to it and there was another group that was very favorably disposed to it. I think the roadless rule and the Northwest Forest Plan have something in common, and that is they ultimately were driven by a presidential mandate. We were criticized in the roadless rule for getting it done too fast, for just jamming it through, and I was telling Senator Craig how most of the time you're criticizing us for not being able to act, for taking too long to do something.

Interagency Coordination

MPD: This is a good time to talk about interagency coordination. We did the Northwest Forest Plan in eleven months, but it takes three to five years to complete a typical forest plan, some of them longer than that. With a presidential mandate, a lot of the coordination problems and the interagency squabbling just sort of melts away and you focus on the task. And with the roadless rule we brought a large team of people. We had the associate chief for natural resources, Hilda Diaz-Soltero, Jim Furnish, deputy chief for National Forest System, and Chris Wood that largely had the chief's oversight of that issue. Hilda had tremendous project management skills. One of the reasons I hired her is because of that skill and her experience with other agencies, and I felt we had a shortage of good people that will take a project and really stay on it to make sure we meet deadlines. She really held the interagency effort together and made sure that the reviews that were required from the Fish and Wildlife Service, from the Department of Justice, from all the other agencies as this process moved forward was kept on track. If there was an issue that needed my involvement, Hilda or Chris brought it to me immediately. If there was an issue I felt the secretary needed to be involved in immediately, one of us would take it to the secretary's staff, whether it was the undersecretary, the chief of staff to Dan Glickman, or Dan Glickman himself. Likewise, we had regular briefings with the Council on Environmental Quality and if we needed a decision we got it and it was just sort of A,B,C,D, one step right after another. So agencies can act. One of my frustrations is the level of interagency communication and the turf.

The Columbia Basin effort is a great example of such a high level of intensity and need for interagency coordination and hand-holding that there was no energy or time left to really get the job done because the interagency turf was so intense. One of the lessons I learned in observing this whole process is that a cabinet member and the president need to do a little bit of head knocking more often than they do. We ought to approach the process with the spirit that all agencies ought to be responsible for all the laws. Instead the Fish and Wildlife Service is stuck with the Endangered Species Act and the National Marine Fisheries Service when it comes to a matter concerning anadromous fishes. When the chief or the director of BLM are up at Congress being hammered for why aren't you getting the cut out or what about the stocking rates of cattle

on a grazing permit, we ought to have the regulatory agency sitting right there with us, because much of our decision is based upon laws that they're responsible for enforcing. But instead of that spirit, it's pretty much the dialogue that it's us against them, the other agency is the problem.

Another feeling I have with most agencies is there's way too much inbreeding. In the ideal world we need a flow of people, maybe not a flow, maybe a better word is a trickle, five percent, maybe ten percent of people from academia, industry, non-government organizations, technical experts, flowing through the state and federal agencies, working for the Forest Service, working for the Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM employees moving from one agency to another so you build networks. You build credibility. You enhance coordination and you develop trust rather than the insularity that evolves when you have virtually everybody working for the same agency for an entire career, even though that's what many employees aspire to do. Take a look at the private sector. Dell Computers is wanting to hire from Microsoft is wanting to hire from Apple to bring ideas, to bring new ways of doing business. That's what hybrid vigor is all about and yet, it's not encouraged in many organizations.

I'm one of the rarities. When I left the Forest Service to go to BLM it was sort of like gee, what have I done wrong, and yet that was a tremendously enriching experience. For me it ended up being very positive, but for most people that will go from one organization to another they're afraid they're going to lose touch. The other concern is that they're going to miss promotion opportunities. Somehow we in the leadership of organizations have to turn this into a positive experience. The tenure system at universities works the same way. It doesn't encourage a professor to go do something else and bring that experience back. Now I'm here at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and I teach at Madison some. I'm probably the only one on staff here that's had actual hands-on policy experience, although we do have some wonderful policy experts. Jack has told me at Montana the reason kids take his course is to listen to the stories and what the real world is like. I have this lecture that I give called the D.C. Sausage Factory, you know, what it's like to watch the sausage being made from the inside of the grinder. Some of the embedded things in our organizations that also cause us problems. The reason I mention this is I hope that it will stimulate dialogue. It's not to be critical, but really to stimulate dialogue, to continually focus on how can we do better.

HKS: The Canadians seem to be able to transfer back and forth more easily. I know forestry professors who've been in provincial government and federal government. They move around a bit. Part of it is the practical matter of health systems and retirement systems. They're much more portable in Canada than they are in the U.S.

MPD: Wouldn't it make sense to have experts in the Forest Service from other agencies that know how the other agencies approach something to enhance coordination. Instead the tendency is to knuckle down and hold our ground. The classic example is the spotted owl and the troika of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the BLM in what ultimately turned into a very personalized debate between Cy Jamison, Jack, Dale Robertson, and John Turner.

HKS: How about reorganizing government and putting all these guys in the same box rather than having them scattered around the way they are? No one seems to really think it's a good idea, but on paper it makes sense. Get back to your original question, where do the good ideas come from. How can an agency given all the demands on scarce resources afford to give someone a little space to think?

MPD: One might even say how can we afford not to.

HKS: Well, I understand that.

MPD: I believe it's kind of a pay now, pay later issue. If we look at the spotted owl issue, the roadless issue, endangered salmon, the cost over time is tremendous. Look at the fire issue and the forest health issue. We threw over a billion dollars on fire in 2000, over a billion dollars in 2002. I was in violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act in fiscal year 2000 because of fire. Just think if we could take even twenty-five percent of that billion dollars and invest it up front in the treatments on the land. But instead what we do is we spend half the year throwing money at fire in suppression and the other half of the year talking about prescribed fire and how we need to integrate it in the overall process. Yet we can't quite seem to take it to the next step. I certainly see the opportunities in front of us now because every fire year we have is a teachable moment both within the agency, the American public, and Congress.

HKS: Steve Pyne thinks part of the fire mentality deficiency we have is the militarization of the process. The Forest Service adopted military approaches to fire and is very good at that, chain of command, sector bosses, and squad bosses, and crew bosses, and spans of control, and moving equipment, and all the rest of the planning. The Forest Service excels and even exports that, it goes to Chile and shows them how to do the same thing on their fires. But it doesn't have anything to do with the prescribed burning, except to discuss wouldn't that be great if we could do it. Instead it sees all the problems. Who's going to accept the liability if a fire escapes.

MPD: We're all basically risk averse. If you're the one that's touching off the match on a prescribed fire and it escapes, your career is on the line. The incentives aren't there to be out on the edge. Can you imagine how the park manager feels from the Cerro Grance Fire with two hundred and forty-three structures burned? None of us wants to repeat that or wants to experience that kind of thing. Your point exemplifies that.

HKS: That fire must have been studied quite a bit by now. Are there some obvious deficiencies in the way that was handled that could be avoided? Is there a learning curve involved in that, that you can now go beyond that and not worry about that sort of thing? I'm not asking you to recount all the specifics, but did we learn enough from that fire to advance?

MPD: We reinforced some of the things we already knew about the need for better interagency coordination. To really be able to respond quickly when there is a problem. So it's the timing, a deployment of resources with different resources being in different agencies.

HKS: I'm not being critical here, but the Park Service is not quite as adept at fire suppression as the Forest Service is. Did things get out of hand because it was a national park fire?

MPD: I don't know the details well enough to respond.

HKS: Are there any other examples of interagency issues you want to bring up? Obviously the Forest Service and BLM get along better in recent years. How about the Department of Justice and Fish and Wildlife Service? Is that something that you would like to put on record? You mentioned it would be better if the Fish and Wildlife Service went to the same hearings you did and sat down along side of you and explained why the Forest Service wasn't able to get the cut out or whatever it was

MPD: Well, I'll just reiterate what I said. We ought to have the spirit where all the agencies are responsible for all the laws. I wasn't nearly as vocal as Jack was on we've got to redo the laws because I felt the environmental laws that we had on the books have made tremendous progress in the United States with clean air and clean water. People aren't dying of respiratory problems at the level they were in L.A. in the 1960s. The Cuyahoga River is no longer burning. We're recovering species. The whole litany of environmental laws that was passed from say between

1960 and 1980, no other developed nation's made the progress we've made in the area of the environment. Now that doesn't mean we don't have a long way to go, but we certainly haven't been sitting on our hands. I view this as we're going through the growing pains of how to mesh all this stuff. You've got the problem of evolving case law and different interpretations and different decisions in different circuits that can drive managers nuts. But when all is said and done, do we really want to throw all of this out the window and start over again? My answer to that's no.

What we need to do is each agency needs to go back and look inside itself and really clean house to the greatest extent that it can. What we find is it's easier to place the blame someplace else. It's easier to say well, this law is broken and run to Congress or various special interests will use this as a means to change the law to favor them. If we approached this in the spirit of we're all responsible for all the laws and we're one government and we need to figure out how to make it work. I can tell you that the American people don't distinguish between the agencies and what they do.

There was some polling on the public recognition of land management agencies. Of course, the Forest Service was number two, only behind the Park Service, and you could predict the level of public recognition of the agencies with the lowest being the Bureau of Land Management. Of course, the Bureau of Land Management is one of the smaller agencies and is only located in thirteen states in the West, and with lands in the low population states. Some good head knocking both of cabinet members and by cabinet members, to get people to cooperate better would help. I don't remember many of the details about the issue but as acting director of the BLM we got an order from the White House chief of staff, probably Leon Panetta, for the Forest Service, the BLM, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service to get together and get on top of some processes. The fact is we did when we had that level of direction and basically the mandate of the president. That doesn't happen very often. It needs to happen a lot more. I think of the daunting task that the Homeland Security agency, this new cabinet member has. The natural resource agencies in a sense are minor compared to the FBI, the CIA, the National Security Agency and the intelligence community and the entrenched cultures, which are probably ten times tougher than what we experience in the natural resource agencies. What I've experienced with organizational behavior is, it's going to take decades to pull the Homeland Security agencies together. You can do it on paper and you can say you've done it but when you look down into the actual behaviors of the organizations and then you're into the covert operations and what the double agents are doing, I don't know how we will ever know if that's been successful or not.

HKS: The FBI is supposed to be about domestic issues, and yet when there's a terrorism thing in Yemen, FBI agents go over. There's a lot of turf struggles going on.

MPD: The only time I think some of these reorganizations can really work is if you've had some traumatic event. Look at Desert Storm and how popular George Bush, Sr., was. A little over a year later he was beat by a young, lesser known governor, not only a lesser known governor, a governor from the southern state of Arkansas. That's how short the memory span of the American public is. So I believe you either have to have some very traumatic event that's such a teachable moment that you're given the latitude to take that kind of action, or else it has to happen maybe right at the beginning of a second term of a strong, very popular president.

Water as Centerpiece

MPD: I wanted to see our annual performance report be more user friendly, rather than just be a book of tables and columns and government acronyms. I wanted it to be something that people could pick up and was an attractive document that they would want to look at, rather than just another mundane IRS like looking document. The Government Performance and Results Act did bring on a number of new requirements. Al Gore wanted government to be more results oriented, as the name indicates, and to really focus on what services we're providing. It's also partially tied to reinvention of government. The Forest Service was one of the thirty agencies that had ninety percent of the contact with the American people. The vice president was interested in that, and the whole objective was to have a more businesslike approach to management. I really think that's about all I can say about that.

HKS: It wasn't a turning point in history? Things are better now than they were because of it?

MPD: No, no, the intent was to try to get the agencies to run more efficiently, more on a private sector business model, at least from the standpoint of accounting and how we measure results and communicate the results to the American public and the Congress.

HKS: You could have constituencies that would disagree that those are the results that are important. There's still some of the values. The annual reports over time for the Forest Service, and probably all agencies, have changed a lot. Back the first twenty or thirty years there was a lot of preaching from the pulpit about the ills of the private sector. You don't see any of that now in the annual reports, for a variety of reasons. Then they changed basically to statistics. Then affirmative action comes along, and the photographs are all of blacks, women, people in wheelchairs, and so forth. You could see the agendas of administrations come and go from just the way the reports were assembled. But it became hard for me to know if I was learning anything or if this was just a fluff job put out by the public affairs office to put the best foot forward, and you didn't really know what was going on. In the earlier years you felt confident this was actually telling you something. Maybe it's just politically too difficult now to level with the public, but you're saying that that's part of the mandate, right? Tell the public what's going on.

MPD: That's part of the mandate. One topic we mentioned earlier is the issue of water. As chief I started talking about water a lot. Of course, I've got some biases given that my training is in aquatics and fisheries. But as you struggle with what's our support base, and who's going to want us in twenty years and fifty years and why. Yes, there are people that care about timber. There are people that care about grazing, mining, recreation, and all of these values, but how could we get more public support for all of natural resource management and what land is and why it's important, which we talked about quite a bit earlier. Then you marry that with the fact that eighty percent of the American public lives in urban areas and cities and towns today further removed from the land. This presents the challenge to all of us, how we link people to the land and help them understand it's important. Then we marry that with the Neil Sampson statistics that the appropriation has declined by fifty percent in proportion to the federal budget. Then we ask ourselves why are we losing that market share.

Obviously there are a lot of high priority things and everything from healthcare to social security to aging, the change in age demographics of the country and all of our needs, but yet I don't think we talk nearly enough about water. My way of attempting to connect to a greater number of the American public is through water. Hal Salwasser in one of his talks called the national forest the headwaters of the country and threw out the statistic that eighty percent of the rivers and streams in the United States originate on national forests. Then if you look around, even in the East, here in Wisconsin, you've got the Chippewa, you've got the St. Croix River with many, many tribs on the national forests. You go even further east and you've got the tributaries to the Shenandoah, the Potomac, and so on.

I put a team of people together headed by Jim Sedel, who was a researcher from PNW recently assigned to the Washington Office. He pulled a team of Forest Service people that ultimately developed the publication called "Water and the Forest Service." I gave a speech at one of the annual outdoor writers conferences, called "The Forest Service, the World's Largest Water Company." I think in one sense foresters are missing the boat, no pun intended, by not talking about the connection of forest and water because there's no doubt in anybody's mind that the cleanest and the best water in the country flows off of forests. So when Sedel did his analysis and put the publication together we found that one third of the U.S. is covered by forests. It produces two thirds of the runoff. The hundred and ninety-two million acres of national forests cover eight percent of the surface area of the U.S. provide fourteen percent of the runoff. The national forests provide drinking water directly, according to the EPA, for sixty-six million Americans in thirty-four hundred communities. And we hardly talk about it. According to the Sedel team, the marginal economic value of the water flowing off the national forests is 3.7 billion dollars a year, and that's figuring the value at two dollars an acre foot in the East and four dollars an acre foot in the West. An acre foot is about three hundred and sixty thousand gallons of water.

My objective was to try to get to more people to care about forests. I still talk about forests and water all the time. In fact, I wrote an article that ran I think it was January 3rd in *The New York Times* talking about forests and water. I am going to continue. One of my goals now is to really try to help connect people to the land by doing things like writing articles and giving speeches. This whole issue of water, the U.N. says it's the issue of the century, will be the issue of the millennium and of all of the resource values—recreation, grazing, timber, mining, archeological values, spiritual values, scenic beauty—it seems to me like water's the one that's probably the easiest for the greatest number of people to connect with. Hence, I started talking about water and watersheds and watershed function and where water comes from a lot while I was chief and still believe it's the right way to go.

HKS: It's certainly important everywhere. I'm concerned when I fly into the South and look at all those reservoirs that are brown and muddy. You figure fifty years they're going to be filled up, and there are no more valleys in the South. National forests don't have a whole lot to say about that, but probably a significant amount of watershed protection on east slopes of the Appalachians is in national forests.

MPD: If you look at the Asheville watershed, the water comes off of the national forests, as does the water supply for many, many, many communities. We worry about the support base for the agency, for natural resource management, for land management in general, and I really think water is one of these issues that we can never talk about enough and help people understand.

Typical Day as Chief

MPD: I grabbed one of my old calendars. Dale Robertson is exactly right. There is no typical day. Usually you have a schedule, and you find that schedules are made to be changed. The chief's day certainly isn't filled with time to reflect on what are the big issues and to have the kind of conversation that you and I have been having, the philosophy of management, and where are we really going as a nation. We don't spend nearly enough time doing that. We spend way, way, way too much time in the minutia of the day-to-day management, the urgent issue of the day that's biting you. I think that having a job like chief is like drinking out of a fire hose when you aren't thirsty and ever every once in a while the physical force from the fire hose slaps you in the side of the head to keep you awake.

The most challenging days were during the congressional hearing season. The first year to year and a half that I was chief I wanted to do all the hearings rather than have deputy chiefs or staff do them. I had a lot of great help and I've got to say that the congressional affairs staff does a great job of preparing the chief and anybody else that testifies. On a typical day of a hearing I'd usually be up by three-thirty in the morning. I'm a morning person to begin with. It's like you're studying for a Ph.D. prelim, really pour over all of the briefing materials, the notebooks, and not plain memorize but to understand everything. By say six or six-thirty I'd have breakfast and leave for the office. By that time I'd have a list of questions for the staff about things I didn't know or things that might be important. They'd usually be in early that day, and they'd try to round up as many of the answers as they could. Also by that time they might know what some of the questions might be. We'd have a last minute briefing. I would take the last half hour or so to go over the last minute details and then polish up my opening statement. Usually they were over by noon, but sometimes they'd go well into the afternoon. Especially if it was one of the major oversight hearings or the appropriations hearing, I'd come back and kind of melt away. Usually what I did on those days is that I'd walk around and do something that wasn't too intense, visit with employees and return phone calls. That's one kind of a day.

For another kind of a day; I've got my calendar here. I'll read off a few of the things that happened this day. Eight o'clock we started out with an executive team meeting, chief and staff. Nine thirty signed an MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] with the National Park Service, the BLM, with the Continental Divide Trail Alliance in the Old Executive Office Building in the old Indian Treaty Room, which is one of the more beautiful rooms and more beautiful buildings in Washington. Then at ten-thirty I have a meeting here with George Frampton, Jim Lyons, and Chris Wood at the Council on Environmental Quality on roadless. Immediately after that, a meeting with Jim Furnish, Ann Bartuska, Anne Kennedy, deputy assistant secretary, regarding a large-scale watershed restoration project that Governor Kitzhaber from Oregon was involved with and pushing us to do, which turned out to be a wonderful, wonderful project. Then here's another meeting immediately after that at one-thirty with Phil Janik, Jack Blackwell, Denny Bschor, who was at that time director of the recreation staff, and Jim Furnish on the 2002 Olympics and the Forest Service's involvement on that issue. Then we have a meeting with the congressional staff with Dale Bosworth, at that time regional forester from Montana, Tom Tidwell, who's now I believe forest supervisor on the Wasatch, Jim Furnish, and Denver Burns from research. We were preparing to visit Senator Conrad Burns to tell him about the programs in Montana. What we tried to do is to say even though Burns opposed the roadless policy, this is what we do that's important in Montana. Then at four-thirty I had a meeting again with Dale Bosworth with some other members talking about roads, because Dale was leading the development of the transportation policy. If you notice, there's not a lot of time to sit back or think in a day like this.

HKS: Except maybe walking over to CEQ. You've got ten minutes there.

MPD: I almost always tried to walk every place I could in D.C., even coming back from a congressional hearing. You know, it's a pleasant walk. Washington is really a beautiful city.

HKS: I know.

MPD: I didn't think Washington was very nice, until I saw New York and then I really began to appreciate the Mall in Washington. I'd say those are examples of typical days. Some days you would have a lot of interruptions with members of Congress calling that have a problem. We need to see you now on this issue. Responsiveness to the administration, the secretary's office, and the Hill is a tremendous challenge and also a tremendous frustration for scheduling. You might have CEQ calling. We want the chief. The undersecretary's office, we want the chief at the

meeting. The secretary's office calling, we want the chief at a meeting. And somebody wanted to see you on the Hill, literally all at the same time. There's this constant pressure that they always want to see the chief, and yet you can only be in one place at one time, and you've got to delegate and you've got to have staff that are ready to go. I know Jack had that frustration, and I'm sure that Dale Bosworth has this frustration because many times Congress or the administration doesn't necessarily follow the chain of command.

HKS: Jack wanted to have permission to put the cost of preparing a report in the report. He wasn't challenging the legitimacy of the request that Congress needs to know. Some of the requests were very expensive to prepare. He felt somehow that would make a difference, because he felt some of the requests were rather trivial, of ephemeral interest to the congressman. So anyway, he was upset by the amount of work that it was causing.

MPD: I will certainly second that idea, and likewise for the amount of congressional correspondence and other things. A lot of stuff just could be handled with a phone call, and yet we always had this backlog of correspondence that we were dealing with and we always had the secretary's office on us, you're behind on these issues and the correspondence unit has got a tremendous challenging workload with all the coordination that's required.

HKS: I'm not surprised there is a correspondence section. It replaces the steno pool, but there are also high level people in there that can understand the policies and protocols and all of this?

MPD: Yes. They know where the letter is and if it's got to go to timber, if it's got to go to recreation, if it's got to go to research, if it's got a due date on it, and who has to review it and where it is, the time sensitive stuff.

HKS: Also whose signature is on it; is the chief's on most of these congressional requests?

MPD: Yes, but I really reduced the number of pieces of correspondence that I signed. The tradition was the chief signed almost everything, and it seems to me that we ought to give credit where credit's due whether it's the recreation staff director, the fish and wildlife director, or a staffer. I mean, they're the experts. I think it really diminishes the clout of the chief's signature when almost everything comes from the chief. As I mentioned earlier, the employee letters that I wrote, I never really got a lot of feedback from Forest Service employees. I'm not sure they ever really paid attention, because you get this barrage of stuff coming at you and you really don't know what's important and what isn't. We had a building full of experts, and how many decisions does the chief reverse that come up from staff, probably not very many. I mean if we're asking the right questions and there's good staff work you may end up just being the rubber stamp. Instead, why not have the issue are expert or the staffer responsible for the specific program sign.

HKS: With an associate chief, that signature is valid for most things?

MPD: Yes. One of the things that we did is really reduce a lot of the volume of material and information that came up to the associate chief. We tried to keep as much as we could at the deputy chief level and staff level in Washington. Virtually all of the executive energy was going to dealing with the crisis of the day. So back to the question of where do the ideas come from, what's an overall grand plan, the overall strategy of where the agency's going, we probably only spend a small percentage of time doing that when, in fact, isn't that what leadership is about? Yet the culture was such that and the symbolism was such that everything came right up to the chief, the associate chief, and we changed some of that, and some people liked it and some didn't.

HKS: This technology of email must have impact on correspondence. It must be increasing. Everyone can get directly at your web page or whatever it is. Is that a management issue or just you roll with the punch?

MPD: I think it is an organizational management issue, and like most things it's good and bad. It results in great efficiencies. I can remember being on the district when Max made the decision to go with the Data General. When those of us in the field heard how much it was going to cost we thought he'd gone off the deep end. Then five or ten years later, if you were going to take the computers away from people they'd say they couldn't do their job. Then lo and behold, the Data General became obsolete; the generation time of technologies is really amazing.

The democratization as a result of email is interesting. The chief or the chief's office was rarely the first to break news, because when a staff meeting was over somebody would invariably go and start sending emails. To get a personnel announcement out officially, for example, to beat the leaks and the grape vine was a big challenge. I remember the Friday Newsletter and the news that came out in that mechanism was obsolete. People already knew what it was. And the other thing email allows people to do is to put their own personal spin on things and it makes internal communications more challenging. They'll say the chief said this or this is what happened at this meeting, and it was simply their interpretation of what happened or maybe their interpretation with their spin and bias on it that was not necessarily consistent with the intent. So this modernization, like all things, has got an up side and a down side.

HKS: John McGuire observed that there's a real difficulty of getting news out to the field to keep people up to speed without somebody slipping authorities and orders into that informational letter. To keep those directives out of news items was really a tough show because someone thought well, the chief made a decision, that's now the policy but those letters were not the way to get it out to the field. So it was a constant struggle. I guess the technology just makes the struggle a little bit different, but it's been around a long time.

MPD: That's right on. In fact, as I mentioned before, one of the two or three big challenges in the job is internal communication, both as an individual and as an organization for the chief to stay on top of that.

President Tours a Forest Fire

HKS: You accompanied President Clinton to a fire. Want to tell about that?

MPD: Yes, Pete, 2000 was a tough fire year, as you know. Seems like I spent a good share of the summer out West. I recall missing our family vacation, which didn't go over very well at home, but in the life of a chief or an agency head that's a fairly common occurrence. It comes with the turf and fortunately my family was patient enough to tolerate it without throwing me out. First the Bitterroot was burning up, and I'd spent a lot of time making the rounds to various fires.

The year 2000 started out with the Cerro Grande as really the first big fire, which was the escaped prescribed burn that ended up burning two hundred and forty-three homes in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Later that year I had been making the rounds out West. My oldest brother Dan--I'm the youngest of a family of six and Dan is the oldest so he's eighteen years older than I am—he was the campground host at the Canyon Ferry Campground in Montana, which actually is on Bureau of Reclamation land but it's a BLM campground. He was a volunteer for the BLM and he'd been a campground host there a couple years and I was out there in Montana going back and forth from meetings with the governor. We were in the Bitterroot and in Missoula. I recall the

Missoula airport being closed down because of poor visibility due to smoke. I had some meetings with employees, Senator Baucus, the governor, and others. So I'm out at the Canyon Ferry Campground where my brother was a campground host and spent a couple of nights with him there.

When the Canyon Ferry Fire first started and the Forest Service started looking around at where to have the fire camp, they came into the campground and, of course, the first person they met was my brother Dan. I don't think anybody knew there was any relationship until they heard his last name and he said well, what are you going to do here. The Forest Service guy says we're going to have a fire camp. He said that's fine, how many people are you going to have here. Oh, he said, probably about twelve hundred. He said no way. That just isn't possible. So at any rate it happened and Dan really enjoyed it. He'd never seen this before, seeing this whole operation unfold and how efficient and effective all of this was. There's another story I want to tell you about Dan that happened earlier that year. He was struck by lightning.

HKS: Is that right?

MPD: He was riding his bike, doing his rounds at the campground, and he's an astute guy. He's a very experienced outdoorsman, and he said there was one thunderhead way off in the distance. The next thing he knew he was laying on the ground with his head feeling like it was on fire. Some of the people in the campground actually saw this happen and the lightning really didn't strike him but struck the back of the bike he was on and it threw him in the air and off to the ground. He was passed out for probably about a minute and he said the first thing he noticed was his head was hot like it was on fire and he couldn't see. Finally after about five minutes his eyesight came back and it was just a phenomenal thing. They immediately, of course, called the doctor, who said well, watch your eyesight and he's fine to this day, except now I think he hides under the bed when a thunderstorm rolls by.

It was Friday night. I'd probably been out West for about two weeks on fires and the phone rang in Dan's trailer at the campground. It was somebody from the secretary's office saying that we think maybe the secretary or somebody from the White House may be coming out on the fire and I thought, gee, I thought the secretary was in Europe. I was surprised to hear that the secretary was interested in coming out on a fire, but they said we want you to check back early in the morning before you head back to Washington. I had a flight from Helena to Salt Lake City and then on to D.C. to come back home. Well, the next morning I got back to the airport, got to Salt Lake City, and they said go to Boise. Somebody from the White House may be coming out and we want you to help with the advance. George Lehner, who was our director of communications, was with me. We were pretty certain that the president was interested in the fire but yet we felt we were probably the only ones out there who knew. Nobody knew this was going on yet. Then finally yes, the president was interested in coming out on a fire, what are the options. The options were California, Nevada, and Idaho, and Montana.

This was August and this was a presidential election year. Well where's the president going to go, he's going to go to California with fifty-four electoral votes. That seems to be pretty much of a no-brainer. So we send in the options as to where the fires were and where he could go and lo and behold, the word comes back that he wants to come to Idaho, the state where there probably wasn't a handful of people in a hundred mile radius that voted for him, and the delegation was completely opposed to him. In fact, the senior senator disliked Clinton so much that he didn't go to the State of the Union two years in a row.

We did all the advance work and it was kind of interesting because there were the other agencies involved. Yet we were able to set up where the president went. I met with the governor, and that was kind of a tense time because here it was, a couple of days before the president was due

and no one had even invited the governor. I had breakfast with Governor Kempthorne and assured him that somebody would be contacting him through the proper channels from the White House and, in fact, that did happen. We were waiting at the airport at Boise, and Bruce Babbitt had come. He had been on vacation and he was there and several other dignitaries were there. Air Force One lands and who walks off Air Force One behind the president but Senator Larry Craig, the very senator that disliked the president so much he didn't go to the State of the Union two years in a row. From Air Force One we got on a smaller plane because Air Force One couldn't land in McCall. The press plane always goes ahead of the president so they can do photos of the president as he's landing and getting off the plane. We're in this small jet that is now Air Force One and I learned that Air Force One isn't always the big 747. Air Force One happens to be whatever plane the president is on. And we're on Air Force One with Secretary Glickman, Secretary Babbitt, the president, Governor Kempthorne, Larry Craig, and John Podesta, the chief of staff.

We knew that Craig and the governor were going to push for cutting more salvage, and that morning the Lewiston paper had a headline that two mills closed in Lewiston because of the depressed market. I had this paper and really didn't want to hand it to the president myself, as this dialogue was going on about what are we going to do with the salvage, so I gave the paper to Bruce Babbitt and when Senator Craig brought up the issue of salvage, Secretary Babbitt handed this newspaper to the president with a smile on his face. Of course, the president passed it around and that was the end of our salvage discussion, and it was interesting because that was a big debate at the time. We've got these thousands of acres of burned timber and what are we going to do with it. The state already had a fair amount of timber on the market, and you can imagine if all this Forest Service timber went on the market it would really depress the prices. But also the fact was it takes the Forest Service a lot longer to get something like this on the market.

It was just one of the interesting nuances of the fire. Ultimately we did tour the fire and I had the opportunity to fly in Marine 1 with the president and John Podesta to brief him about the fire, to look at the various fire mosaics, where you could really see the results of earlier fires. This is in fir country and fairly high elevation where you do have stand-replacing fires. The president took a nap, maybe a ten minute nap, ate a banana and a bagel and talked about his family and talked about his vacation on the national forests. He asked a lot of questions about the fire and just had a wonderful meeting with the employees and the firefighters that were on the fire line that were gathered there for the ceremony. We flew back in the helicopter to McCall and then back to Boise and back to D.C. on Air Force One, where it was Secretary Glickman, Undersecretary Lyons, myself, Senator Craig, the president, and some of the president's staff. We really had a very productive discussion with Senator Craig about where to go with fire. In fact, he agreed not to ever use the word salvage and encouraged his colleagues not to, and as a matter of fact he didn't.

Increased Fire Budget

MPD: There was another significant thing for the Forest Service about that trip. When the president goes on a trip like that obviously he's got to do something, and the mandate that he gave the two secretaries was to come up with a strategy and request for the resources needed to deal with this fire issue. So the interagency fire plan was developed with the input of all of the governors. In fact, we had several meetings with the governors, the primary one hosted by Governor Leavitt in Utah with a bipartisan approach on how we were going to move forward to deal with some of the challenges we had. That effort resulted with perhaps the biggest budget increase in the history of the Forest Service with the 1.4 billion dollar fire appropriation, much of which went to rebuild the fire forces but also for other uses as well. The Forest Service did get

the bulk of the $2.2 billion appropriation with the balance going to BLM, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and BIA. Just three years earlier I got a letter from the four committee chairs when I announced the moratorium on road building in roadless areas. As Don Young said we're going to cut your budget until you squeal, or more appropriately they were going to bring us back to custodial management. None of this is predictable, of course, but I found it so ironic that here three years earlier they threatened to cut our budget like it had never been cut before, and here we got the biggest budget increase in the history of the agency.

HKS: Has that increase held since then?

MPD: Yes. That ended up being a permanent bump. Obviously we need much more than that because the Forest Service and all of the agencies in 2002 spent more money dealing with the fire issue. We had the Biscuit Fire that President Bush was out on bringing a lot of visibility for fire and bringing this issue to the forefront. So in the chief's chair with the tremendous opportunities that come with this you just have to be prepared for whatever opportunity is put in front of you, because you never really know where the real opportunities are going to come from. It's only been about two years since I've been out of the job, but yet I just look back with tremendous satisfaction. In spite of the challenges you have, you also have tremendous opportunities to really, really shape overall policies, not only with the agency but nationally and even internationally. I think it's a tremendous advantage when you can have presidential involvement because whether it's the forest plan, whether it was the roadless policy or the fire issue, without that, none of these things would have really happened to the extent and level that they did.

HKS: Roughly how much of that 1.4 billion dollars goes into the fuel reduction, the cutting and thinning of the trees and stuff?

MPD: The bulk of that appropriation went basically to rebuild the fire fighting machine of the agencies, the suppression effort, because we were probably at less than seventy percent, maybe sixty of MEL, which is the "most efficient level." For years the target was to reach seventy-five or eighty percent of most efficient level in terms of the budget. I always felt that was bizarre because why we wouldn't we be requesting the most efficient level. Why would we be requesting something that was less than most efficient? I think the Forest Service now has tremendous opportunities in moving forward with fuel reduction and focusing on the condition we want the land in. The whole issue of fire is in everybody's house every morning on TV and evening with the visibility that the press gives. My hope is that the Bush administration, with an increased emphasis now on timber harvest, that we don't replay the fights of the salvage rider era where it's a cut it to save it attitude versus let's really go ahead and do the thinning, the fuel treatment. We need to focus on acres where they're needed most and this is around the urban-wildland interface, the community protection zones, to really do the work on the land in the areas that are going to make a difference.

HKS: This past year since I've moved to New Mexico I've been driving around. I've seen people with chain saws dragging small trees down to the roadside. Someone's told me that on private lands, the owner has to match the federal contribution. Is that right? I mean is this national forest lands, or is it all lands pertinent to the national forests?

MPD: It's through the state and private authorities of the Forest Service in cooperation with the state agencies. In fact, the bulk of the work that's needed in the urban-wildland interface isn't even on national forests. It's private land. The one thing we were careful to emphasize is to always tell the secretary and the president that you're just not going to throw a pile of money at this and this problem's going to disappear. The fire ecologists and specialists will tell us that the most important factor that determines whether or not someone's house or building is going to

burn is within forty meters of that building, to make sure we continue to preach the fire-wise practices that you've got to eliminate the fuel that's going to carry fire to your building.

HKS: So if you build your house in the middle of a lot, you're pretty much clearing off the standard lot in order to have that hundred and twenty feet.

MPD: If you look at Los Alamos, houses with cedar shake shingles were in this dense thicket of very flammable fuels. It probably wasn't that way historically before the days of suppression, but people like the privacy, the seclusion, the wildness that trees and shrubs provide in their immediate surroundings. Yet from a fire safety standpoint, it's a disaster waiting to happen.

HKS: The North Carolina Division of Forestry sent a brochure on how to protect your home from fire. It apparently went to everyone in the state. We live on an island out in the Atlantic, so fire is not one of our major concerns.

MPD: I'm really glad to hear that.

HKS: Wind is a concern and high water. For fire, clear thirty feet from your house; depending upon the steepness of the slope and the size of the trees. That's a whole lot less than forty meters. Has there been some opposition to using this money from, I'll just call them environmentalists, because you're manipulating the landscape?

MPD: The debate we get into again is what are you going to be removing from the forest if you're going to be doing thinning and fuel treatment. The concern now is that we're going to move into taking large trees and the focus will be really on timber volume and getting the cut out versus the treatment that's needed on the land. So in a sense it's in the Forest Service's hands as to how they manage this and what pressures are put on the Forest Service today from people like Mark Rey, the undersecretary in the administration. Hopefully the timber interests will not push this too far so we end up in the rancorous debates that we experienced in the '90s with the timber salvage rider. The salvage rider and that whole debacle really was the aftermath of another bad fire year in 1994.

HKS: Where I was looking was on the Lincoln National Forest just above the Apache Indian Reservation. It was people working above the roads, and the trees were so small they were carrying them out by hand. I mean there was no commercial value. I assumed they chipped them or something, but there certainly wasn't any commercial value.

MPD: One of the challenges is in a lot of those areas we really don't have any timber industry infrastructure left. That's true for the central Rockies and other places. You have lesser value wood to begin with, what we call utility wood, and the thinning and the fuel treatment that needs to be done, but these are not typically your logs that carry the high value. I somehow wish we could take the chip mill debate of the Southeast and move some of those chip mills to the West where you have thinning and fuel treatment that needs to be done, but apparently there's not the profit margin that's needed for industry to really get involved. Hopefully we'll identify some ways to get that done in a cost-effective manner.

HKS: The chip market in southern New Mexico is pretty thin, pretty thin.

MPD: Yes, it is and actually the volume of material that needs to come off of some of these places really is not that great either.

More on Workforce Diversity

HKS: Workforce diversity has been a serious issue for the last several chiefs. How was it when you were chief?

MPD: It was an issue that we did spend a lot of time on. I mentioned my first week in the chief's chair there was the Tongass National Forest. The other big issue the first week that continued throughout was workforce diversity, dealing with a major backlog of complaints. Some complaints had been on the books for ten years or more and it truly was a bureaucracy run amuck. I put a team of people together to try to determine how to get on top of that. I ultimately ended up detailing a lady by the name of Kathy Gugu is over from Natural Resource Conservation Service to head up a team of people that also included Forest Service staff to really clean up the backlog issue. She structured it just like an incident command team would on the fire, and I'm proud to say they really did eliminate that backlog. We were still getting some new complaints but we were able to deal with the current complaints rather than just struggle with this backlog of a thousand plus complaints. I spent a lot of time with the national leadership team really struggling with the issue and the process of how to get on top of it.

The secretary had put together the civil rights action team, which was headed by Pearlie Reed. Pearlie Reed was chief deputy of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and when Paul Johnson left Pearlie was named chief and remained chief until just within about the last year. We had demonstrations in front of the Department of Agriculture. A lot of it was the Association of the Black Farmers. The inequities that they were dealing with was a big part of the challenge for the secretary. I know now with Ann Veneman in the secretary's chair it continues to be a challenge, but I really think we did make a lot of progress with the effort.

The civil rights staff and leadership of the Forest Service did a lot to bring some very, very high quality people with diverse backgrounds into the Forest Service. The first female associate chief was Hilda Diaz-Soltero from Puerto Rico where she had a tremendous record of success as the secretary of natural resources, a cabinet level position in Puerto Rico. She also had experience in the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. One of the things that Hilda brought to the team was a knowledge of how these other organizations operated that we had to work with as well as tremendous project management skills and tremendous energy. I use Hilda as one example of many, many people that came in as we worked to diversify the leadership of the Forest Service. Some would say well, you're just playing favorites to get people of color or to get women in top jobs. Well, the fact is, I don't think we made any compromises. We really did get some good people in and made a fair amount of progress.

I met routinely with the various representatives of the Hispanic community, of the African American community, the Native American community as we worked our way through these issues to make sure that it was a priority for the Forest Service and to make sure that all the employees knew it. I made a whirlwind tour of the Forest Service hitting every station, region, and the state and private areas, sometimes in meetings in one location, just to get the organization focused on the importance of civil rights and the symbolism of the chief doing this tour. I wanted to focus the leadership on the importance of workforce diversity, civil rights, and how to deal with some of the challenges that we had within the agency.

HKS: Jack tells a story about making a speech in front of a fairly large audience of Forest Service employees. He made a joke about baldheaded men, and he got three civil rights citations out of that audience. I mean it shows the sensitivities were so close to the surface, and that's what bothered him. There's no humor left. I mean, it's just drudgery. They call it the civil rights mafia. He was so discouraged by that. How do you make progress when people are that far apart?

Here's a baldheaded man making a joke about baldheaded men, and that shows he favors men over women according to the citations.

MPD: This happened to me while I was director at BLM. In the spirit of the holiday season, I sent out a holiday letter wishing people Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and tried to hit all of the holidays that the various ethnicities and beliefs practiced. But we didn't say Kwanzaa, and I got two or three fairly irate letters saying, how could you leave us out kind of a thing. You do want to throw up your hands and say hey, wait a minute, we're all human and if everyone feels they have to be included in everything every time, it makes a situation tough. It really does dehumanize much of it, because you have to be so careful in everything you say and do. I remember being chastised at a speech for saying "you people." I don't even remember saying it or in what context, and one of the people came up after the talk and said you know, "you people" refers to blacks in a derogatory way. Jack's right, the sensitivities are very high and I think we have to be as sensitive as possible. But I also think there has to be a realization that we're all human as well.

With regard to being left out, I can remember being in Region 2. We were working on the Natural Resources Agenda where we said the priorities were forest roads, recreation, watershed restoration, and forest sustainability. I was criticized for not including grazing. That exemplifies one of the challenges that comes with one of these kinds of jobs. You're oftentimes criticized more for what you don't do than for what you do. There's competition for the chief's time and you've got to make choices. There are those times where you can't do something for whatever reason, go to a staff meeting for example, that can oftentimes be interpreted as well, the chief really doesn't care when, in fact, the chief probably does care. But in the thirty-five thousand employee organization where you have all of the other responsibilities and this fire hose of work and opportunities coming at you, you just can't do everything. It's something that people need to think about a little bit more. I don't think there's any chief that is out there putting down any staff, but sometimes it's interpreted that way.

Law Enforcement

HKS: Law enforcement was an issue for Dale and for Jack. Was Law enforcement still concerned about those basic quibbles about where I belong and who reported to who and all that?

MPD: I didn't hear too much about it. When I traveled, particularly if I saw law enforcement people along with district rangers and forest supervisors and other people on the staff, I'd ask how's it going. I spent a couple of days traveling with law enforcement people just to see what their job was like and what they did. One of the people I was with was out of Portland, and we went on the Mount Hood and they basically ran me through some of their major problems. I recall one in particular where there was a ring of people stealing cars for parts. I assumed it worked something like this, that you had a 1994 Toyota Corolla and you needed a new engine and you'd call somebody up and the gang would go and steal one. They'd haul it up on the Mount Hood, strip it down, and torch it. So what we'd have is a car body to remove. Sometimes it would start a fire and then we'd have the oil and the hazardous materials that resulted from that. They were averaging about one a week when I was out there.

We continued to work with Congress to try to help them understand the tremendous law enforcement workload that we had with the increased use of the national forests. Even so, there were some members of Congress that were ever wondering why we had a law enforcement organization in the Forest Service at all. From the standpoint of managing the issues that Jack and Dale dealt with, that was one of the issues areas I delegated to the chief operating officer or

associate chief. I would have regular meetings with Bill Wasley who was chief of law enforcement during my tenure, just to make sure that anybody wasn't withholding any information and to hear his side of the story as well. So law enforcement was a challenge but it wasn't something that I personally spent a lot time at. It was something that I tried to delegate while I focused on issues like roads and roadless and the budget and other things like that.

HKS: Jack writes about the use of the Cleveland National Forest for illegal entry. Whenever the Immigration Service clamped down on the border, people came up through the national forest and campgrounds were overloaded by a factor of ten. He thought the Forest Service shouldn't cope with, not only the illegality, but the sheer logistics of it and tried to get money to deal with that—a very serious problem.

MPD: With September 11th and the most of the law enforcement capability of the United States being pulled and focused on national security, I really worry about what's going on out on the national forests and the BLM lands as well. Many of our special agents and rangers are involved in the anti-terrorism efforts, and I hope some people are still minding the store. I recall talking to one of the law enforcement officers here in Region 9. The law enforcement officer might be in Duluth and it may take him three or four hours to get to the east unit of the Hiawatha, say the St. Ignace Ranger District, if there's a serious problem there. So it's a real shortcoming that we have, and I think it's another example of the challenges we have to help Congress and the American public understand the need to make investments in the land and what it takes, whether it's dealing with fire and fire risks or human safety and protection on the national forests. It's another woefully underfunded organizational part of the Forest Service that does a tremendous public service.

Restructure Lines of Authority

HKS: Is there some generic statement you want to make about how the chief deals with the next layer down, as it were, the R&D folks?

MPD: As you looked at the chief's workload and the fact that the chief's name was on nearly everything and the volume of material that came up to the chief and the associate chief to deal with on a daily basis, we were basically in a reactionary mode all the time. There was no time to think about big picture stuff; it was just this barrage of stuff coming at you.

Dave Unger had retired. He was the model public servant in what he did. I first met Dave when he was director of the watershed staff when I first came to Washington. He was my associate chief and really very, very helpful.

We took a look at other organizations and here on paper the chief had like thirty-seven or thirty-eight direct reports. The management models tell you in an organization where things are running very smoothly some people can have up to say maybe a dozen to fifteen direct reports. The average is probably six to eight, and if you've got an organization that's dealing with a lot of challenges, the model suggests you should have four direct reports. I talked to a lot of people and looked at the Coopers and Lybrand report after they studied some of the Forest Service challenges. I looked at all GAO [General Accounting Office] reports that make up a stack probably two to three feet high that were critical of various challenges that we had in the Forest Service, the financial management, the accountability, and all of this sort of thing. I basically made the decision that the regional foresters ought to report to the deputy chief for National Forest System, the station directors to the deputy chief for research, and the state and private

directors (we really only had at that time Michael Raines in the Northeast) report to the deputy chief for state and private forestry.

It was not popular, everybody wants to report to the chief. Would I do that again? The answer is yes. I think Dale Bosworth changed it back because of the pressure from his colleagues. The reality was they had the latitude to play the chief, the associate chief, or their deputy chief. You could go to who you thought you could get the answer you wanted. And in some cases you could almost play them against one another because if you didn't get the right answer from the deputy chief or the associate chief, you could go to the chief. All those things probably continue to happen, but I think it puts a tighter reign on this.

I tried to make it a point to call regional foresters regularly. We always saw each other at leadership team meetings but once a month at minimum and often talked more often when there were specific issues in their areas. The controversy isn't in Research and the controversy isn't in State and Private like it is in the National Forest System, so there wasn't really a need to spend a lot of time with station and area directors. A lot of it's the nature of the individual. Some would say hey, you know, I know you're busy. The last thing I want to do is bother you with a problem or an issue. I always told them that if you need to talk, you've got my number. I return all my calls. And some called regularly, and some didn't call much at all.

HKS: John McGuire talked about span of control. The president's span of control is absurd. The cabinet keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger and there's still one president. No one can actually supervise the federal government the way it's structured. It just doesn't make sense. But yet, how do you change it?

MPD: Those traditions in the Forest Service run very deep. As I said, I do think the Forest Service really needs to look at its entire organization. I'm one that's believed for at least fifteen years that with the modern terminologies that we have, the electronic communications, that one of the things we could do to get a lot more efficient would probably be to reduce the size of the regional offices significantly. I think we ought to change the name of the regional foresters to more reflect the current ecosystem thinking.

HKS: Regional conservationists or something?

MPD: Something like that. I know that'll go over like a lead balloon with probably all of the people in those jobs because of the reverence to the culture that's so deeply embedded in the organization. The primary responsibility of the regional forester, for example, probably ought to be accountability and quality control and regional and state relationships with governors, trade associations, partners. Those that are at the staff level that are the technical experts probably ought to be moved out. They ought to be in the Washington Office or they ought to be fanned out on the forests and on the districts. We really ought to do as much as we possibly can to create a three-layer organization. I felt this for probably fifteen years, that the four-layer organization is a thing of the past.

HKS: Three layers are better? I mean you want to have fewer layers, is what you're saying?

MPD: Fewer layers in the organization. When we take a look at the overhead, we all ought to be very disappointed in how little of the entire appropriations reaches the field level. I know there're lots of process things we struggle with, but we can administer budgets now on things like that from the Washington Office directly to the national forests. I think the stations are okay. I remember having a conversation with Dale Robertson talking about his idea of merging the responsibilities of station directors and regional foresters and having assistant chiefs or whatever we would call them out in the field that would be an extension of the chief across the country.

Over the course of the next decade or so I hope we're looking at ways of reshaping the organization. Here's the thing you run into with any organizational restructuring. Whoever starts it, it's just going to take a lot of time and there's going to be a lot of organizational pain involved.

HKS: And Congress is going to get involved.

MPD: And Congress is going to get involved. Don Knowles, when he was working on the appropriations staff, said to me you know you'd be surprised what you can get from a member of Congress when they're trying to save their fish hatchery, even though it may not be needed. The symbolism of that is so important. The buzz saw that Mark Rey ran into when he proposed moving the regional office out of Juneau, and then the reinvention effort near the end of Jack's tenure where they talked about combining Region 1 with Region 4. These reorganizations in government are really, really tough.

HKS: So the target would be the regional offices? That's where the reduction would take place, at the regional level as opposed to the forest level?

MPD: I think so. Of course, we've got to look carefully at the Washington Office as well.

HKS: Can you have larger districts? There are seven hundred and forty-two districts or whatever it is?

MPD: We've got a real dilemma here. We talk about relationships problems that we're having at the local level, and we're moving into this centralizing mode where we're combining forests and combining districts. In reality what we ought to be doing is fanning out in the communities to build relationships with local communities. You don't do this by centralizing. I hope the technologies and the skills are put in the place in the future where we can be more integrated in the communities.

Elizabeth Estelle headed up a team for me taking a look at collaborative stewardship, and what that really meant in the Forest Service, and came up with recommendations. They looked at what are we doing that's right and what do we need to do different to improve, and this whole area of how you bring employees and community leaders closer together. I certainly don't have all the answers.

Reorganization of Government

HKS: You've worked in two different departments. President Nixon in the early '70s proposed reorganizing government and bringing the various agencies together that have similar missions. He said there's something like twelve agencies in four departments trying to protect the environment and it's unworkable. He said we have conflicting statutes and regulations and traditions and cultures, and we've got to get them together. Well, it didn't happen. In your opinion, if all the agencies that dealt with the environment were under the same cabinet officer, would that help at all? You still have the statutes, but at least you could get them all reporting up through the same chain of command. Does that make a difference, do you think? Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM are in Interior and yet Fish and Wildlife Service doesn't help BLM with the Endangered Species Act. There's still that split of responsibilities.

MPD: That's a tough one. I'm not sure bigger is always better and no more efficient. For example, when I was at BLM and Jack was chief, one of the models that we used to talk about was in the San Luis Valley in Colorado in Region 2 where we reorganized what was two BLM

resource areas and two Forest Service districts. Because the Forest Service had the timber management expertise they did the timber management for BLM, whereas BLM had more of the grazing and range management expertise, so they took the lead in range management. I was out there for an advisory council meeting with Elizabeth Estelle, this is a BLM advisory council under the new Babbitt grazing regulations. The BLM and the Forest Service were there together and we were making this presentation to the public and the resource advisory council about this trading post and this idea we had about sharing resources and combining to increase efficiencies. It was like they weren't interested. The attitude was well, you should have been doing this all along, and yet to us in the agencies it was a big deal. It was a new model.

After having been director at BLM and chief of the Forest Service, from the standpoint of operations on the ground it really makes no sense to have two agencies because the missions are so similar. But then when you take a look at the cultures, the cultures are very different. One of the best ideas that came out of the Reagan administration was the Interchange, and it went nowhere. The people that tanked the Interchange were probably the employees of the agencies. I can remember a lot of dialogue in the field about well BLM is not giving up the King's Range to the Forest Service, and we in the Forest Service are not going to give up the Nevada National Forest to the BLM. My view is that local employees of each agency lobbied their local constituencies and county commissioners, who through their congressional delegations opted to maintain the status quo. Then we get into the issue of congressional jurisdiction. That's probably where the real stickler in agency reorganization would be, because no congressional committee wants to give an inch of oversight authority and would probably be the major impediment in that kind of combination. I think it will happen someday. I think there'll be an event and the stars will line up. There'll be the alignment in the White House and on the committees and in the cabinet where this kind of thing will happen. And it might be driven on organizational efficiencies as much as on resource issues.

HKS: In 1891 Congress spent quite a bit of time trying to codify public land laws, because they were enacted during different times and they weren't meshed. Authority for creation of forest reserves was part of that. It seems to me Congress has to be willing to codify some of these laws to get rid of the antagonism it's built between agencies.

MPD: I'm pleased because of my agency experience, but a lot of times the reason that the agencies are left with these tough controversies is because of Congress' inability or refusal to act. They can't build a coalition. There's too much disagreement. The debate just goes on and on and on, and the agencies are left struggling, sort of holding the bag and oftentimes end up being the whipping boy for Congress's the inability to act. I see the inability of Idaho and Montana to deal with their wilderness issues. I remember Jack saying if they'd just get on with it the Forest Service wouldn't be left holding this can of worms.

Transition from Clinton to Bush

HKS: What were your expectations during the presidential election in 2000? It obviously was very close. Did you expect if Gore won you'd stay, if Bush won you'd go, or didn't you really think about what would happen?

MPD: You can't not think about that. We did discuss it in national leadership team meetings and in the staff, we'd go through the what if scenarios; what if Gore gets elected, what if Bush gets elected. My view just very briefly on the what if Gore got elected. I thought well, we had roadless, the next thing I would have done as chief is call a halt to commercial harvest of old growth. We had already begun to make statements about that. I mentioned earlier the

Figure 13: U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman (left) and U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck at the Millennium Green Celebration in front of the USDA building on the Washington, D.C., Mall (2000).

headline in *The New York Times* in response to my speech on I think it was January 9th with Duke University and the request by the chief that the Forest Service make good on Dale Robertson's mandate that we inventory the old growth. I would also have revamped the outdated timber sale contract approach to vegetation management. The national forests need a new business model for vegetation management. Jim Furnish was already quietly working on a much simpler approach.

Beyond that the other big issue out there was dealing with off-road vehicles that this chief, Dale Bosworth, is dealing with, and I'm glad. I wish him well on a very, very difficult issue. I'm not sure Gore would have played very much in Forest Service issues. He certainly didn't while I was chief even though some of my critics would say well, it's Dombeck, Gore, and Lyons or Babbitt, when the fact is, other than a very short discussion with Vice President Gore in Dan Glickman's office about providing some assistance to some of the fire victims whose houses had burned in Florida, I never had a policy conversation with him nor did I have Katie McGinty ever say to me that the vice president wants you to do this or that. There was much more involvement of John Podesta and Bill Clinton in issues like the monuments, like withdrawals, like roadless that I didn't see Gore playing in at all. Now that doesn't mean he wasn't involved behind the scenes. It's just that I never observed it or received any direction or was even asked a question to answer from him on that.

I assumed that he probably wouldn't play in our issues but he'd play in the physical sciences more, the area of high technology, fuel cells, energy efficiency, solar. That arena is where I think Al Gore would have played in the environment had he been elected. That's just speculation, no more than that. With George Bush we really didn't know where he was coming from. We knew he was opposed to our roadless policy because he made that as a campaign statement. We knew that some of the conservative western governors like Kempthorne were very much opposed to that issue, and they'd be putting pressure on him to reverse that policy. But beyond that I assumed George W. Bush's conservation policies would be more in line with his father's. Yet after the election one of the first things that I did was write a letter to the president-elect addressed to the governor's office in Texas basically saying we have these policies and we know they're controversial. But there are all these other opportunities to focus on.

I had this conversation with some of the transition people and Secretary Veneman's staff on what I would do if I were you on issues like roadless. Even though you're opposed to it, you could just kick the heck out of Dombeck and Glickman and Clinton and whomever you want, but you've got one of the biggest budget increases in the history of the Forest Service. Focus on things like fire, on fuel treatment, and some of these other areas, because if you open up this can of worms on roadless again, first of all, you're going to get beat up by the enviros on doing it and then you're going to add this additional workload and frustration inside the Forest Service that we have been struggling with for ten or twenty years. Well, they really didn't take my advice. It was obvious to me by say January that they wanted to roll back roadless and they wanted a low profile chief of the Forest Service.

HKS: Was Mark Rey on the transition team?

MPD: I think he was deeply involved in it. We had people like former congressman Bob Smith from Oregon, I think some of the people of the Northwest Timber Association. I mean the most far-to-the-right extreme entities, anti-fed running this thing, and my view that the transition team really ended up to be even far to the right of where Larry Craig was, which was kind of scary.

As soon as Secretary Veneman was named I also wrote her a letter outlining some things and offering to come out and meet with her to discuss issues in preparation for her confirmation hearing or whatever. One of her assistants called back and said thank you for the letter. One of

two interesting things that I put in the letter, because I was somewhat concerned about it, is my wife and I had agreed we were going to go on a major vacation on our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and that was the year 2000, the year of the big fires. Our wedding anniversary is in July and, of course, I wasn't even around. Yet, the year we got married we agreed we were going to do this thing and we just didn't know when to do it. Then there was the election coming up so I decided we would take this vacation the end of January. Is there a good time for an agency head to be gone, probably not. At any rate, I wrote this in my letter to Ann Veneman that there was our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary trip. So the first time she met me in person she said by the way, happy anniversary and have a good trip.

I assured her that we've got plenty of good staff here, she was going to be covered, but if you have any concerns about my being gone for a couple of weeks during this time of the year just let me know and we'll make sure you're covered. She was very, very gracious about all of this. My impressions were that early on though that the secretary didn't have much decision space, that the mandates for where we were going in natural resources were really coming from the transition team through the vice president's office and there was little decision space for the secretary.

The first thing they wanted me to do is basically have no public visibility. As I mentioned earlier one of the things I was proud of is that fact that I think we turned the press around in the four-year period from being about eighty percent negative on the Forest Service to being about eighty percent positive. After the first meeting with the secretary I drafted a letter to employees talking about the meeting and the general climate of the transition that we're involved in, we're moving forward, and the new administration didn't like that at all. They asked to review every letter that I wrote on any kind of public statements, anything that mentioned the secretary. It was obvious to me that they felt that they did not want a high profile chief. And I've had employees now two years later saying they're sticking with that, saying that they see Mark Rey's name in the paper but they don't see the chief's name in the press like they did.

But the real signal was that when they basically wrote a very flimsy letter that there really wasn't any spirit of support for the roadless rule in the litigation. When I was gone on vacation they sent this letter and my staff showed it to me when I got back. That was really the only time I called up Dave Tenney, who was the acting assistant secretary at that time - he's still there now as deputy– saying hey, this just isn't right and I am very upset. I probably said something very much out of character for me to talk to somebody in that position like that. I felt as though they weren't going to listen to me, and this I think wasn't any surprise.

The handwriting was on the wall; they wanted me out, and the next step was basically to have this transition in a way that it would be most benign for the organization. What we learned in the transition between Dale and Jack, that's the last thing the agency needed, and I had that kind of discussion with some of the staff. Ann Veneman, in fact, was very gracious through all that.

One of the first meetings I had with Secretary Veneman I took her a Smokey Bear toy, because I'd heard that she liked stuffed toy animals. It was basically the meeting that she was going to ask me what I wanted to do, and I suspected that. It turned out to be a very, very cordial meeting. I was fortunate that I was in the situation given that I was in FERS [Federal Employees Retirement System]. I had transferred from the Civil Service Retirement System to FERS when we first had the opportunity to do that in the 1980s. That gave me flexibility in my career the same way that my decision to get a Ph.D. versus going into line management that we talked about earlier. I made that same kind of decision to move to FERS for that same reason, and that really gave me the flexibility not to be caught in a bind. One of the things I've got to tell you, the intensity of these jobs is tremendous and you really got to be with the program to do justice to the agency. The last thing I wanted to do is to stay there and dig in and fight and put the agency

through the same kind of rancor that it experienced in the early 1990s. And that's not my nature to begin with. So we really had a very open conversation, and the secretary said well, I'll tell you what, come on back. Secretary Veneman said bring me a list of people to discuss that you think ought to be the next chief, their strengths and weaknesses. We'll meet again in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, I went to Rome to the committee on forestry meetings at FAO. I think they probably liked having Dombeck out of the country.

HKS: Sure, low profile.

MPD: Where they really didn't have to worry about me. I really have a lot of respect for Ann Veneman. We had some very congenial conversations about a broad range of Forest Service issues. I think she's a moderate, and I was almost afraid she was going to ask me to stay.

HKS: This is the AP story on your announcement, and a sentence here jumped out. "Dombeck could have stayed longer until the end of April and longer if asked," as though it was clear that you were going to go no matter what, but you pulled the pin instead.

MPD: The regulation is that the presidential appointees, if you're in an advice and consent position or a Schedule C, have to leave within three days of the inauguration. At least those were the transition rules when we went from Bush to Clinton that I was involved in as acting assistant secretary at Lands and Minerals in Interior. But there's this cooling off period where a political appointee cannot move or reassign a career employee, which I was, for a hundred and twenty days. So what that literally meant is Ann Veneman couldn't legally reassign me for a hundred and twenty days from the date of her swearing in as a cabinet member.

HKS: It gives a person three months to figure out what they're going to do if you know you're going to go.

MPD: That's right. Dave Tenney was part of that team. We didn't know Mark Rey was going to be undersecretary. All the rumors were that it was going to be Doug Crandall and that he was going through the preapproval process. It turned out that it wasn't him. But I've got to say that from the standpoint of Dave Tenney, who was the acting at that time and is still there as deputy assistant secretary, they were cordial and accommodating. We both knew what the outcome was going to be. There were no harsh words or anything like that. I was fortunate that I was in a situation where I could essentially take a formal retirement. I was in the FERS system and that provides the flexibility that you get in the Federal Employee Retirement System is greater than in the Civil Service Retirement System, so I didn't necessarily have the same problem that Dale Robertson had, even though I still wasn't fifty-five and won't be fifty-five 'til September.

HKS: Well, you think that the atmosphere that Dale had where Secretary Espy never met with Dale. Espy was up on the Hill saying he was going to get rid of the chief and they never even talked to each other. It seems strange that as gracious as Bill Clinton appears to be, and you confirmed that he's a very warm person, that they treated Dale so harshly. Bush comes in and his administration, they're cordial, and they don't treat you like you're a bad person. You're just not the right guy for the job.

MPD: We knew there were policy differences. There wasn't anybody that didn't know there were policy differences and different philosophies, and I'll say it again that to do a good job for the agency you've really got to be with the program. There has to be congruence in philosophies and approaches and what the administration wants to accomplish, and I don't have sad feelings about that. That's what a democracy is. We had an election, albeit this one was very close.

Who knows how long would I have stayed if Al Gore had been elected? They might have asked me to do something else than be chief, which I would have probably said no to. When you can be an agency head, why would you want to be an assistant secretary some place. I had had experience in Interior and I had a set of experiences in my portfolio that no one else had when it comes to being central to the two large land management agencies in two departments. There's not a better job in government in my book than chief. I think the secretary of the Interior has got essentially an impossible job when you take a look at the financial mess we have with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Virtually every secretary is going to be sued personally and under investigation as Bruce Babbitt was. Gale Norton is right now as a result of that issue.

When I left the chief's job and decided to come back home I had encouragement to run for this or run for that. I have no political aspirations and I'm happy where I am. So all in all, for me the transition really wasn't an unpleasant experience at all. You know when you're in and you know when you're not, and I've been on both sides of that. There's all kinds of speculation about who's going to be this and who's going to be that and all the rumors that you see flowing through organizations and the reality of it is, there's really only a handful of people that are on the inside, the inner circle, who really know what's going on. Most of what you hear is little more than gossip and rumors, just background noise. Most of the people that claim they know really don't. I say this from having been both on the inside and on the outside, participating and observing.

HKS: We have in the history of the Forest Service where the chief has survived switches of administration between Republicans and Democrats and back, like Nixon-Ford to Carter to Reagan. What happened? Now is it going to be every time there's a change of party it could be a change of chiefs? You were, I guess forced out is not the right word, but it was clear that they didn't want you to be chief on conditions that you would accept. This hasn't happened before you and Dale Robertson.

MPD: Well, I wasn't about to compromise and change my conservation values.

HKS: No, I understand that. I understand that.

MPD: I would have been insubordinate at the very first congressional hearing. The same thing would have happened to me that happened to Pinchot. I would have publicly gotten crosswise with them, and some urged me to do that.

HKS: Martyr yourself, I guess.

MPD: To make the point but the fact is, yes, I care about the organization as well, and I felt it wasn't fair to put the organization and the employees through that.

HKS: The game changed. The chief hasn't been apparently seriously threatened during changes in administration before Dale. The Forest Service has always been sensitive to the possibility, and chiefs retired timed to the next election so the new guy would be in place either before or after the transition and all the rest of that. But I'm wondering if Bush is not reelected is Bosworth going to be out.

MPD: I think it's a lot deeper than political parties, and there's more depth to it than that. If you take a look at the range of differences, the spectrum of differences, the level of controversy that Dale Robertson was dealing with was extreme.

HKS: That's true.

MPD: As I recall, and you're the historian, Sununu wanted Dale out during Bush 1.

HKS: That's right

MPD: And would a new administration if it had been a Republication administration have kept Dale or, given the Dwyer decision and all that Dale had been through? It's ironic that Dale was working for an administration that wanted to cut twenty plus billion board feet. Then we have the old growth debate that he was immersed in. So I think it's more than the change of administration. If you take a look at my situation, I certainly didn't expect this Bush administration to be as pro-development and as anti-environment as they are. I've got to say I'm truly glad I'm not part of it. I was fortunate I was where I was in my career, and I'm happy with the decision that I made because what I worked for my entire career isn't what the policies that the Bush-Cheney team are pushing. I don't like to be critical of anybody or any administration necessarily, but when the reporters first asked me what I think about the environmental policies of this Bush 2 administration, my response is I wish he'd hire his father and listen to him because we made a fair amount of progress under Bush 1. He moderated a lot of the policies of the Reagan-Watt era in BLM, even under Cy Jamison, who a lot of people thought was going to be this black hat anti-environmentalist. As we discussed earlier, a lot of these programs grew. A lot of the programs like "Rise To The Future," the fish and wildlife programs at the Forest Service, and the recreation programs really blossomed under Bush 1. The first formal statements of ecosystem management were under Bush 1. The formal policy on clearcutting that came under Bush 1. What we see now is we see a very different set of policies. I don't think we could have anybody in the White House that is more extreme on the environment than Bush 2.

Now if we had gotten a moderate elected I can see the situation very well. They could say hey, Dombeck, we don't like some of these policies. You need to back off on some of this a little bit and play it cool, but we want you to stay. So I don't think we've started any sort of a precedent necessarily, because I hope there's more depth in our analysis of this than just we've gone from Democrat to Republican. Some people may think because I happened to be chief in the Clinton administration, the fact is I've never been one or the other from the standpoint of being partisan. Although I do think now with what I see going on in the Republican party and more of this extreme element coming out that started in the 1980s and is really picking up steam, that I'm really not happy with a lot of the politics of the country including the foreign policy and the level of arrogance that we are communicating. It's more than just the environmental policies that are not in sync with the way that I think we should be going. So I'm glad I'm not there, and I have a lot of empathy for the chief and the people that are dealing with this because what they are doing is they are walking a tightrope.

Dale Robertson phoned me probably my first day or maybe even before the first day as chief and said a couple of things that I always remembered. One is that Mike, remember you're the most popular your first day on the job. The second thing he told me that day was that he was not going to bother me with decisions I make and things I do. He said I've been in that chair and he said I know that sometimes you've got to do things and only you know why and nobody else will know. That comes with the job.

I'm proud that I did articulate a true conservation agenda that put us in a leadership role and began to rebuild trust. My worry now is with the philosophy of this administration that we're going to lose a lot of that trust, and that we're setting the clock back maybe another ten or fifteen years. Even though the road building era is over, now we're going to go through more rancor and public debate than if the administration that followed Clinton would have been more moderate. Your interviews with the next two or three chiefs are going to tell us where we are in that regard.

I want to tell you one other story. I had my going away party with the national leadership team. I pulled Dale Bosworth aside. I said I had called Jack Thomas saying, you have just been displaced from the front row. He says what do you mean. I said you are no longer the guy that screwed everything up. It's Dombeck. And I said to Dale Bosworth, you're next. I see this trend in the culture of the Forest Service, particularly from Dale to Jack, Jack to Dombeck, Dombeck to Bosworth, where it's easy to place blame, but you don't always know what the individuals struggled with and what they dealt with.

Now as I look back two years out of the job, I really am truly grateful for having had the opportunity to work with the people I did, but I really didn't miss the job even one day. In fact, my first official day out of the job I went fishing on the Potomac River. Monday morning instead of driving into the Auditor's Building I drove to Great Falls with my fishing rod. I didn't catch anything but had a good time. But it really is a tremendous honor and opportunity to work with the tremendous, tremendous organization of the Forest Service. I have equal respect for the BLM and the people I got to know there. The only thing I really missed was the wonderful people you work with on a daily basis and have debates with and disagreements with but tremendous with opportunities. Only in America could somebody that grew up twenty-five miles from a town of fifteen hundred in Podunk, USA, on a national forest end up being chief, when that wasn't even part of the career plan to begin with. Some people said well how did you maneuver your way, when did you decide you wanted to be chief. I remember walking into the ranger's office seeing John McGuire's picture hanging behind Bob Miley's [the ranger who hired me] desk, and didn't have a clue what he did, didn't know what he did, and probably didn't care. It was just something that was never on the radar screen that I'd have these tremendous opportunities laid in front of me as I went through a career that it would be impossible to plan my career path.

The Chief's Personal Life

HKS: I'm always curious about the chief as a person. How did you get to and from work when you were in Washington? You can't take a carpool because your schedule is too erratic, but the freeways require you have to have two or three people in order to drive in the good lanes. So what did you do?

MPD: Well, I lived in Vienna, Virginia, which is the end of the Orange Line. We specifically located near the Metro when we first came to Washington, so we also had that alternative. Much of my career I did carpool, even when I was acting director at BLM. It worked a lot of the time, especially going in, and then if I was late, which I often was. I was able to take the Metro home. Then when I became chief, Pam Godsey, who was on the state and private forestry staff, was a neighbor. Pam and I carpooled together, and it always worked in the morning because you could plan the morning. I always felt bad, you know, keeping people there 'til way, way too late. So it can work part of the time. Then Pam retired, and I probably drove in about half the time and the other half the time I Metroed. When I had a hearing up on the Hill or I was going to end my day up on Capitol Hill, then I almost always took the Metro because it saved coming back to the office, and it would save me fifteen or twenty minutes a day. But the advantage I had as an agency head is I had a parking space, which was really the only perk. So it was easy for me to get a carpool, because we could use my parking place, which is a premium in Washington.

HKS: People waited in line to get in your carpool I'm sure. As I was packing my bags this morning I was thinking about all the travel that chiefs do, and how many times on a trip your plans are changed, a phone call from Washington to come back for a hearing, whatever it is. You wind up doing things you didn't intend to do when you take a trip. How do you pack enough gear

with you to be able to be that flexible—you're going on a fire, you're making a speech, you're flying back for a hearing. Is that much of an issue?

MPD: You'd go to some place out West like Eureka, California, and it would be sixty degrees on the coast and then you'd go up over the mountains and it would be ninety-five. I remember in California leaving the Bay Area and it was sixty degrees. You go to the central valley it's ninety or up in the mountains and it snows. You had to take a lot of clothes, because you didn't ever know what the weather was going to be like. Your boots and shoes and stuff take up a lot of room, so footgear was a particular problem. You'd be amazed how many times I ended up borrowing a shirt, a uniform from other employees.

HKS: I'm not surprised at all. That's why I was asking, with your erratic schedule.

MPD: The biggest challenge in traveling was really personal and at home. Let me give you a couple of examples. I've got a place rented for a week's vacation back home here in Wisconsin near where I grew up and plans for my brother and his family and my wife and daughter to meet out here. The phone rings, and you've got to stay for a hearing. In this particular instance, the phone rang and it said we want you to be at the podium, I was director of BLM at the time, we want you to be at the podium with Mollie Beattie and Jack Ward Thomas at the outdoor writer's conference, which was in Chattanooga, Tennessee. So my wife and daughter drive me to Dulles airport. I fly to Chattanooga. They drive to Milwaukee by themselves, fourteen hours. I do the outdoor writer's conference with Mollie and Jack. This was just a tremendous experience because this was the first time Jack gave his speech about the importance of public lands during the devolution of public lands era. It was his first public statement of why public lands were important to him, and "not only no, but hell no" to the devolution of public lands. So I got to Milwaukee, my wife and daughter pick me up. Six hours later we got to the cabin, which we had rented on Moose Lake. Spent a couple of days with my brother. I got another phone call. Come back, you've got to do a hearing. My wife drives me from near Hayward, Wisconsin, to Rhinelander. I fly to Washington, come back two days later, and she picks me up at Rhinelander again. The phone rings again; this time it was a fire and I was called out West. She and my daughter end up driving back to Washington by themselves.

They have a lot of patience, but it's things like that that really were tough. I don't know how many times family vacations got scuttled or interrupted. It used to be the joke that well, if we rent a place and schedule a vacation, it'll be certain that Dad won't be able to go. And, in fact, I mentioned yesterday that when we got married we made the agreement that on our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary we were going to go to Australia and you just don't go to Australia for a couple of days or a long weekend. And, of course, that was the year of the 2000 fire season and there was no way that I was going to be able to be gone even for a week. And, of course, we had planned on really wanting to go to Australia for at least three weeks. In fact, we still haven't gone. That's on our list. So that is a frustration. Plus the other part of traveling is you're almost always worn out. And part of the Washington scene is the social side of what you're expected to do. I grew up twenty-five miles from a town of fifteen hundred and boy, a fancy reception. You know, they're going to have shrimp. They're going to have all this good food and all this fresh fruit and it's going to be wonderful and after a couple of years it's, not another reception. You just go and make an appearance and visit with a few folks and leave as quickly as you can.

HKS: It's what I would call mandatory social life. Is that usually right at quitting time just for the convenience of all people who are working in the district?

MPD: Usually. You do get to do some really, really interesting things, though. In about September or early October of 2000, Donna, my secretary, got a call. I was invited to the vice president's residence for a Christmas party. I'd never been to the vice president's residence. I

knew it was near the Naval Observatory some place, I just didn't know exactly where. I said to Donna, put it down. My wife and I will go. It was scheduled for six to eight o'clock on December 13th. Well, the election occurred. We didn't know who was going to be president. Do you know what happened the morning of December 13th? That was the day the Supreme Court made the decision.

HKS: I was in India December 13th, as a matter of fact.

MPD: And they determined that George Bush was going to be president, and I said to Donna I can't imagine the vice president having a party today. Call him and see. She said, oh yes, it's on. So we went. You got to walk through part of the house and see all the Christmas decorations. It wasn't decorated as elaborately as the White House. So you walked through, then they had a tent out in back and they had music and Christmas carols and drinks and hors doeuvres and that type of thing. There was an unusual mixture of people. There were a few fairly high-level career people like me. There were some lobbyists. I remember John Podesta, the president's chief of staff, being there. There were a few members of Congress there. Paul Hanson, who was head of the Izaac Walton League, was there and a few people from the conservation community, some industry lobbyists, some members of Congress, some Hill staffers. It must have been just a random selection of people. And lo and behold, about seven o'clock Al and Tipper Gore came out and they both looked like they'd both been crying a good share of the day.

Tipper kicked off the event and talked a little bit and made fun of Al. Al Gore got up and said well, I've been busy today. I've been writing a speech. We didn't know it at the time, but he actually used us to rehearse a portion of his concession speech. It was about quarter to eight or some place in there. He said I've got to leave. I've got to go give a speech. Away they went and, of course, the party dispersed and we went home and turned on the TV and there was Al Gore, same suit, same tie, giving the concession speech that we'd heard earlier. So regardless of your party affiliation or who you're for or against, the fact is it's just a tremendous honor to be affiliated with the greatest country in the world and the leadership and the opportunities you have that are also part of the job. Yes, there's a lot of stress and it's like drinking out of a fire hose most days, but there's also some things that are fun. All the agencies report to the executive branch, so in essence they're your bosses.

HKS: I am unable to identify with what you said, but I certainly agree it is an honor to be able to serve the public in some way. Aldo Leopold said that every professional some time during their career ought to serve the profession, be active in the Society of American Foresters or something, and do that grunt work. I thought that was kind of interesting. He had good ideas all the way along.

Just a few more things about what's it like to work in Washington, D.C., as head of an agency when you have so many opportunities for disruption. You can't really control your calendar even day-to-day, when you can go home at night and all the rest. You have the practical problems of having bills paid and having your car serviced, haircuts, and all the rest of it.

MPD: You somehow fit it in. In my case and I think probably the case of most of the chiefs you have a very understanding family and spouse that helps with a lot of stuff. You know my wife used to practice what a lot of my friends and neighbors called ego control. I'd come home at night, and before she'd let me in the house she'd say how do you spell boss. If I didn't say P-A-T, because her name is Pat, she said I won't let you in. It was very much of a life like anybody else had. There's this reverence of the chief among the employees. We'd be canoeing or rafting, and I'd want to take the stern or I'd want to take the oars on the raft and sometimes employees would be surprised that I knew how to do that. We all come from essentially the same mold. I probably, with eleven years as a fishing guide, had more practice at cooking meals on a gravel

bar and in the woods over a wood fire and chopping wood and running rivers than a lot of people had. A lot of people probably didn't know that about my background, so they'd be surprised when I'd want to do that kind of stuff.

HKS: Pinchot used to say a ranger had to be able to throw a diamond hitch, and I imagine Pinchot could do that.

MPD: I always thought that most of the appreciation that I got for the land and the outdoors and the importance of connecting people with the land I probably got growing up and guiding more so than from my college education. I learned the science and the techniques and the details and the scientific names, but you get to know so many people guiding, different people, and you see the awe and the inspiration that they get from the out-of-doors and nature and the scenery and the wildlife experiences. What made an impression on me more than anything else is that we're not going to be remembered for the volume of timber that we get out. That's not what we remember Pinchot for. We remember people for what they save for future generations.

Selection of Dale Bosworth

HKS: You mentioned earlier that during your last month or last weeks you prepared a list of candidates that you recommended to the secretary to be your successor. How much more can you add or explain about the selection of Bosworth?

MPD: We went through the entire list. The secretary, as I said, was very cordial, and I really think she respected me and I respected her. I was a most afraid near the end that she was going to ask me to stay. I had a list of seven names, all in the Forest Service leadership and, of course, Dale was on that list. Dave Tenney was in that meeting as well. She asked me some questions about various people, and I went through the pros and cons of each. I remember naming one person, and Dave Tenney mentioned that that probably wasn't an acceptable candidate because this person was in favor of roadless. It was one of the regional foresters who will go unnamed for now. They were very courteous and respecting of the chief and all employees of the Forest Service and knew that they had to select a chief that was a resource professional.

HKS: Dale appears in Jack Thomas' journals six or eight times as regional forester of two different regions during the time that Jack was chief. You could see that Jack thought highly of him, the kinds of things he asked him to do. What did you see in Dale that put him on the list with the others?

MPD: I'd say he was in the top tier with regard to his land ethic. He had good people skills. He had a good presence. His temperament was appropriate to be able to handle the stress and the controversial hearings and all of those kinds of things. Having him in the top tier certainly wasn't difficult at all. He wasn't strongly liked or disliked by either side. He tried to work with all sides. So given the political climate of the time, I do think Dale was the right choice. He had the support of the rank and file, certainly more so than Jack and I had. His father was a leader in the Forest Service. There were a lot of characteristics in Dale that made him the right choice.

HKS: When his appointment was announced it was accompanied with a brief resume. I was surprised that he hadn't had any visible Washington Office experience. He was never associate deputy or whatever. Do you have any gut feelings with how it was harder for him to adjust not having actually sat in Washington for a year or two if not longer? Is it that different than being in a regional office?

MPD: I think so. I think that in a regional office, even at a lower level in the Washington Office, you are not exposed as much to the tremendous swings in politics that you have to deal with as you go from one member to the other. I used to think to myself that decision isn't based on science, that Washington's a political place. You've got the Smithsonian there, but that's about it. It's not a UC-Berkeley or the University of Wisconsin-Madison or Colorado State; it's the political capital of the country. It is a political place and most decisions are based upon a combination of science, sociology, economics. You throw it all together and that's really what politics is. It's a blend of all of those factors.

I remember Sally Collins telling me not too long ago in a phone call that one of the challenges that she and Dale were having is that they didn't have the level of Washington experience that I had, because I'd had the benefit of some years of training working near the director or secretary level starting with the time I worked for Cy Jamison in 1969. So I essentially had six or seven years training and did lots of hearings, lots of testifying and meetings at the White House and Old Executive Office Building before I became chief, and I think that was a distinct advantage. This is no criticism of Dale, but to give you some insights into the culture, having someone that they really feel is one of them will be popular with employees and that's important. But one of the weaknesses the culture has is that it's too inwardly focused, and as I mentioned earlier, the tendency is to use up the chief internally. Yet it's these external relationships—Congress, the administration, the lobby groups, the special interests—that ought to be the chief's main focus. Dale is a smart guy. He'll work hard at trying to arrive at the right balance.

Forest Service Leadership

MPD: I had a group that Donna, my secretary, used to call Mike's lunch bunch. These were people from outside, and we'd just talk. I'd host lunch and it would be people like Roger Kennedy, the former director of the Park Service, Ted Roosevelt IV would come over, former congressman Skaggs from Colorado, Jim Range, who was an assistant secretary I believe in the Nixon administration, a Republican, and others like that. We would occasionally meet and just say how are things going. I think one of the things that any leader of a large entity needs is an independent group of advisors that are outside of your organization and outside of government that can bring different perspectives to you. Especially in my case the signal that this might send to particularly the Washington Office staff is that well, he doesn't care what we think, which the fact is, isn't true at all. The thing is it's this diversity of opinions that's important, and in all agencies one of their bigger challenges is the internalization of how they view the world and how they view themselves. So when you get a situation like I mentioned at the beginning of the interview with a Jack Anderson column running that's saying the administration has finally found an agency even it can't reinvent, the most important thing for the leader to know is why enough people think that about the agency to say it publicly, rather than be defensive about it. So getting that outside advice is I think very, very important.

HKS: I remember an entry in Jack's journal. I don't remember the issue, but he said "and the deputies agree, finally." So you could see the deputies thinking, you don't care what we think. You care what Congress thinks. Somehow or other he's brought them around to at least not oppose him anymore. Was consensus usually easy to come by?

MPD: On some issues it was virtually impossible, others easy. My view on an issue is when you're moving it forward, the most helpful people are those that disagree with you. They really are the people that help you draw the map, because they tell you where the obstacles are and where the bumps in the road are. If you get too much group-think, if you will, then you sometimes miss some external perceptions or other things that are out there that are the landmines that you're

not aware of. This is a challenge when you have too much internalization in an organization. When somebody brings an issue to you, have we heard all sides of the issue or are they coming there as advocates for the issue only having asked the set of questions that favor their position on the issue. The chief can't know everything. I always described myself as the person that knows less about more issues than anybody else in the Forest Service, and that's often the case because we've got experts in every area. So you don't always know if you've asked all of the right questions. Who's for it, who's against it, and why. What are the ramifications from economics to local governments to reactions of Democrats, Republicans, Independents, or whoever might have a stake in the particular policy or issue.

HKS: Generally were the chief and staff meetings short, just sort of show and tell, heads up, this is what's going on? Or some of them lasted a half a day?

MPD: Really a combination of both. It's easy to get too up with meeting after meeting after meeting. One of the quips that I used to make was in Washington there are two kinds of people, those that go to meetings and those that schedule meetings. What we were really best at was canceling meetings. We tried to keep the daily meetings short, fifteen minutes or so, what's important. We had weekly meetings with the deputies and some of the other staff that we tried to hold to an hour. You go around the table, you talk about issues that are hot, what's going on. But the longer meetings were always the national leadership team meetings.

HKS: Those are generally quarterly?

MPD: Generally. What's typically known as the RF&D we tried some different things. We were in a stage there about two years through my tenure where several of the regional foresters and station directors said well we want to be more involved. We don't know enough about what's going on in Washington. So for a time there we had meetings more often than quarterly, and we scheduled conference calls on an as needed basis, just to make sure that we did the appropriate level of coordination that's so important.

HKS: Half of the group is research specialists and the other half deal with the whole range of issues of the Forest Service. The dynamics of the meeting seems to be a little bit strange, especially since there aren't very many controversies on the research side.

MPD: The traditional RF&D, the quarterly meetings, probably had far too much show and tell. We tried to interject more natural resource policy substance into them. And one of the frustrations I had that started out as acting director at BLM that carried over into the Forest Service was, if someone from the outside who no idea what we did observed one of our meetings, they probably wouldn't have any idea what we did after the meeting. It was so much process stuff and yet our business was natural resource management. I wanted to see us talking more natural resources, talking about why the land's important, what's going on, sort of more of the big picture stuff. We made a concerted effort while I was chief to move it in that direction, and I think were reasonably successful.

We perceive ourselves as the conservation leaders of the country and perhaps of the world, and yet when we meet as a national leadership team why is it that we sequester ourselves in some hotel in Washington where hardly nobody else knows that we're there. So I said hey, let's start having these meetings in a more public way. The first meeting we had of that nature was at the campus of the University of Minnesota, and the university was thrilled to have us. They had a reception for us, the faculty, the students. Bruce Vento came and spoke to us because that was his district. We had another meeting in Madison because I felt the importance of the symbolism of what the agency is on the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *A Sand County Almanac*. Again they were thrilled to have us, and the faculty and some of the graduate students had a

nice reception for us. They learned something about who we were what we were about. Hopefully we recruited some prospective employees as a result of that.

We had a wonderful field trip to Leopold shack. We had two busloads in two groups that went out. The group that I was on toured the shack. Nina Leopold Bradley was there, the older Leopold daughter, just a wonderful, wonderful lady. She told us some stories, and it was in the fall and there were geese in the air over the Wisconsin River. It was just a spiritual experience. She did some readings around the campfire and there was hardly a dry eye on anyone when we left there. It was just such a tremendous experience. My view is that we shouldn't be always sequestered in this internalized mode but that we ought to be having meetings in other places, too. We had another meeting at the Yale School of Forestry and Environment Sciences. How could you have a more symbolically important place for the conservation leaders of the country to be meeting and have the community know it that we're there, that we're meeting, that we do exist and we talk about these things.

When Jack was chief and I was director of BLM, one of the things we did is we had some joint meetings between the two agencies, similar issues, similar problems, spotted owl, grazing issues, forest management issues, recreation issues, many of the same kinds of problems. I remember one of the meetings we had somewhere on the Virginia side of the Potomac. It was the day of the Oklahoma City bombing. I recall someone coming in and calling Jack and me out and said hey, this is what just happened. That ended any substantive discussion because everyone was so shocked at the tragedy that we just really couldn't do business anymore that day.

HKS: I interviewed Bob Buckman. You probably didn't know him very well. He was deputy chief of research under Max.

MPD: I was with Bob just about a month ago. I gave a speech at Oregon State University and talked to one of the graduate student classes over lunch, and he was part of that dialogue. Doing well.

HKS: It's Bob that made me really aware of how much time the chief and staff and RF&D love, spend on personnel, putting people on lists, forest supervisors, associate deputies. Because you can't be sure that any one person is going to be available at the moment there's a vacancy. He presented it as fascinating for a guy from research not really knowing that much about the day-to-day Forest Service, but to see how much effort it took to have people in line at the right time of transitions, and you couldn't always predict the transition time. Somebody might die. Somebody might quit. John McGuire said that the toughest job any chief has is you have to work with what's left you, and if you don't have the right array of deputies or supervisors for whatever reason, you've got a lot of backing and filling to do. And the chief's most important legacy to an agency is the people he leaves in the key positions. Are they the right people? They're not all one year from retirement.

MPD: I'd say that was a bigger problem in the 1990s than it was probably when John McGuire was chief, because of the age demographics of the organizations. And this is not unique to the Forest Service but all of government. We took a look at the demographics of the Forest Service, and this was a few years ago, and found that forty-two percent of the workforce was eligible to retire within the next five years. So we had this bulge of people moving through, and typically about half the people retire as soon as they're eligible. One dynamic we're having now is with the downturn in the economy, more people are working longer because their investment portfolio, their nest egg isn't what it might have been a couple of years ago. This is true across the entire spectrum in the United States, not just the Forest Service or the government. But this is a real challenge. We looked at the fifty-five or sixty or so people in the Forest Service that are in the Senior Executive Service, and you've got to look hard to find somebody that's under fifty. We

probably had only a couple of people that were under fifty. So where's your next chief going to come from? How old was Dale when he was appointed associate chief? My guess is he must have been around forty.

HKS: He was very young.

MPD: So how is it then that we get people into position at an early enough age so by the time they're appointed chief they've got enough energy and years left to serve? Big challenge, it is a big challenge.

Life After the Forest Service

HKS: Talk about your most important honors and publications.

MPD: I'm deeply honored and grateful to all of the super people that I worked with in an entire career that would leave me with the honors I have received. I'm over two years out of the job and am still being recognized for my work. In July I go to Duluth to receive the distinguished service award from the Society of Conservation Biology. The distinguished executive award, the presidential rank award, honorary doctorate, the Audubon medal. It's absolutely humbling to be part of that when I think about how my role was really being there symbolically as a leader, when so many people were doing the work that resulted in the accomplishments that were actually recognized. It's a reflection on the agency or in my case I should say agencies that I worked with and the many employees.

Another thing that's been fun to work on was the recent book that was just published by Island Press, *From Conquest To Conservation, Our Public Lands Legacy* really emanates from the experiences that I had both at BLM where I talk about the history of public lands and basically from conquest to conservation. Conquest being the Revolutionary War and the conquest of the English rule over the U.S. I hope what's written there will be helpful. Some people have said well, why do you have coauthors. There's really a couple of good reasons. Number one is Jack Williams and Chris Wood and I published a book earlier called *Watershed Restoration Principles and Practices.* My objective as director of BLM at that time was to encourage employees to be active in their professional societies. So we edited this book, which is a twenty-eight chapter synthesis of some of what we know about watersheds. Most of the papers were written by Forest Service and BLM employees.

At that time we agreed we'd write another book. We didn't know exactly what it would be about but we sort of got started. Then I got waylaid with the duties of the chief, and once I left the chief's office then we were able to get our nose to the grindstone again. So I made the commitment that we were going to do it. I think it was Princeton University Press, one of the editors was looking at it and chastised me a little bit for that fact that I should have been the sole author. It would be easier to market. I said well, a deal is a deal and these are friends and colleagues and, in fact, they made important contributions. We agreed we'd each write three chapters and then critique each other's work. And that's pretty much what we did. In fact, we ended up with eight chapters instead of nine because we merged one. We all brought different talents and skills to the table. I am really proud of the fact that we got this done and may do another book. We'll see what the future brings.

HKS: I scanned it the other night. It's a book that's certainly suited for classroom as a required text in a lot of courses. It's short. It raises a lot of questions and would be great for a seminar,

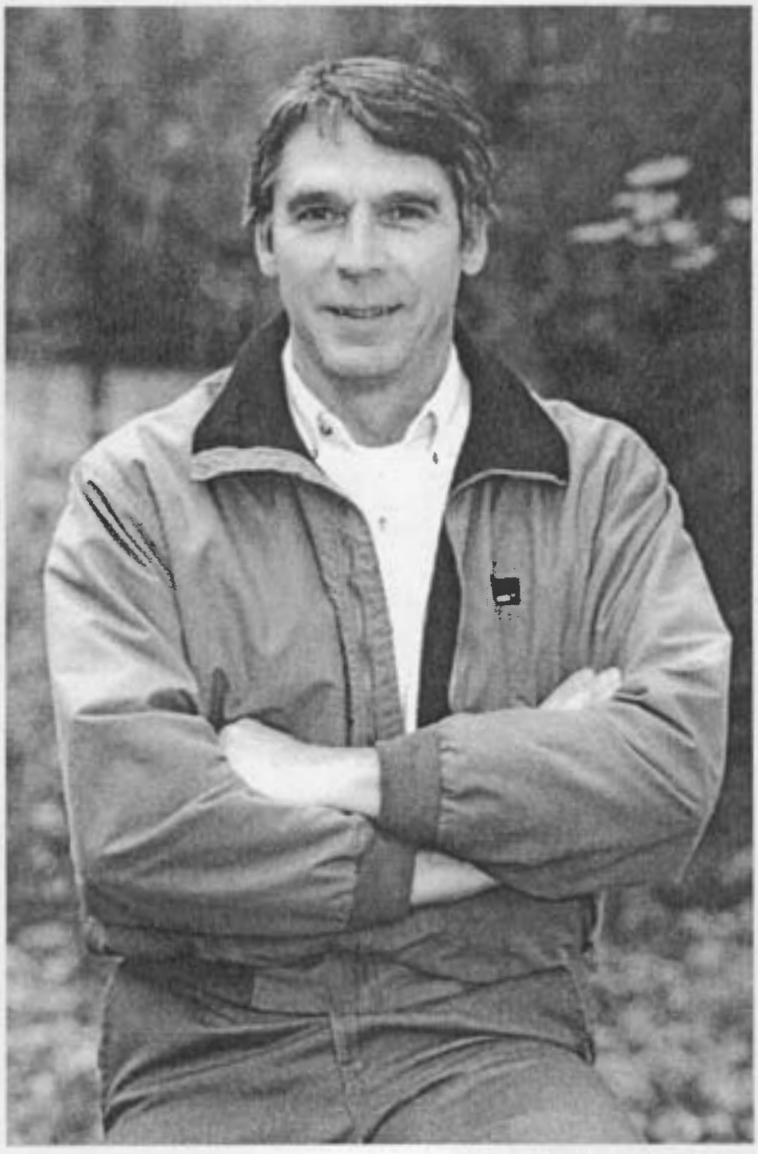

Figure 14: Michael P. Dombeck, Ph.D. Pioneer Professor of Global Environmental Management, University of Wisconsin System Fellow of Global Conservation (2001).

because it's provocative. It gives the students something to hang their hat on when they're trying to carry the debate in a seminar situation.

I noticed on your resume that while you were chief you were adjunct professor both at Yale and at this school here, Stevens Point. Is that just strictly an honorary situation or were you active in the academic programs at both campuses while you were chief?

MPD: Probably a combination of both. One of the people that was on my master's committee is still here. When I got into agency leadership positions he convinced me to come to Stevens Point every other year and conduct an all-day workshop on public lands. We began to focus more on the Forest Service lands because obviously there's maybe only a couple of acres of BLM lands in Wisconsin, some of the isolated islands that were missed in the survey on the Mississippi that are close to here. But we've got 1.7 million acres of national forest in this state.

We had wonderful all-day workshops that students of this class put together and organized, attended by two and three hundred people from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan on all the issues from the environmental community's concern to industry. The Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin would be part of the agenda, as would the Sierra Club and the recreation industry. It really helped the students see the debate and the tension that you deal with in the real world in public land management. Then I was on the advisory board of my alma mater here in the College of Natural Resources at Stevens Point. At Yale I thought it was symbolically important for the chief to be on the adjunct faculty. Ed Brannon and another professor and I taught a seminar, and the first meeting we had with the students was a weekend at Grey Towers talking about issues, laying out the course. I would take the train from Washington to New Haven on occasion to deliver a lecture or a speech or participate in the seminar. So it was fun.

After the Forest Service I elected to come back to a university, which is one of the things I always planned on doing. My goal wasn't to be a public servant when I was in college. I was focused on being a professor, the good life in the Ivory Tower with June, July, and August for fishing. The fact that the students come at things from a different way and challenge your opinions all the time is really refreshing, even high school students. Last month I participated in the Laird Youth Leadership Day.

Melvin Laird, the former secretary of Defense, this was his congressional district when I was a little kid, and I participated this year where we made presentations to four hundred and fifty sophomores and juniors in high school about key issues. I had the segment on conservation, and they had an emergency room doctor there to talk about chemical warfare and biological warfare. They had the supreme court justice of the state of Wisconsin there. Senator Warner from Virginia was the keynote speaker. I'd do about a ten-minute presentation and then leave forty minutes for dialogue and questions. The provocative questions that these juniors and sophomores in high school ask are really instructive to help one get an idea what's going on in people's minds and what they think about these issues. Of course, these kids are not afraid to challenge you so they really keep you on your toes.

HKS: One of those times you wish you had a video camera. I was at a workshop at Grey Towers and sat next to Jack Thomas. He was new to being chief. Across the table from him was Gifford Pinchot IV, who I guess was about twelve or fourteen years old. They got to debating and this kid said this is really a generational question. It has nothing to do with science and so forth. And Jack agreed. Of course, he was not the typical person dealing with environmental questions, given who he was. His father Gifford Pinchot III was also at that table.

How about the future? Academic all the way as far as you're concerned, or are you thinking about serving on boards of directors, conservation groups, or what?

MPD: Before we get into that, let me deviate just one last time. As I said, I started, never realizing that I'd work for the government or for the Forest Service as long as I did. One of the things when you sit in the chief's chair, you watch all the employees and how they feel. I can sort of lump them into three categories, and there's two categories that I never wanted to be like. One category was by the time people are nearing the end of their career they can be very disgruntled with where the agency is going. Things are all messed up today. If it would only be like it was thirty years ago when life was good. I remember the assistant ranger on the first district I worked on didn't come to his retirement party and he was a GS-9 technician. He was disgruntled because he knew his replacement was going to be a GS-11 professional, and he thought that was unfair. So you've got that type, and I never wanted to be like that.

You've got another type that are the workaholics. They are so dedicated to their work that by the time they're in the organization twenty-five, thirty years the only friends they have are the people they work with, and their hobbies and outside interests are little more than a memory of the distant past. Then when they do retire, the adjustment is difficult and I see many of them having a really unhappy retirement or a difficult transition from this workaholic mode to life in retirement. And I never wanted to be like that.

Then there was the third kind and I'll site Jose Cruz as the example. He retired about 1999 as the director of fire management in state and private. Employees have tremendous respect for the chief. Whether they like you or your policies is oftentimes another matter but still the respect is always there. Jose came into my office and he said chief, I think I would like to retire. He said you know I feel good about where our program is now. I've had a chance to make some tremendous contributions, and I want to go out on a high. I thought, he has the right attitude. Actually there are lots of people like that, and they would come up and just as a matter of respect they would say chief, can I retire. I might respond well, how many years do you have in. And they might say thirty-four or they might say twenty-eight, and I would say it really seems to me that you have earned the right to make the decision that's best for you and your family, that you've done your bit for the country and you've done your bit for the Forest Service.

We talked earlier on the spectrum of say pro-environmentalism to anti-environmentalism. I use that as a metaphor for the gulf between the philosophies of the two, because I still really feel good about what I got to do. Now that I'm two years away from the job I feel a lot better about it now than I did when I was six months away. I don't know what it will feel like in five years but I feel good about some of the things I got to do and have no remorse whatsoever. But the fact is, I would don't want to be there now. My wife and I never planned on coming back to our alma mater, or within even a hundred and fifty miles from where we both grew up, which is where we are. Our plan was we wanted to end up near a small to moderate size college town close to public land and outdoor recreation. The opportunity was offered to me to come here to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to help shape the Global Environmental Management Education Center and have the title of pioneer professor, because I was the first one. I was talking to my advisor where I got my Ph.D. at Iowa State, and he wondered if the position was funded by Pioneer Seed Corn Company. I said no, it just means because I'm old. But it's because I was the first one in this chair. So the decision to come here was easy.

HKS: The work you do here at the school, is it really international, truly global? Is yours more of a policy class?

MPD: I teach one seminar for Stevens Point and Madison graduate students. The title of the course is "Issues in Global Conservation." I kick it off with a Leopoldian quote that says we

spend our entire careers learning more and more about less and less, and the challenge is to learn more about the entire biotic community. So I say to them, okay, you're the governor's advisor, or you're the governor, or you're a senator, or the president asks you to be secretary of the Interior, or you're the chief of the Forest Service. What are you going to do and why? Knowing that you can only deal with so many issues at one time, a wise general knows not to have too many battlefronts. You decide what you're going to do, and you convince the rest of us in fifteen minutes or less, plus a briefing paper less than seven hundred and fifty words, why your issue is the issue that's of utmost importance. I use a policy analysis textbook on the how-tos of policy analysis.

I spend about two or three lectures telling them what I think the most important issues are while they are deciding what to work on themselves. Then the rest of the semester is spent with them telling us what their issues of importance are. For a bit of interest I sprinkle in a field trip on a weekend where we go to the International Crane Foundation and the Leopold shack and the two are only just a few miles apart. *A Sand County Almanac* is required reading for the course. It's a freewheeling, different course, and some students are comfortable with a different approach, and others aren't. I try to impress upon them that in real world policy there are no rules. Your chance to influence policy might be meeting somebody in the hall. You might not have a room where you can do a PowerPoint presentation. You might be riding with a secretary in the back of a taxi going to the Hill or over lunch. They can do whatever they want to. I mean they can give a presentation in the woods or they can give a formal PowerPoint presentation to the entire class.

The objective of GEM, the acronym for Global Environmental Management Education Center, is to take the traditional quality conservation education and merge it with high technology. I use distance learning and one week I lecture at Stevens Point and it's broadcast live to Madison. This is interactive video. And the next week I'm in Madison to be there with the students, and we broadcast back to Stevens Point to try to get the students used to the technologies. I say you may be uncomfortable doing this stuff but the fact is, most of you are going to be teaching or involved in some sort of public policy type job, and you might as well get used to the TV cameras because they're going to be part of your life.

HKS: A guest lecturer I would recommend for you is Frank Wadsworth. I interviewed him in Puerto Rico. He thinks the world would be better off if the U.S. Forest Service suspended all research domestically for ten years and applied all those resources to third world needs. He said the end product, the results, the benefits would be so much greater than the fine tuning that we already know about the U.S. Sure there's more to know about the U.S., but he said the big problems are external and we're just giving token attention to them.

HFD: Now that I think about it, I really agree with him. I was a delegate to the Johannesburg summit last fall. I guess it's something I always sort of knew but it never hit me like this before that we in the U.S. don't understand poverty. The fact is, our news does stop at our borders, and you realize that if you watch BBC and news in other countries. You realize how biased the news that we hear really is.

HKS: We've covered the list of questions. Thank you for a fine interview.

[Letter from Mike Dombeck to Ann Veneman *re* Suggestions for Resolving Longstanding Conservation Challenges]

Date: March 25, 2001

Secretary Ann Veneman
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th & Independence
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Veneman:

As you know, this is my final week as Chief of the United States Forest Service. I grew up on the Chequamegon National Forest along forest road 164. As a young boy, I made many trips up and down the West Fork lookout tower that was in full view from our kitchen window. As perhaps the only Chief to have actually grown up on a National Forest, it has been a distinct honor to serve with 35,000 employees dedicated to caring for the land and serving people.

One hundred years ago, one of your predecessors, Secretary James Wilson, directed the Forest Service to manage public resources for "the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run." What defines the "greatest good" has changed significantly since 1904, even since 1997 when I accepted this job. Our modern industrialized society of 275 million people recognizes today that the values of open space, clean drinking water, and recreation far outstrip more traditional commodity values.

Although the mix and intensity of uses have changed significantly over the years, the multiple use mission of the Forest Service remains as important today as ever. Consider our many multiple use accomplishments of the past year. We:

- Provided drinking water to approximately 60 million Americans;
- Managed about 35 million acres of wilderness;
- Performed watershed improvements on 35,500 acres;
- Restored 470,500 acres of wildlife and fish habitat;
- Permitted 9.3 million animal head months of livestock;
- Maintained 23,000 developed recreation sites and 4,300 campsites;
- Assisted 146,700 woodland owners and 690 rural communities;
- Reduced hazardous fuels on 1.4 million acres;
- Developed 2,500 research reports and other technical documents;
- Maintained 4.5 billion board feet of timber under contract; and
- Processed 1075 energy and bonded non-energy operations.

Early in my tenure, we faced congressional threats of "custodial funding" due to a decline in the production of commodities. Four years later after an incredibly challenging fire season and an unprecedented debate on the value of clean water and unfragmented landscapes, the overall Forest Service budget increased by 65 percent. National Forest System funding increased by 22 percent. State and Private Forestry increased by 159 percent and Research by 28 percent. I hope that you are able to continue these sorts of investments in conservation and knowledge that pay such high dividends to future generations.

As you begin your tenure as Secretary of Agriculture, I would like to share with you recommendations to help resolve specific longstanding conservation challenges as the Forest Service enters a new century of managing for "the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

Roadless Area Protection

I hope the Administration's intent is not to negotiate a settlement with those opposed to roadless area protection. Doing so would undermine the most extensive multi-year environmental analysis in history; a process that included over 600 public meetings and generated 1.6 million comments – the overwhelming majority of which supported protecting roadless areas. Controversy over roadless areas has persisted for decades. I hope you will withstand political pressure and not reopen this divisive debate.

Due to complexity, cost, and controversy more projects fail in roadless areas than anywhere else. Most important, not a single private land owner or corporate interest would continue to build new roads in pristine areas while saddled with a crumbling 386,000 mile road system with an $8.4 billion road maintenance backlog liability. One quarter of one percent of our nation's timber and a fraction of a fraction of our oil and gas is a small price to pay for the protection of 58.5 million acres of our children's natural resource inheritance. The long-term public interest in conserving these areas should prevail over short-term private interests.

Civil Rights and Financial Management

Much progress has been made in the areas of civil rights and financial management and accountability, but more remains to be done. The Forest Service must remain vigilant in promoting a civil rights agenda that treats employees and customers fairly and with decency and respect.

Financial management and accountability remain a significant vulnerability. Although the traditional culture of the agency does not readily accept outside assistance, I recommend your bringing in the highest quality expertise to bolster Forest Service skills and accelerate the achievement of financial and program accountability goals. With a $4 billion budget and 35,000 employees, the Forest Service is akin to a Fortune 500 company in size and complexity. It deserves comparable leadership and expertise in the arena of financial management.

Old Growth

More than any other, the old growth issue symbolizes the conflict and controversy that crippled the Forest Service for 30 years or more. Former Chief Dale Robertson called for the inventory and mapping of old growth forests more than a decade ago. It's time we completed these inventories and maps.

Moreover, it makes little sense to harvest old growth forests simply to bring their short-term economic values to market. The greatest good of these remnant forests is found through their research and study, conservation and restoration. The mark of a truly wealthy nation is not measured in acres harvested, rivers dammed, oil barrels filled, or mountaintops mined. Our maturity is most ably displayed by demonstrating mastery over ourselves. Our willingness to say, "Enough, these ancient forests cannot be improved through commodity timber production" honors our nation far more than engineering an expensive road to harvest an old growth stand.

Timber harvest remains an important function of the National Forest System. For example, thinning of brush and small diameter trees may help protect communities and restore fire dependent ecosystems, and in the process employ thousands of people in high quality jobs. But not if timber harvest comes at the expense of our rarest and most biologically significant old growth forests. Ensuring the conservation of old growth forests should become among the highest Forest Service priorities.

Timber Trust Funds

The incentive system that drives many Forest Service activities, despite the best intentions of field employees, continues to be modeled on an outdated system from a bygone era. The Forest Service helped to prompt congressional reform of a 1908 law that separates funding for rural schools and roads from timber harvest levels. If implemented as passed, this legislation can help to diminish controversy and reconnect communities to the lands and waters that sustain them.

Congress should now turn its attention to reforming the financial incentive system that promotes roadless area development and old growth harvest. The fact that timber receipts are used to pay employees and finance important programs too often pits long-term land health objectives against short-term financial considerations.

For the past two years ago, the Forest Service proposed that Congress make nearly $400 million of Forest Service timber related trust funds (e.g., Knutson-Vandenberg, Salvage, and Brush Disposal funds) subject to public scrutiny and congressional review through the annual appropriations process. Given the increases in our budgets over the past few years, it is past time that all Forest Service programs are treated on an equal par.

Wilderness

Few congressional decisions are more forward-looking than those involving wilderness designation. We must highlight the profile of, and increase the funding for, the dwindling number of wilderness employees in the field. This helps to explain why I committed to hiring a hundred new wilderness field staff and created a separate wilderness program apart from Recreation, where Wilderness formerly resided. It is far more than a recreation resource. Wilderness is a salve to the human spirit. In an increasingly developed and urbanized society it is a tangible reminder of our pioneer heritage.

As an agency, we have always had a schizophrenic relationship with wilderness. Although the Forest Service practically invented the wilderness ethic, we struggle with recommending new wilderness designations from the most ecologically productive lands. Existing wilderness areas remain under threat today – from proposed mining operations under the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness of Montana to chronic under-funding. Remaining vigilant against these threats and recommending the expansion of wilderness from remote high elevation areas to old growth forests, prairie grasslands, and bottomland hardwoods would demonstrate your commitment to this enduring resource.

Fire Management

Six years ago, in the wake of a deadly fire season, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Salvage Rider. The Salvage Rider applied short-term solutions to the long-term degradation of forest ecosystem health through past management actions and fire suppression. I became Chief on the heels of this 18-month law that suspended citizen appeals and directed agency

resources into timber harvest of burned and associated green trees, and inherited the rancor and gridlock it wrought.

By contrast, in the aftermath of last summer's similarly intense fire season, we crafted a bipartisan approach to protecting communities and restoring fire dependent ecosystems not dependent on the use of traditional commercial timber sales. Our long-term solution directs protective work on the areas directly adjacent to communities most at risk, through thinning of brush and other fine fuels that are most flammable, and broader use of prescribed fire. Thousands of jobs and economic opportunities await those communities willing to perform the needed stewardship work and to use the wood fiber generated incidental to accomplishing restoration objectives. The effort will meet controversy and gridlock, however, if used to simply accelerate commercial timber harvest in the name of fire protection.

The 1872 Mining Law

The General Mining Act of 1872 is the product of an era when women and many minorities could not vote, the nation was struggling through Civil War reconstruction, and St. Louis represented the western frontier to many citizens. The 1872 Mining Law confounds Forest Service efforts to balance multiple uses. Problems with the Law's antiquated royalty provisions are well known. In addition, the Law allows privatization of public lands for as little as $2.50 to $5 per acre. Every single use of the National Forest System: recreation, timber harvest, oil and gas development, for example, is subject to the approval or rejection of a field official for environmental or safety reasons. All but one, that is – hard rock mining.

It is Congress, not the Forest Service that must act to bring this law into a modern context. Because they have not, I recommended the segregation and withdrawal from development under the 1872 Mining Law of the Rocky Mountain Front, the Guadalupe Caves in New Mexico, portions of the biologically rich Siskiyou National Forest of Oregon, and other areas of the National Forest System. I had little choice in the matter because the anachronistic law vests anyone capable of filing a valid claim with the right to develop an area regardless of its other social or environmental values. Until Congress demonstrates the willingness to reform the outdated 1872 Mining Law, I urge you to continue to aggressively recommend the segregation and withdrawal of our most sensitive forests and grasslands from hard rock mining.

Off Highway Vehicles

More people recreate on National Forests and Grasslands than on any other public lands. Technological innovations in motorized recreation enable people to get into more remote areas than ever before, often resulting in degraded water quality and wildlife habitat and erosion. Off highway vehicles should remain a legitimate use of public lands where expressly allowed. We must ensure, however, that their use does not compromise the integrity of the soil and water resource and wildlife habitats.

Last year, more than 100 groups petitioned me to initiate a national rulemaking regarding off highway vehicles. I resisted in part due to other priorities. This issue, however, will not get any easier for local managers. I urge to you to ratify and implement policies that I articulated last year for the use of off road vehicles on the National Forest System. They include:

- All off road vehicle decisions, including those that change present levels of use, should be made through an open and public process, except where emergency closure is needed to protect public safety or forest resources.

- Motorized use should occur only on designated routes and areas. Development and use of unauthorized roads and trails should be illegal. This will require adequate signing and mapping for responsible off road vehicle users.

If such recommendations are not implemented, the litigation and controversy that greatly reduced the timber program, will almost certainly soon haunt the Recreation Program.

Private Land Conservation

Fewer areas offer more promise for conservation and watershed restoration than private lands. Decisions by the nation's largest wood retailers to not purchase wood from endangered forests and to only sell appropriately certified wood products speak to the promise and momentum of this issue. The Forest Service State and Private and Research programs offer urban and rural residents alike voluntary options for improving management, conservation, and restoration of private lands. These programs are chronically under-funded yet entirely consistent with this Administration's stated intent to offer incentives to private land conservation, and should be a priority for the Department of Agriculture.

Water

Recent international studies indicate that by 2025, two-thirds of the world's people will face water shortages. As Chief, it was my policy that watershed health and restoration serve as the overriding priority of all forest plan revisions. Fewer States demonstrate the importance of the National Forest System to drinking water than your home state, California. Although National Forests comprise only 20 percent of the State's land base, they supply nearly 50 percent of the surface runoff. Ensuring the multiple benefits of the National Forests water resource will require, among other things, a willingness to assert water rights to preserve wilderness values, providing minimum instream flows for fish, and securing bypass flows for other resources.

I recognize that short-term political imperatives run rampant in Washington, DC. Please remember that the decisions you make through your tenure will have implications that last many generations. You cannot fail if you allow your loyalty to the land and to those yet to be born to take precedence over all other organizational and political frailties.

I wish you much success as Secretary of Agriculture, and hope that you receive these recommendations in the constructive manner they are intended. With clear conservation policy direction, and without micromanagement from political forces, the Forest Service is the world's finest conservation organization. Allow Forest Service employees to follow their land ethic and they will provide for "the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

Sincerely,

Michael P. Dombeck
Chief of the Forest Service

Conservation Leadership

[Speech given by Mike Dombeck to all U.S. Forest Service employees on 1 July 1998.]

Date: July 1, 1998
Subject: Conservation Leadership
To: All Employees

Today marks the 110th anniversary of Gifford Pinchot's first day on the job as a Forest Service employee. I took this opportunity to discuss the natural resource agenda and what it means to be a conservation leader with the National Leadership Team. I'd like to share that discussion with you before the holiday weekend celebrating our nation's birthday. As an organization, we pride ourselves for our conservation tradition and expertise. I'd like to get a little beyond the sloganeering and examine what that truly means. As Pinchot said, "we must go vigorously forward, apply what knowledge and common sense we [have] to the task ahead, and everywhere and always prefer results to routine."

To me, a conservation leader is someone who consistently errs on the side of maintaining and restoring healthy and diverse ecosystems even when -- no, especially when -- such decisions are not expedient or politically popular. If we are to redeem our claim to be the world's foremost conservation leader, our job is to maintain and restore ecologically and socially important environmental values. A highly diversified society increasingly demands that our stewardship result in a legacy of healthier landscapes.

For example, our proposed suspension of road construction in roadless areas will help us develop not only a science-based long-term road policy but one that also reflects the values that society places on wild places, old growth, wilderness, and on intact and unfragmented landscapes.

I recently read a letter from a line officer who chided local managers for being behind schedule relative to meeting the region's "timber targets." My expectation is that line officers will demand similar accountability for meeting watershed restoration, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian, recreation, cultural resource, and wilderness management goals.

We need to do a better job talking about, and managing for, the values that are so important to so many people. Values such as wilderness and roadless areas, clean water, protection of rare species, old growth forests, naturalness -- these are the reasons most Americans cherish their public lands.

For example, twenty percent of the National Forest System is wilderness, and in the opinion of many, more should be. Our wilderness portfolio must embody a broader array of lands -- from prairie to old growth. As world leaders in wilderness management, we should be looking to the future to better manage existing, and identify potential new, wilderness and other wild lands.

We have a real opportunity to employ our science and professionalism and lead the debates on use, management, and conservation of natural resources. But we must step out in front of these issues instead of serving as a wrestling mat for interest groups. If we do not become more flexible and adaptable in responding to conservation issues and social demands, we will become less relevant as time passes.

Conservation leadership extends far beyond the National Forest System. I want our Research program to do more to promote and improve conservation and more efficient utilization and

recycling of wood fiber. As national wood consumption rates continue to increase, so must our efficiencies.

Many of our State and Private Forestry employees are working hard to ensure that the benefits of public and restoration extend to the more productive habitats on private land. We must do more. We also need to help ensure that as private and state lands help to meet the nation's demand for wood fiber, they do not compromise their own productive capacity.

Fifty years ago, Aldo Leopold wrote his seminal work, *A Sand County Almanac*. In it, Leopold spoke of his personal land ethic and the need for land managers to extend their own ecological conscience to resource decisions. The Forest Service natural resource agenda is an expression of our agency's land ethic. If we are to redeem our role as conservation leaders, it is not enough to be loyal to the Forest Service organization. *First and foremost*, we must be loyal to our land ethic. In fifty years, we will not be remembered for the resources we developed; we will be thanked for those we maintained and restored for future generations.

Thanks for your hard work.

Mike Dombeck
Chief

A Gradual Unfolding of a National Purpose: A Natural Resource Agenda for the 21st Century

[March 1998 speech by Mike Dombeck to all U.S. Forest Service employees outlining the agenda for his tenure as Chief of the agency.]

Introduction

I'd like to begin this speech by thanking Secretary Glickman and Under Secretary Jim Lyons for their continued leadership and support of the Forest Service. Their efforts within the Administration on our behalf are essential to advancing our agenda.

I also want to thank my leadership team and all Forest Service employees. Our jobs are not easy and I am very proud of your performance. We often find ourselves caught in the midst of social changes, shifting priorities, and political crosscurrents.

I wish that I could tell you that what I have to say today would change all of that. It likely will not. Social values will continue to change. New information about how to manage sustainable ecosystems will continue to evolve. Political interests will continue to intersect with resource management decisions.

What I can do today is lend focus to our efforts. The agenda that I will outline for you will help us to engage more effectively in what I think is one of the noblest, most important callings of our general era - bringing people together and helping them find ways to live within the limits of the land.
We have two very basic choices. We can sit back on our heels and react to the newest litigation, the latest court order, or the most recent legislative proposal. This would ensure that we continue to be buffeted by social, political, and budgetary changes.

Or, we can lead by example. We can lead by using the best available scientific information based on principles of ecosystem management that the Forest Service pioneered. And we can use the laws that guide our management to advance a new agenda. An agenda with a most basic and essential focus - caring for the land and serving people.

The answer is clear, we must lead. Just as we always have - from concepts of sustained yield, to multiple use, to ecosystem management. We have a proud tradition of responding to new information and adapting to change. In fact, as a former Chief said in 1930, "A federal policy of forestry has been evolving for almost 60 years. It has been built up by successive legislative enactments and the resulting activities. It is not a specific and limited program but rather is a gradual unfolding of a national purpose."

"A gradual unfolding of a national purpose." That is the premise of the agenda I have developed with other Forest Service leaders and I will outline today. We will not be complacent. We have an obligation to lead. My expectation is that you will share this with, and learn from, your colleagues, local communities, interest groups, and others to further refine and promote an agenda that is sensitive to the needs of people and implemented within the limits of the land.

Our job is to care for the land and serve people. On the lands we manage, this means complying with the laws that protect, and help us to manage, our natural resource inheritance. On lands outside of Forest Service management, our role is to provide leadership, technical assistance, and

support for all forests. With your leadership, what we talk about today will help the nation set a course that will leave our children a rich - and I hope, even richer - natural resource legacy.

Our agenda will focus on four key areas:

- Watershed health and restoration
- Sustainable forest ecosystem management
- Forest roads and
- Recreation

Returning to Our Roots

Before getting into the specifics of our agenda, let's take stock of where we are and where we've been. This new agenda will guide future policies and decisions. But in reality it is as old as the Organic Administration Act of 1897. Over 100 years ago, through the Organic Act, Congress directed that:

No national forest shall be established, except to improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States.

In recent years, much has been written, said, and done about the Organic Act's provision for timber production. What is far less understood is the Act's strong focus on watershed maintenance and restoration. In fact, the need to protect and enhance water supplies, including flood protection was the driving force behind the Organic Act and other early forest legislation and water laws such as the Clean Water Act. The emphasis on watershed protection was both prophetic and well deserved. For example, today over 900 municipal watersheds are within national forests.

Watershed maintenance and restoration are the oldest and highest callings of the Forest Service. The agency is, and always will be, bound to them by tradition, law, and science. The national forests truly are the headwaters of the nation. Congress recognized this well over 100 years ago and in the intervening years repeatedly reinforced that message. Our agenda places a renewed emphasis on ensuring that our watersheds are protected and restored for the use and benefit of our citizens.

Our agenda builds on this historical and legal foundation and affirms that we must do more to sustain and restore the fabric of the whole landscape. All of our laws - from the Organic Act to the National Environmental Policy Act through the Clean Water Act - are based on a fairly straightforward premise. We must do more. Our collective challenge is to find ways to involve more people, to provide cleaner water, and to make decisions that afford even greater protection of, and benefits from, our natural resources as we carry out our multiple use mandate.

We cannot simply preserve our wilderness areas and national parks and by extension hope to protect our natural resource heritage. We cannot afford to manage our national forests and other public lands in isolation of state and private lands. We must work with state and local governments and communities to link neighborhood creeks and tree-lined streets to the sea-bound rivers, state and national parks, and forests.

Our agenda takes the not-so-new position that we must do more to sustain and restore the fabric of the whole landscape. If we are wise enough to understand the physics of splitting the atom, advanced enough to communicate instantaneously around the globe, if we can feed billions of people, surely we can act with enough foresight and wisdom to protect and restore our lands and

waters. If this nation, of all others, cannot demonstrate how to live in harmony with the natural world that sustains us, what hope is there for other nations?

Watershed Health and Restoration

So our first priority is to maintain and restore the health of our ecosystems and watersheds. Healthy watersheds are resilient in the face of natural events such as floods, fire, and drought and are more capable of absorbing the effects of human-induced disturbances. Watersheds absorb rain, recharge underground aquifers, provide cleaner water to people, and reduce drinking water treatment costs. They provide wildlife and fish habitat and connect headwaters to downstream areas and wetlands and riparian areas to uplands. Healthy watersheds dissipate floods across floodplains increasing soil fertility and minimizing damage to lives, property, and streams.

We must protect our healthiest watersheds and restore those that are degraded. We must also continue our long tradition of protecting wild areas such as wilderness so they can remain important sources of clean water and biological diversity.

How we manage our forests has a profound effect on the quality of our drinking water and the ability of our watersheds to perform their most basic functions. Recognizing the countless benefits that healthy watersheds provide to the American people, we will:

- Make maintenance and restoration of watershed health an overriding priority in future forest plans and provide measures for monitoring progress.
- Propose to increase stream and riparian area restoration by 40% by 1999.
- Propose a 30% increase in habitat restoration and conservation of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.
- Propose increasing by 50% the number of abandoned mine reclamation sites.
- Improve efforts to prevent non-native species from entering or spreading in the U.S.

Although most of these actions and proposals are specific to national forests, their benefits transcend boundary lines. We will seek voluntary and non-regulatory partnerships with other private, federal and state land managers. For example, we will:

Work with other state and federal land managers, interested private landowners, and community groups to conduct watershed analysis and assessments to better understand the effects of management activities on the landscape.

There are approximately 40 million acres of national forests that are exposed to abnormally high risk of fire, disease, and insect outbreaks. Though insects, disease, and fire are part of the natural cycle, the vulnerability of these forests is unacceptably high. To respond to this need, we are asking Congress for funding to:

- Increase prescribed fire and forest fuels treatment in critical watersheds from 1.1 million acres in 1997 to 1.5 million acres in 1999 and
- Double the amount of thinning in unnaturally dense forest stands particularly along the urban-wild and interface over the next five years.

Sustainable Forest Ecosystem Management

Let's turn now to sustainable forest management. The basic point of our sustainable forest management strategy is this - not only do economic stability and environmental protection go

hand in hand - economic prosperity cannot occur without healthy, diverse, and productive watersheds and ecosystems.

To keep our watersheds healthy and productive, we must better understand their status and condition across all ownerships. Most of the public interest focuses on management of the national forest system. Yet, state or private owners manage over two-thirds of the nation's forests. They help to meet our country's need for wood fiber, drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreation. We must look across boundary and fence lines and work together to practice sustainable forest management.

By fully funding forest inventory and monitoring programs and using measurements of sustainable forest management such as the "criteria and indicators" that were endorsed by 13 countries in 1995, we would have a common language to measure our effectiveness at managing sustainable forests and grasslands. The Forest Service is committed to:

Working with state, local, and other partners to use criteria and indicators of sustainable forest ecosystem management to report on the health of all forested landscapes across the nation by 2003.

Protecting our environmental capital requires maintaining healthy and productive forestlands whether they are in urban or rural areas. From 1978-94, the number of forestlands owned in parcels of 50 acres or less has doubled. The increasing diminution of forest tract size can diminish wildlife habitat, reduce access, and degrade water quality. We must share our expertise with landowners and help them to consider long-term objectives. Thus, we will:

- Work with State Foresters and others to increase the number of non-industrial private forest landowners that complete long-term forest stewardship plans. We will emphasize tools such as the Stewardship Incentive Program that could enable more than 3,000 landowners to develop scientifically based stewardship plans.
- Work with other federal agencies and Congress to develop policies that encourage long-term investments in forests and discourage their conversion to other uses.

Eighty percent of Americans live in towns and cities. We must literally bring forestry to the people by building on programs such as the Urban Resources Partnership and Community Forestry programs to increase the health of urban forests. Urban forests contribute an estimated $400 billion in economic benefits through reduced storm-water treatment costs and energy conservation. Urban resource stewardship helps to ensure that all people - regardless of where they live - can share, enjoy, and benefit from a healthy environment.

As more and more people place greater demands on our forests, it is naïve to think that we can restore ecosystem and watershed health without active management based on sound science. Forest management has changed significantly over the years. We know today that healthy forests do far more than grow trees and provide timber. For example, they "grow" water, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities. Sustainable communities and economic prosperity depend on the full array of products and values from a healthy forest.

And as we learn more, we are continually adapting our management. For example, clearcutting on national forests declined by 84% in the past 10 years. The use of timber sales whose primary objective is to restore forest ecosystem health has increased by 70% in the past five years.

Even with these improvements, we hear calls increasingly for a "zero-cut" policy for national forests. I am opposed to this proposition. Both science and common sense support active management of national forests. A stable timber program from national forests is essential to

many rural communities. We need to help provide stability so that companies can make needed investments in new equipment and technologies and provide jobs. National Forests should be a model for demonstrating how active forest management can meet economic needs and maintain and restore watershed health.

Ensuring sustainable forests requires the involvement of communities that benefit from, and care for, these forests. Our efforts to restore healthy forests can help to sustain rural communities by providing a stable wood supply and jobs to communities. To make this possible, we will work with Congress to:

Increase the amount of research and technical assistance to forest products industries so that they can more profitably harvest small diameter wood, increase the use of secondary markets for wood products, and market more finished wood products.

Find new ways to use an in-place, highly skilled workforce to accomplish much needed forest management and restoration.

As long as our incentive system ties the production of commodities from national forests to funding needed services such as schools and roads, state and county governments face economic instability. Presently, 25% of many of the revenues generated from national forests are returned to states and distributed to counties. These payments have decreased as timber harvest from national forests has declined. To help remedy this situation, we propose to work with Congress and local communities to:

Provide stable and predictable state and county payments that support public schools and roads.

Forest Roads

Our new agenda also emphasizes management of the forest road system. Few natural resource issues in recent years have captured as much political attention and public scrutiny as management of the national forest road system. Forest roads are an essential part of the transportation system in many rural parts of the country. They help to meet recreation demands on national forests and grasslands. They provide economic opportunities by facilitating the removal of commodities from the national forest system, which in turn provides jobs and revenue. Forest roads provide access to conduct needed management.

The benefits of forest roads are many. So too, are the ecological impacts on our watersheds. There are few more irreparable marks we can leave on the land than to build a road. Improperly located, designed or maintained roads contribute to erosion, wildlife and fish habitat fragmentation, degradation of water quality, and the dispersal of exotic species.

Building a new road requires a short-term outlay of cash. Funding its maintenance over time entails a long-term financial commitment. The failure to maintain the forest road system limits public access and does tremendous environmental damage. So long as road management is unaddressed, public support for needed forest management will disappear.

For these reasons, I recently proposed development of a new long-term forest road policy. The proposal has four primary objectives. First, more carefully consider decisions to build new roads. Second, eliminate old unneeded roads. Third, upgrade and maintain roads that are important to public access. Fourth, develop new and dependable funding for forest road management.

The President's budget recognizes the need to address these issues. It proposes to increase:

- Road maintenance funding by 26% and
- Major improvements to forest road bridges and culverts by over 66% in FY 1999.

Much of the existing forest road system was built over the last 50 years to facilitate timber harvest and removal. Roads that were built to accommodate logging trucks are increasingly carrying people seeking outdoor recreation opportunities.

Approximately 80% of all public use occurs on about 20% of the forest roads. Where it makes sense, we can manage many of our forest roads as public roads as a full partner with the counties and local communities. This policy shift could qualify these roads for Highway Trust Funds and accelerate improved management of the existing road system.

Because of our increased scientific knowledge about the social and ecological values of roadless areas, we recently proposed calling an 18 month "timeout" on new road construction in roadless areas. We propose to use the time to develop new scientific tools and analytical procedures that our managers can use to decide when, or if, to construct new roads.

Our overriding objective is to work with local people to provide a forest road system that best serves the management objectives and public uses of national forests and grasslands while protecting the health of our watersheds.

Recreation

The final piece of our agenda recognizes that recreation is the fastest growing use of national forests and grasslands. It provides the link - a window through which an increasingly urban society can enjoy and appreciate the natural world. Forest Service managed lands provide more outdoor recreation opportunities than anywhere else in the United States. We are committed to providing superior customer service and ensuring that the rapid growth of recreation on national forests does not compromise the long-term health of the land.

Our recreation agenda will focus on four key areas. First, providing quality settings and experiences. Second, focusing on customer service and satisfaction. Third, emphasizing community outreach. Fourth, strengthening relationships with partners, communities, and others.

Our priority is to provide premier settings and experiences for recreation users. From downhill skiing at Vail, to wilderness expeditions into the Frank Church wilderness, to family outings in the national forests which surround California's 20 million residents. National forests and grasslands provide incredible outdoor opportunities.

We expect to have over one billion recreation visits in the coming years. Such growth poses both serious management challenges and tremendous opportunities. To take advantage of these opportunities, we will:

Improve the quality and quantity of public information about recreation opportunities on national forests. We will use the Internet and the National Recreation Reservation Service and others to highlight the many recreation opportunities from forestlands such as the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Collaborate with state and private landowners that wish to benefit from public recreation use of their lands.

Establish quality standards for the recreational services and more effectively evaluate customer satisfaction and feedback.

Nearly half of this year's recreation visitors will encounter a facility or a service below Forest Service standards. This is unacceptable. My goal is that every visitor to the national forests leaves with a deeper appreciation for, and understanding of, how important their natural resource legacy is to them. As public demand increases, the Forest Service must ensure that facilities are properly maintained and that people can enjoy a safe and high quality recreation experience. We propose to:

- Increase funding for recreation management by $20 million dollars in1999.
- Increase funding to enhance opportunities for fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and conservation education.
- Accelerate the conversion of unneeded roads to trails.

Partnerships with the recreation users, concessionaires, permittees, and local communities help us to more effectively deliver quality recreation experiences. The private-sector can often teach us new ways to deliver better services at a lower cost. We will expand the use of such partnerships and encourage more Americans to volunteer time, labor, and experience in helping us to improve interpretive services, trail maintenance, facilities, and conservation education.

Conclusion

This is an agenda that can help us to chart a new course in conservation. I believe that it is a course that will benefit the communities we serve, the resources we are entrusted to manage and the children who will inherit the results of our stewardship. Concern for our natural and cultural resources spans races, religions, generations, and economic backgrounds. This helps to explain why so many people care about our public lands. Indeed, conservation has moved from a "special interest" to a national priority.

Our goal is to help people to live in productive harmony with the watersheds that sustain us all. We cannot do it alone. The issues are too broad, the land base too large, and resources too scarce. So my instruction to you today is to go out and engage your communities, colleagues, friends, and neighbors; work with them to refine and implement this agenda. We can only redeem our role as conservation leaders by working with, and learning from, others.

The German philosopher Goethe once said, "Every man has only enough strength to complete those assignments of which he is fully convinced of their importance." We can leave no greater gift for our children, show no greater respect for our forefathers, than to leave the watersheds entrusted to our care healthier, more diverse, and more productive. That is my vision for this great agency. And with your help, it can be our most important and lasting legacy.

Roadless Area Conservation: An Investment For Future Generations

[Speech by Mike Dombeck, Chief of the Forest Service, *re* agency efforts to protect roadless areas in the National Forest System, 5 January 2001.]

More than a year ago, I sought and welcomed President Clinton and Secretary Glickman's assistance in protecting roadless areas of the National Forest System. Political affiliation made no difference to me -- or to the land. Protecting wild and unfragmented landscapes is a bipartisan American tradition, one that rises above ideology. It is a uniquely American idea born of our uniquely American heritage. Europe has its great castles and works of art, Africa its ancient pyramids and cultures. Here in America we have our wild places, the first home of Native Americans. These untamed landscapes are what remain of the pioneer spirit that shaped this nation's character.

Almost a century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon and said, "Leave it as it is. The ages have been at work on it and man can only mar it." Much the same can be said about our remaining roadless areas. Since the first Forest Reserves were created in 1891, through 20 presidencies – 12 Republican and 8 Democrat – this great body of public land we celebrate today, a vital 58.5 million acres of our treasured National Forests and Grasslands, remain roadless. President Clinton's decision reaffirms the long-standing policy of his distinguished predecessors – that this great nation will keep some of its land the way the Lord created it.

In the past two centuries, this nation has chosen to use its natural resources to build its homes, feed its people, and defend its shores. At the same time, we have chosen to set aside the most extensive network of public lands, designated wilderness, monuments, parks, and refuges for wildlife and fish of any nation on earth. Conservation is nothing if not about choices left for future generations.

Today, we conclude a public process that is based on the direct input of more than 1.5 million people -- but in a larger sense reflects the views of tens of millions of other Americans. The collective will of the American people has driven our decision to protect roadless areas. The decision is based on sound science, and more than a year of analysis by some of the foremost researchers in their fields. But our decision also makes plain common sense. Consider: We are presently saddled with a maintenance backlog of about $8.4 billion on our existing road system. Faced with such liabilities, no private landowner in the world would continue investing in new road construction.

We presently supply less than 4 percent of the nation's timber from all of our national forestlands combined. Of that modest 4 percent, only a tiny fraction – 6 percent – will be affected by roadless area conservation. That's one-quarter of 1 percent. Similarly, National Forests supply less than 4 tenths of one percent of the nation's oil and gas, and far less from roadless areas. Is it worth one-quarter of 1 percent of our nation's timber supply, or a fraction of a fraction of our oil and gas to protect 58.5 million acres of wild and unfragmented land in perpetuity? Seventy-five years ago, another Forest Service employee, Aldo Leopold, answered that question. "Such a policy would not subtract even a fraction of one per cent from our economic wealth, but would preserve a fraction of what has, since first the flight of years began, been wealth to the human spirit."

This is a conscious choice made with an eye toward the future. As we witness the march of urbanization and the development of wild places, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we

have given at least some of our remaining undeveloped land – a piece of our pioneer heritage – lasting protection. Through that choice, we pay tribute to those who have come before and preserve their legacy for those who will follow.

Let me be clear. Roadless area conservation will in no way diminish our wildland firefighting capabilities, and it will in no way affect existing permits, contracts, or rights of access. Moreover, I want to emphasize that timber harvest will continue in much of the National Forest System. This rule signifies a shift away from the timber controversies of the past that were typified by cutting old growth and developing roadless areas. Today, a growing consensus is building about the need to protect the most pristine forests while using timber harvest to make our other forests healthier, communities safer, and economies more resilient.

Roadless area conservation is a down payment on the well-being of future generations. Under this new rule, more than 58.5 million acres of roadless areas will continue to cleanse the water for downstream use by millions of Americans nationwide. They will continue to serve as a refuge for native plant and animal species and a bulwark against the spread of noxious invasive species. As a baseline for natural habitats and ecosystems, they will continue to offer rare opportunities for study, research, and education. Finally, they will continue to offer terrific opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other dispersed forms of recreation on large, undisturbed landscapes where visitors can find privacy and solitude. As Aldo Leopold once put it, our remaining unroaded wildlands are a national treasure, a "wealth to the human spirit."

This is a proud moment in Forest Service history. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to the hundreds of Forest Service employees who helped make this happen.

Sustaining The Health Of The Land Through Collaborative Stewardship

[Message to all Forest Service employees from Mike Dombeck on his first day as Chief, 6 January 1997.]

As many of you know, I am no stranger to the Forest Service and no stranger to Washington, D.C. I have worked at various levels of the Forest Service in Michigan, Wisconsin, California, and Washington, D.C., before going to the Department of the Interior. I am glad to be back.

My Forest Service roots go deeper. I grew up 25 miles from a town of 1,500 people in northern Wisconsin's beautiful lake country, in the Chequamegon National Forest, what the author of *Little House on the Prairie*, Laura Ingalls Wilder, called the "Big Woods." My early years were spent fishing, hunting, and hiking, with seven summers spent as a fishing guide. One of my favorite things to do today are walking in the woods or being on the water.

I'd like to talk today about my professional resource philosophy -- collaborative stewardship. I'd also like to discuss my expectations and vision for the Forest Service.

First, however, I want to thank Dave Unger for his leadership and assistance over the past few weeks. I also want to thank the Forest Service Transition Team and the many Forest Service employees and retirees who assisted on this transition and in formulating and reviewing the following statements. I have talked with each of the previous Chiefs and want to thank them for their ideas and counsel.

Let me say right up front that I know and respect the knowledge and skill in the ranks of this organization, among the volunteers, and retirees. I cannot do this job without your help. At the same time, many of you have told me you expect me to take action where action is needed. I will do my best.

A Proud Tradition

I am honored to serve with you, and for the American people, as the 14th Chief of the Forest Service.

Since President Theodore Roosevelt defined conservation as applying "common sense to common problems for the common good," the Forest Service has been blessed by leaders of foresight, conviction, and vision.

I recently read a brief biography of each of the previous Chiefs. I was struck by the fact that the mission of the Forest Service is as relevant today as it was nearly a century ago.

From Gifford Pinchot's simple statement that "without natural resources life itself is impossible."

To John McGuire's assertion that "people need to hear forestry's message -- that sound forestry practices can provide both protection and use."

From Dale Robertson's belief that "we have more knowledge about the management of natural resources than any other organization in the world."

All the way to Max Peterson's and Jack Ward Thomas' staunch defense of maintaining public forests and rangelands in public hands.

Since its inception, the Forest Service has been remarkably productive, effective, and critically important. Just as examples, the Forest Service has:

- Worked with states and private land owners to apply needed conservation measures to state and private lands across the nation.
- Improved watershed health in many areas and restored Dust Bowl era grasslands.
- Established literally thousands of partnerships to conserve natural resources by improving wildlife and fish habitats, protecting water and air quality, and preventing soil erosion.
- Met the needs of millions of American families with wood products, forage, minerals, quality recreation experiences on National Forest lands and so forth.
- Discovered and employed more efficient ways to use and recycle wood and wood fiber.
- Improved the wildland fire fighter safety record.
- Established a world renowned research organization.
- Exchanged valuable forestry knowledge with countries around the world.

Too often, these achievements are forgotten and all of the attention is on the problems of the moment. I have not forgotten your many successes, far too many to mention here. I am proud to serve again with employees such as Bob Nelson, who recently joined Chief Thomas as a recipient of the Wildlife Society's Aldo Leopold Award, the highest award given to a wildlife professional.

I am honored to follow in the footsteps of the many retirees -- people who have spent their lives to protect and restore our natural resource legacy.

I look forward to working with all of the excellent Washington and field employees.

Communications

We are a better, stronger, and healthier nation due to the work of the Forest Service. In the past, because there were fewer people and demands on the land, we could achieve many of our goals with less conflict. Getting from point A to point B wasn't all that difficult. We helped define the starting point and decided how to get to the endpoint. That has grown more complex as society has changed and become more complex. Today, we are faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges than ever before.

There is an ongoing debate in this nation over how national forests and rangelands should be managed. That's just fine. In fact, it's healthy. Debate and information are the essence of democracy. The people we serve, all of the people, are now more fully engaged in defining how to move from point A to point B. Our task is not to dictate the course or the outcome. Rather, we need to be the facilitators, the suppliers of knowledge and expertise, the educators and communicators who help people search for solutions.

But as the debate swirls, we cannot forget our successes or the essential services that we provide daily to people and communities. An important part of our job is to articulate our successes. The most enduring and powerful maxim of business is that "money flows to things people want." People want their cultural heritage protected; clean air and water; healthy forests and rangelands; good hunting and fishing; sustainable supplies of timber and forage, etc. The one sure way to guarantee that we will have continued downsizing and declining budgets is by not telling people our story.

Explain the services we provide in a manner that everyone can understand and appreciate. Speak clearly and focus on the positive things we do. When we focus too much of our organizational energy merely responding to contentious issues, we lose the vast majority of people who support and benefit from our good work.

Much of our good work in watershed protection, wilderness management, and forest and rangeland management, the Job Corps and other human resource programs are not well-known. We need to communicate our successes. And, consider our state and private forestry, research, and international forestry programs:

- State and Private Forestry works with tribal governments, local communities, states, and private landowners to protect forests and rangelands from the effects of fire, insects, and disease. They work with local landowners to improve the health of private and tribal lands and watersheds and urban forests.
- Research provides the scientific and technical underpinnings needed to help assure the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. Science is the foundation of Forest Service management.
- International Forestry ensures that the knowledge of the world's finest conservation organization is shared with other countries, continents, and peoples; and that we learn from them. The recently signed Santiago Agreement, a product of Forest Service leadership emanating from the UNCED conference in Rio, is a good example of how different nations of people can work to promote sustainable forest resources world wide.

These are critically important functions! Who opposes them? When we don't effectively communicate these and the countless other good things we do, 10% of the audience ends up controlling 90% of the debate. And far too much of our organizational energy and money is spent in adversity and litigation. That must, and will, change. This is not a matter of desire, it is a matter of long-term survival.

Our mission is sound -- Caring for the land and serving people. Carrying on with the "Course to the Future" is appropriate. What's changed is now we go about accomplishing it.

As the country grows, its need for timber and water supplies, quality recreation areas, energy and minerals, and healthy fish and wildlife habitats increases. Our task is to responsibly adapt to change in the face of multiple competing interests. More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe -- the very fabric of their lives -- are dependent on the land that sustains them.

Simply stated, we must maintain, healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. We cannot meet the needs of the people if we do not first conserve and restore the health of the land.

So our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters. Let me repeat, our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land.

Just how do we maintain the health of the land? By working with people who use and care about the land. People are the delivery system for ensuring healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems. Anglers, loggers, campers, Families -- everyone who breathes clean air and drinks clean water -- are our delivery system. Assuring healthy ecosystems begins and ends by working with people on the land. As Gifford Pinchot said, "a public official is there to serve the public, not run them." To successfully adapt to growth and change we need to engage people in dialogue.

My expectation is that everything we do -- every environmental impact statement we write, every timber sale, recreation plan, mining plan, or allotment management plan we approve -- will not compromise the health of the land. I want to make it very clear that no Forest Service Program has dominance over another. Timber is not more important than wildlife and fisheries. Nor is wildlife and fisheries more important than timber or recreation, or cultural resources, and so on.

We will care for the land and serve people by listening to all our constituents and by living within the limits of the land. I call this commitment to healthy ecosystems and working with people on the land "collaborative stewardship."

Collaborative Stewardship

We will implement collaborative stewardship through:

- Working with people on the land.
- Using partnerships and collaboration.
- Enhancing conservation education.
- Using science and technology.
- Insisting on personal accountability.
- Putting the right people in the right jobs
- Communicating a better understanding of how resource management affects economic prosperity.
- Fostering a multi-disciplined, multi-cultural organization.
- Adapting to growth while maintaining sustainability.

The National Forest Management Act foresaw the possibility of forming citizen stewardship councils for national forests. Other agencies already utilize consensus councils that are made up of a balance of command by interests, environmental interests and the general public. We can do the same thing in the Forest Service. These collaborative councils, although only one of many ways to more fully involve people in Forest Service management, can bring people together to define a shared vision for management of natural resources.

By definition, collaborative stewardship entails bringing people together. It does not imply abrogation of leadership or decision making authority. As a former Forest Service employee, Aldo Leopold, once wrote, "the only progress that really counts is that on the landscape of the back forty." Most resource issues today are less dependent on technical matters than they are on social and economic factors. If we are to maintain and conserve the land's health, we must learn to balance local and national needs. We must learn to better work with the people who use and care about the land while serving their evolving needs. We must be catalysts in bringing people together.

Accountability

Our first priority is to the land and the people who use and care for it. And our responsibility is to deliver. As a step toward clarifying that responsibility, I am going to ensure that every forest supervisor in the nation have new, clearly-defined performance measures in key areas such as the following:

- Riparian condition and forest health.
- Water quality.
- Watershed health and soil stability.

- Noxious weed management.
- Management of fire dependent landscapes.
- Endangered species habitat.

I don't care if these are called working agreements, performance agreements, or whatever. Every forest supervisor, on every forest, will be held accountable for showing an improving trend in appropriate areas. Performance measurements, by definition, will be quantifiable. We will come up with these measures for forests and rangelands within six months.

These measures will allow us to track the health of the land and allow the people we serve to hold us accountable.

Every post and level of the Forest Service organization will be accountable to our mission. During this six month period, other performance measures will be developed and used for areas such as:

- Financial management and accountability.
- Demonstrated commitment to collaborative stewardship.
- Customer service
- Achieving workforce diversity.
- Simplification of procedures.
- Effective collaboration between research and management.

All Forest Service employees will be evaluated and held accountable for achieving applicable performance measures.

The greatest resource this agency has is its people. More than 30,000 employees and their families live and work in communities, large and small, all across the country. These dedicated employees are the key to making our mission a reality. Such an important resource must be nurtured and protected. I want to make one thing crystal clear, I absolutely will not tolerate discrimination. I am committed to improving workforce diversity, reducing the number of Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, and eliminating their causes in the Forest Service.

We have a constitutional and moral obligation to protect basic civil rights and guarantee equal opportunity. Every Forest Service employee has the right to work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. If we all honor and appreciate each other's strengths, then diversity will become our strength.

There are a few qualities I value and think important to an effective organization.

- Honesty
- Intelligence and creativity
- Clarity and simplicity
- Hard work
- Loyalty to the mission of the Forest Service

These are the qualities I expect from each of you on a daily basis. They should be your basic operating principles. We have a complex business that need not be made more so. Keep things simple. Write clearly and concisely. No more bureaucrat-ese. Minimize acronyms. If what we say isn't clear to the average citizen, then we are doing something wrong.

All of the benefits of sound forest and range management are easily explained: clean air and water, better recreation opportunities; a sustainable supply of wood and forage; habitat for rare species, vibrant local communities, and so on.

Caring for the land and serving people are what we are all about. All of the world should know. We will be held accountable to this mission. The American people will know they can depend on us if we deliver.

Vision

My vision is to be the very best at what we do. To more effectively care for the land, to more diligently serve people, than any other organization in the world.

When someone in Bend, Oregon, or Ocala, Florida, or at Iowa State, or Cornell -- even China -- asks, which is the premier conservation organization in the world? Or, "What agency works better and costs less to achieve their mission?" The answer they should hear on the street should be the USDA Forest Service. When they ask what is the best forest research organization in the world? The answer should be the USDA Forest Service. Which agency works most effectively with states and private landowners and other nations to conserve and restore the health of the land? The answer should be the Forest Service.

Conservation starts and finishes with the health of the land. It begins and ends in the communities in which we live and serve. But effective conservation and the strength and credibility of the Forest Service are weakened by perceptions of bureaucratic infighting, end runs, conflicting agendas, and insufficient attention to basic business areas such as financial controls and communications.

An effective organization is able to solve its own problems. Our conservation efforts are diminished if we cannot.

We must solve our own problems; but we need to reach out to all our partners, to the citizen owners, to local, state, and tribal governments, to sister agencies.

I will strengthen the Chief's office so we can function more effectively. We will focus very clearly on policy matters and effective communication to the people we serve. We will focus on solid working relationships with the Congress and Administration and other agencies we work with. Therefore:

- I intend to add a counselor to help extend and improve our relations with the Administration and other agencies. Few believe that we are operating as smoothly as we should.
- In filling the Director of Public Affairs position, I will emphasize the importance of communications -- on speaking clearly to the people we serve; on our successes; on working closely with our sister agencies and partners; and on articulating policy.
- I will have a Chief of Staff to assure the operation keeps running smoothly, to promote teamwork, to focus on accountability and financial integrity, and to help our leadership team improve the quality of everything we do. I am announcing today that Francis Pandolfi will serve as my Chief of Staff. Mr. Pandolfi comes with very broad experience beyond his academic training including: Chairman of the Recreation Roundtable, Chairman of the National Environmental and Training Foundation, CEO of Times Mirror Magazines, Vice President of CBS, Board member of Trout Unlimited, the National Audubon Society, and the American Museum of Natural History Center for Biodiversity and Conservation. I believe you will enjoy and appreciate Mr. Pandolfi. He has dedicated much of his life to natural resource conservation and education.

I realize that some of this is new; however, the goal is to bolster our effectiveness and stature. I will be seeking assistance of the leadership team to assure our success.

Nothing stimulates an organization like success. Within six months, I want us to have at least three major wins under our belt. These will be marked by a spirit of inclusiveness and openness. They will demonstrate to us, and to the people we serve, that we are the preeminent conservation organization in the world. I am thinking of such accomplishments as:

- Establishing a fund to provide grants to Forest Service units for social resource stewardship projects.
- Establishing a group of citizen stewardship councils to serve as models of collaborative stewardship.
- Improving the efficiency of the budget and planning process to allow people to spend more time on resource issues. This is a far greater challenge than most recognize. Our financial and administrative houses must be in order. Anything less diminishes our ability to carry out our mission. This must be fixed!

These are a few of my ideas. I want yours too. Tomorrow I will send a Data General message to all employees asking for specific, practical proposals for accomplishments that we can achieve in the next six months. I firmly believe that the greatest reservoir of practical and innovative ideas rest with the many talented employees across the country.

Conclusion

I want to leave you with a few final thoughts.

This country is blessed with having elected people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. As a result of Congressional foresight and citizen activism:

- Our air and water are cleaner.
- Rare species have been brought back from the brink of extinction.
- People are more active in management and protection of their lands.
- Recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing are better.

We are a better, more secure, and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Forest Management Act. These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America. Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and a healthy, properly functioning democracy.

So where do we go from here? Our task is to help bring people together on the land. That's what collaborative stewardship is all about. Whether we are engineers, support staff, or line officers, we are the educators and communicators, the teachers and technical experts who can bring communities of interests together to help define the policies and practices needed for healthy sustainable forests. In doing so we must streamline our regulations and simplify the way we implement the laws toward the goal of a "government that works better and costs less."

We are the professionals, scientists and managers who can work hand-in-hand with state agencies, tribal governments, regulatory and other federal agencies, conservationists -- all who use and care about public lands and natural resources to assure the most efficient and effective conservation management possible.

Our vision cannot be stated better than in the dedication of *Breaking New Ground* by Gifford Pinchot published in 1947. "To the men and women of the Forest Service, whose courage, devotion, and intelligence have made it and kept it the best organization in the Government of the United States."

Finally, let me tell you how pleased I am to be here and to serve as your Chief. It is an honor and at the same time a heavy responsibility. I cannot do the job alone. I'm going to need your help. I am going to give the job my best, my very best. I ask you to do the same. Save time for your family and other pursuits but while here doing the business of the Forest Service, give it your best.

This is a new year, a new Administration, a new Congress. Let's see if we can add some new positive dimensions to our jobs. I challenge each of you to look around in your workplace and your relationships and find some fresh starts. Fresh looks...new ways to look at old problems.

We have a lot to be thankful for in this country including the treasure chest of natural resources entrusted to our care. Our task is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the land through collaborative stewardship.

Michael P. Dombeck Vita

EDUCATION

- **Ph.D.**, Fisheries Biology, Iowa State University, 1984
- **M.S.**, Zoology, University of Minnesota, 1976
- **M.S.T.**, Biology & Education, 1974
- **B.S.**, Biology & General Science, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 1971

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- **Senior Executive Service Development Program**, Washington, D.C., 1992
- **Federal Executive Institute**, Charlottesville, VA, 1991
- **Legislative Fellow: U.S. Senate staff handling agriculture, natural resources, and interior appropriations issues**, Washington, D.C., 1988
- **Executive Management for Natural Resource Managers**, Penn State, 1987

EXPERIENCE

- **Professor of Global Environmental Management & UW System Fellow of Global Conservation**, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (2001-present)
- **Chief**, USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC (1997-2001)
- **Acting Director**, USDI Bureau of Land Management, Washington, DC (1994-1997)
- **Acting Assistant Secretary/Deputy Assistant Secretary**, Chief of Staff, USDI Land and Minerals Management, Washington, DC (1993-1994)
- **Science Advisor and Special Assistant to the Director**, USDI Bureau of Land Management, Washington, DC (1989-1992)
- **National Fisheries Program Manager**, USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC (1986-1989)
- **Regional Fisheries Program Manager**, Pacific Southwest Region, USDA Forest Service, San Francisco, CA (1985-1986)
- **Regional and District Fisheries Biologist**, Eastern Region, USDA Forest Service, WI (1978-1985)
- **Instructor of Science**, Holcombe Schools, Holcombe, WI, (1974-1975)
- **Instructor of Zoology**, University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point, WI (1971-1973)
- **Fishing Guide**, Hayward, WI (summers 1963-1977)

CURRENT BOARD APPOINTMENTS

- **Trustee**, The Johnson Foundation, Racine, WI
- **Director-at-Large**, National Wildlife Federation, Reston, VA
- **Councilor-at-Large**, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Madison, WI
- **Trustee**, The Aldo Leopold Foundation, Baraboo, WI

HONORS AND AWARDS

- **Distinguished Service Award**, Society for Conservation Biology, 2003
- **Boyce Thompson Outstanding Lecturer Award**, Cornell University, 2003
- **Audubon Medal**, National Audubon Society, 2002
- **Lady Bird Johnson Conservation Award**, 2002
- **Edgar Wayburn Award**, Sierra Club, 2002
- **Presidential Rank – Distinguished Executive Award**, 2001
- **Chief Emeritus**, United States Forest Service, 2001
- **Honorary Doctor of Public Service**, Northland College, Ashland, WI, 2001
- **Chair's Award**, Natural Resources Council of America, 2001
- **Conservation Hero of the Year**, The Wilderness Society, 2001
- **Conservationist of the Year**, National Wildlife Federation, 2001
- **Man of the Year**, American Sportfishing Association, 1999
- **Outdoor Life Magazine Annual Conservation Award**, 1999
- **Secretary's Award for Outstanding Federal Service**, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999
- **Wetlands Conservationist Award**, Ducks Unlimited, 1998
- **Distinguished Alumnus**, University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point, 1997
- **President's Fishery Conservation Award**, American Fisheries Society, 1996
- **Certificate of Merit for Sustained Outstanding Performance**, 1989 & 1991 (Cash Award)
- **Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Leadership of the National Fisheries Program**, 1986 (Cash Award)
- **Certificate of Merit for Fisheries Program Leadership in the Pacific Southwest Region**, 1987
- **Certificate of Appreciation for Contributions to the National Plan for Fish Habitat Research and Research Coordination**, 1987
- **Employee Suggestion Award** (Incubation of Fish Eggs on Artificial Turf Mats), 1987 (Cash Award)
- **Best Paper Award**, American Fisheries Society, Wisconsin Chapter, 1984
- **Employee Suggestion Award** (Developing a Technique for Measuring Dissolved Oxygen in Aquatic Microzones), 1983 (Cash Award)
- Darling **Award for Outstanding Conservation Journalism**, Iowa State University, 1981-1983
- **National Scholarship**, Writers Association of America, 1982
- **Theodore Roosevelt Scholarship**, American Museum of Natural History, 1975

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- **American Fisheries Society - Life Member and Certified Fisheries Scientist**
- **Society of American Foresters**
- **American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists**
- **Gamma Sigma Delta, Honorary Society (Agriculture)**
- **Sigma XI, Scientific Research Society**

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Dombeck, M.P., C.A. Wood and J.E. Williams. *From Conquest to Conservation: Our Public Lands Legacy*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003.

Dombeck, M.P. Introduction to *The Roadless Yaak*, edited by Rick Bass. Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2002.

Dombeck, M.P. Introduction to *No Distant Place: Roads and Motorized Recreation on America's Public Lands*, by David Havlick. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2002.

Dombeck, M.P. "The People's Forests in the Twenty-first Century," in *The People's Forests*, 2nd ed. Edited by Bob Marshall. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2002.

Dombeck, M.P. "Protecting the Stuff of Life—Water." *Wisconsin Academy Review* 48(2001): 14-16.

Dombeck, M.P., C.A. Wood and J.E. Williams. "Restoring Watersheds, Rebuilding Common Ties." *American Forests*, 1998.

Wood, C.A., J.E. Williams, and M.P. Dombeck. "The Art and Science of Stream Restoration." *Trout*, (Winter 1998).

Kennedy, J.J., and M.P. Dombeck. "The Evolution of Public Agency Beliefs and Behavior Toward Ecosystem-based Stewardship." In *Ecological Stewardship*, Volume III, pp. 85-99. Edited by W.T. Sexton, A.J. Malk, R.C. Szaro and N.C. Johnson. Oxford, UK: Elsevier Science Ltd., 1998.

Kennedy, J.J., M.P. Dombeck and N.E. Koch. "Values, Beliefs and Management of Public Forests in the Western World at the Close of the Twentieth Century." *Unasylva* 49(1998): 16-26.

Dombeck, M.P. and C.A. Wood. "Ecosystem Management on Publicly-owned Lands." In *Principles of Conservation Biology*. 2nd ed. Edited by Gary K. Meffe and C. Ronald Carroll, Sunderland, Maine: Sinauer Associates, 1997.

Williams, J.E., C.A. Wood, and M.P. Dombeck. "Watershed Restoration: Social and Scientific Challenges for Fish Biologists." *Fisheries* 22(1997): 26-27.

Williams, J.E., C.A. Wood and M.P. Dombeck, eds. *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*. Bethesda, MD: American Fisheries Society, 1997.

Wood, C.A., J.E. Williams, and M.P. Dombeck, "Learning to Live Within the Limits of the Land." In *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*. Edited by J.E. Williams, C.A. Wood and M.P. Dombeck. Bethesda, MD: American Fisheries Society, 1997.

Dombeck, M.P., J.W. Thomas and C.A. Wood. "Changing Roles and Responsibilities of the Public Lands in Restoring Watershed Health." In *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*. Edited by J.E. Williams, C.A. Wood and M.P. Dombeck. Bethesda, MD: American Fisheries Society, 1997.

Williams, J.E., C.A. Wood and M.P. Dombeck. "Toward an Understanding of Watershed-scale Restoration for Aquatic and Riparian Resource Conservation." In *Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices*. Edited by J.E. Williams, C.A. Wood and M.P. Dombeck. Bethesda, MD: American Fisheries Society, 1997.

Thomas, J.W. and M.P. Dombeck. "Ecosystem Management in the Interior Columbia River Basin." *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 24 (1996): 180-186.

Dombeck, M.P. "BLM's Ecosystem Approach to Management." *Natural Resources and Environmental Issues* 5 (1996): 106-107.

Dombeck, M.P. "Ecosystem Management: Successes within the Bureau of Land Management." *Fisheries* 21 (1996): 30-31.

Dombeck, M.P. and J.E. Williams. "Roles, Responsibilities, and Opportunities for the Bureau of Land Management in Aquatic Conservation." In *Evolution and the Aquatic Ecosystem: Defining Unique Units in Population Conservation*. Edited by J.L. Nielsen, ed. Bethesda, MD: American Fisheries Society Symposium #17, pp. 430-433, 1995.

Salwasser, H., G. Contreras, M. Dombeck and K. Siderits. "A Marketing Approach to Fish and Wildlife Program Management." In *Transactions of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference* 54 (1989): 261-270.

Dombeck, M. P. "Artificial Turf Incubator for Muskellunge Eggs. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 87 (1987): 425-428

Dombeck, M. P. "Muskellunge Habitat with Guidelines for Habitat Management." *American Fisheries Society Special Publication* 15 (1986): 208-215.

Dombeck, M.P., B.W. Menzel and P.N. Hinz. "Natural Muskellunge Reproduction in Midwestern Lakes." *American Fisheries Society Special Publication* 15 (1986): 122-134.

Dombeck, M.P., R.W. Bachmann and B.W. Menzel. "A Method for Measuring Oxygen Microstratification." *Journal of Freshwater Ecology* 2 (1984): 535-540.

Dombeck, M.P. "Ecological Factors Affecting Muskellunge (Esox masquinongy) Reproduction in Midwestern Lakes." Ph.D. diss., Iowa State University, 1984.

Dombeck, M.P., B.W. Menzel and P.N. Hinz. "Muskellunge Spawning Habitat and Reproductive Success." *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 113 (1984): 205-216.

Dombeck, M.P., J. Hammill and W. Butler. "Fisheries Management and Fish Dependent Birds." *Fisheries* 9(1984): 2-4.

Dombeck, M.P. "Movement and Behavior of the Muskellunge Determined by Radio-Telemetry." *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Technical Bulletin* No.113 (1979), Madison, Wisconsin.

Dombeck, M.P. "The Meristic Variation of the Rainbow Darter." M.S.T. thesis, University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point, 1974.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

The Big Ten Conservation Challenges for a New Century, 2002 Scott Margolin Environmental Affairs Lecture, January 14, 2002, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT.

Water: The Under Valued Forest Product, Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies Lecture, February 2, 2002, University of Wisconsin- La Crosse.

The Big Ten Conservation Challenges for a New Century, Plenary Speech, Humanities Symposium, Institute for Ethics in Leadership, February 2, 2002, Viterbo College, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The Big Ten Public Land Conservation Challenges For a New Century: Where do we go from here?, Distinguished Lecture sponsored by Pacific Crest Biodiversity Project, April 6, 2002, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington.

Protecting Soil & Water: The Stuff of Life, Earth Week/Banquet Speech, American Water Resources Association- Student Chapter, April 21, 2002, University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point.

Forest Management Issues in the United States, Seminar presentation, May 27, 2002, BOKU University, Vienna, Austria.

Forest Management Issues in the United States, Seminar presentation, May 30, 2002, Freiburg University, Freiburg, Germany.

The Big Ten Public Land Conservation Challenges For a New Century: Where do we go from here?, Keynote Speech, Annual Meeting of Great Lakes United, June 8, 2002, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.

Status and Trends in Great Lakes Forestry, The Great Waters Institute for Journalism & Natural Resources, September 22, 2002, Ashland, Wisconsin.

Protecting the Stuff of Life, Closing plenary speech, Waters of Wisconsin Conference, October 22, 2002, Madison, Wisconsin.

Conservation Challenges for a New Century: Where do we go from here?, 2002 Paul Errington Memorial Lecture, November 11, 2002, Iowa State University.

The Big Ten Conservation Challenges for a New Century: Where do we go from here?, Albright Distinguished Lecture in Conservation, 2001, University of California-Berkeley.

Taking the Long View: Conservation Investments for Future Generations, 2001, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Protecting America's Pristine Wildlands, National Wilderness Conference, 2000, Denver, Colorado.

Intelligent Consumption: The Forest Service Role, The Intelligent Consumption Forum, 2000, University of Wisconsin- Madison.

The Future of Recreation on Your National Forests & Grasslands, 73rd Annual Outdoor Writer's Association of America Conference, 2000, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Moving Toward Sustainable Forestry in the United States, North American Forestry Commission, 2000, St. Andrews, NB.

The Changing Role of Timber Harvest in Our National Forests, American Forest & Paper Association, 2000, Washington, D.C.

The State of the Forest: Extending Our Land Ethic, The Commonwealth Club of California, 2000, San Francisco, California.

The Future of Forests? It Takes a Community to Decide, Centennial Celebration of Public Forests, 1999, Washington, D.C.

Building on Leopold's Vision: Conservation for a New Century, Leopold Conference, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, 1999, Madison, Wisconsin.

The United States Forest Service: The World's Largest Water Company, University of California-Berkeley, 1999, Berkeley, California.

Thinking Like a Mountain, Gila Wilderness 75th Anniversary, 1999, Silver City, New Mexico.

Protecting and Restoring a Nation's Land Health Legacy, School of Forestry's Plum Creek Lecture Series, 1999, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana.

To See the Forest for the Watershed: The Challenges of Managing Natural Resources Across Broad Landscapes, 1997, Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, New Haven, Connecticut.

Past, Present, and Future: Sharing of Common Ground, Sharing Common Ground Symposium, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, 1995, Sparks, Nevada.

From Commodity to Community: A Common Sense Approach to Understanding Ecosystem Management, Distinguished Lecture Series III, 1995, Pennsylvania State University State College.

Wilderness Management of Public Lands Administered by the BLM: Past, Present, and Future, Distinguished Lectureship, 1995, University of Idaho Wilderness Research Center, Moscow, Idaho.

The Public Lands: Past, Present, and Future, Natural Areas Conference, 1992, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1992.

Integrating Fisheries into Land Management Planning, Third International Natural Resources Conservation Conference, 1988, Taipei, Republic of China.

Trends in Fishing Use - Impacts on Future Programs, Keynote Address, Annual Meeting of the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 1988.

Rise to the Future: The Forest Service Fisheries Program, 117th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society, 1987.

Muskellunge Habitat Management with Emphasis on Reproductive Habitat, International Symposium on Muskellunge, 1984.

Biological Factors Influencing Muskellunge-Northern Pike Interaction in Midwestern Lakes, International Symposium on Muskellunge, 1984.

Muskellunge Spawning Habitat and Reproductive Success, American Fisheries Society, Wisconsin-Minnesota Chapter Meeting, 1984.

Ecological Factors Affecting Natural Muskellunge Reproduction, American Fisheries Society, 113th Annual Meeting, 1983.

The Influence of Substrate on Muskellunge Egg Mortality, Seventh Annual Larval Fish Conference, 1983, and 44th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, 1982.

Fisheries Management and Fish Dependent Birds, American Fisheries Society 110th Annual Meeting, 1980.

Movement and Behavior of the Muskellunge Determined by Radio-Telemetry, 39th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, 1977.

Harold K. Steen Vita

Education

- **B.S.F.**, University of Washington, 1957.
- **M.F.**, University of Washington, 1962
- **Ph.D.**, University of Washington, 1969.

Employment

- **Forest History Society**, Santa Cruz, CA; Durham, NC, 1969-1997.
- **U.S. Forest and Range Experiment Station**, Portland, OR, 1962-1965.
- **U.S. Forest Service, Snoqualmie National Forest**, 1957-1958.

Faculty Appointments

- **Adjunct Professor of Forestry/History**, Duke University, 1984-1999.
- **Lecturer, Environmental Studies**, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1970-1984.

Honors and Awards

- **Distinguished Service Award**, American Forestry Association, 1995.
- **Distinguished Achievement Award**, University of Washington College of Forest Resources Alumni Association, 1996.
- **Distinguished Service Award**, IUFRO, 1998.
- **Certificate of Appreciation**, USDA Forest Service, 1999.
- **Special Commendation**, U.S. Department of Justice, 1999.
- **Sir William Schlich Memorial Award**, Society of American Foresters, 2000.

Professional Activities

- **Consulting Editor**, *Journal of Environmental Education*, 1973-1983.
- **Chairman**, Forest History Working Group, Society of American Foresters, 1974-1978.
- **Chairman**, Forest History Group, IUFRO, 1986-1995.
- **Expert Witness**, Department of Justice, 1978-1999.

Major Publications

- *The U.S. Forest Service: A History*, University of Washington Press, 1976, 1977, 1991, 2004.
- *History of Sustained Yield Forestry*, Forest History Society, 1983.
- *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's Challenges in Central and South America*, Forest History Society, 1991.
- *The Origins of the National Forests*, Forest History Society, 1992.
- *View from the Top: Forest Service Research*, Forest History Society, 1994.

- *Plantation Forestry in the Amazon: The Jari Experience*, Forest History Society, 1997.
- *Evolution of Tropical Forestry: Puerto Rico and Beyond*, Forest History Society, 1998.
- *Forest Service Research: Finding Answers to Conservation's Questions*, Forest History Society, 1998.
- *Forest and Wildlife Science in America: A History*, Forest History Society, 1999.
- *The Conservation Diaries of Gifford Pinchot*, Forest History Society/Pinchot Institute for Conservation, 2001.
- *Jack Ward Thomas: The Journals of a Forest Service Chief*, University of Washington Press, 2004.
- *The Chiefs Remember*, in progress.