

**Notes from the National Communications/Legislative Affairs
Conference on the 110th Congress-January 2007**

Disclaimer: The following notes were captured by Sherry Wagner, who does not claim to have a 100% accurate recounting of the meeting. Please treat the notes accordingly.

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General Presentations - Externals

Mark Rey

UnderSecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment

The last election

- Sweeping victory for Ds. Comparable but not as large as the R victories a few years ago. Comparable to what happens in the mid-term. Rs lost the same number of seats that Roosevelt lost 100 years ago.
- 44% eligible voters turned out, larger than before.
- Significant number of Rs voted for others.
- Exit polling said major issues were government corruption, 41%, terrorism, 39%, economy 39%, war, 36%, values 36%, illegal immigration 30% ... So the election was about corruption/war. '94 election was house banking scandal/ Clinton vote.
- Not a single D was defeated.

Changes

- Chairs, committee staffs and committee budgets (each committee has its own organizing rules so where past rules are equal budgets for each party change won't be significant, where it's 2/3 vs 1/3 the change will be great).
- Who's in charge of scheduling, oversight, hearings, and investigations. Since administration is R it should really increase.
- E-mails are discoverable in investigation and deliverable to congress so don't send something unless you are ready to have it blown up.
- Attitude of career civil servants, especially at EPA, FWS, will change - people have been hiding out and waiting for opportunity. DOI inspector general is investigating.
- Campaign strategy of national environmental groups changed. In the past they said elections were about the environment but in truth the environment hasn't raised above the 3rd priority. This time they didn't push it. Second strategy was to frame environmental issues as ballot initiatives; from when they started in mid 80's to recent past it's been expensive and not very effective. This time a lot fewer initiatives. Most recent were 10 state initiatives about state control over private property (passed in 8 of 10)

No change

- Public view of importance of environmental issues in effecting outcomes of national elections.
- Required majorities to enact legislation (working majority). Majority in 110th congress will be even narrower than Rs had in the 109th congress. Relatively more difficult to maintain cohesion in majority than minority caucus.
- Forest Service responsible for deliverables that can be the wedges to split caucus cohesion.

- Most newly elected Ds campaigned as moderate to conservative, house leadership are senior members who represent much more liberal wing. Not comfortable for new members to vote in a liberal manner because it's very different than what they campaigned on; mirror image that Rs faced in '94.
- Human nature. Hard to say that the results of election represented a mandate for something that the Ds were in favor of as opposed to a correction. They will now need to build what you claim is your mandate and see how far you can get to implement it. Human nature suggests that you will overreach and misread what the public is ready for (i.e. contract on America). Predicts salvage rider.
- Still looking at narrowly divided congress trying to lead a relatively evenly divided country. 77,611 votes redistributed among close R races would have kept R majority. So we will continue to govern between the 40 yard lines.
- No change toward career civil servants. More quality time in house and senate hearing rooms but will continue to depend on us to help set priorities.

Legislative Priorities

- Much of this year will be consumed by reauthorization of the farm bill. '02 bill was largely a bi-partisan success. Administration's farm bill proposal will have a significantly larger emphasis on forestry, and have a forestry title. We will probably be asked to show public the value of what we're proposing. Most ideas come from colleagues.
- Sent up healthy forests partnership act last fall; fair amount of bi-partisan support. Hope to get congress to turn to it early in this session.
- House enacted forest recovery act (Walden). Hopeful to get it moving again.
- Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act expired in '06. Will propose a reauthorization in February submittal to hill, with some changes. Will be a priority in committee (Wyden).
- Achieving any 2 of those 4 would be productive.

Administrative Priorities

- Continue to work with states interested in producing state roadless rules depending on outcome of cases Supreme Court, upwards of 6 to 8 states this year.
- DOI closing on a lengthy process on changes to ESA - significant improvement building on some of the work of HFRA. Should see a set of proposed rules in mid-March that will get a lot of attention. Probability is that at least some members will try to offer an appropriations rider to suspend spending any funds on their finalization (May, June timeframe). House parliamentarian has been ruling more strictly about what constitutes an appropriations rider; if agency actions are just ministerial they will be able to proceed. Some of the items will be popular because they can speed species recovery. Also when bill comes to floor it'll be offered as amendment to interior approps by Dicks, who's district has been hit hard by ESA. On senate side we have Feinstein, and most appropriate person to offer amendment would be Boxer.

- Changes to our own NEPA procedures to add efficiencies and offset recent court rulings where 9th circuit has gone beyond CEQ. Clarifying changes will produce more litigation but it'll be where we are more likely to prevail.
- Last 6 years have been like playing basketball in the NBA. Now it's like we're in the playoffs and we will make mistakes.
- State of the union will feature a few of our farm bill ideas including a significant amount of funding for biomass.
- Stay 1 step ahead of the incurable.

Q - Fire oversight

A - Focus will be on status of cost share agreements we have with the states. Some are well defined and break out costs well (CA) but many aren't. Won't be popular with governors. We are carrying a big share of costs. May put pressure on local governments to start to reign in problems. May also get more help from insurance industry. We've sent a couple of alternative funding strategies to OMB and the hill but no one is biting. OMB sees fire being in our internal budget as an impetus for cutting waste. Congressional motivation is that they want to be able to spend the money where they want; separate account for fire would mean that the appropriators would need to cut budget in other areas for offsets, so they are not motivated to change it.

Q- Earmark restrictions

A – It's a temporary phenomenon that will last one budget cycle. You can't change human nature. Continuing resolution will be clean and earmark free. However they will use our '08 budget proposal to show how bad we are at setting priorities and show they have no choice but to earmarks the correct ones.

Q – Organizational changes

A - Continued emphasis on getting more resources and FTEs to the ground (supervisor's offices and below). Consolidations, eliminations, virtual worksites. Trend will continue.

Q - R&D

A - Don't know role yet because new majority hasn't articulated their desires. Will come up in farm bill. Government affairs of either house or science committee of house will probably do oversight of the administration's use of research. But that will go both ways. Brian Baird wants to go after Danato report.

Q - Climate change

Focus on what we can do to have a positive effect on the increase of greenhouse gases. Stay away from the balance of the debate. There is considerable dispute of how bad the problem is but we can emphasize the positive role we can play in contributing to make it better. This is where our data take us and this is where they stop. Contribute based on what we know instead of adding to speculation on unknowns. We know pretty clearly the effects on certain ecosystems if temperatures rise.

Q - Farm bill

A - Accelerating of private markets for ecosystem services, and more funding for it. Will be web cast when the secretary rolls it out. In the last few cycles there have been no administration proposals for the farm bill, but it's not totally unusual to put one forward.

Q - OMB

A - Blessed with a political director of this program area, David Anderson, who knows a lot about our issues and is very interested. Relationship has improved. Will always be a little contentious because of who they are and what they do.

Q - Supplemental

A - There will be one because of Iraq. Will include some agricultural relief, possibly some flood restoration money.

Q - Competitive sourcing

A - Folks responsible for managing that will get a lot of scrutiny from government affairs committees. It's a 2 way street - evaluate all we do and look critically at what we do best and what we do most poorly. For what we do best we should be looking across government for opportunities to do more, like Job Corps (we have among the highest placement rates so we've taken over some centers from FWS). Similarly when OPM and OMB look across government they found 14-16 payroll service providers, not many efficient. Open competitive bid was the impetus to shrink them to 4. NFC was one of the 4, who took on 300-400 additional FTEs. Thinks we will see capability of ASC to take on work of other smaller agencies in USDA. Opportunity to get someone else to do the things we're least proficient in. People like to do what they are good at. So it should be empowering instead of devaluing.

Q - Administration's legacy on the environment

A - Based on president's personal interest we've already been able to enact some legacy initiatives, like HFRA, and clean up issues to the point that we are a government center of excellence. Not many people on the hill or in the public at large understand resource management; they depend on us. But everyone knows what it means to be able to balance a checkbook. We will see legacy issues in this farm bill, Johann's legacy, with dramatic changes in agricultural and natural resources policy. Appointments will also become more prominent in the next 2 years as we make choices who can weather changes in politics.

Q - Legacy of Bosworth

A - Good. One key is the health and satisfaction of the agency today relative to 6 years ago. One of the least noticed benefits is that the chief's work has bought time to make a change in the workforce. A lot of people hung on so we didn't see as much turnover (of course that was helped by the stock market). That contribution is significant. Had all of the people eligible decided to go we would have had a hard time keeping the train on the track.

Dave Tenny

Deputy UnderSecretary for Natural Resources and Environment

- Communications is essential. What if our message about recreation facility master planning was something like this: it's a partnership between the FS and its public because we want to provide a premiere experience for those who enjoy the NFs, so that when we set our priorities they match what the public wants. Instead we talked about it as niche marketing.
- Another example is a letter about the new planning CE, suggesting that we are all about trying to exclude the public. Our task is to describe what the new planning rule is all about. We said the new rule was about being more efficient, cutting time and money. Another way: we have learned a lot over the last 20 years about how to work with the public. We are trying to replace 20 years of a paradigm that created discord to something that will bring the public to the table right away, to bring people to the table in a way that will build collaboration.
- Roadless - agency is described as trying to public comment. Why not say we have heard from the public and know this is a very important issue; what we are engaged in now allows us to respond to them even more. The public can make recommendations that will be very relevant to where they live. We are very concerned and want to be as responsive as we can.
- NEPA – we have a “nearly fully cooked” set of regulations that have not yet gone to the department or OMB. Intent is to step down CEQ regs so they apply directly to FS activities. It will challenge some aspects of NEPA that have tied us in to knots. One purpose - to better engage the public, better enable our managers to engage the public in a productive way. They are based on recommendations from the field.
- Always remember that first and foremost what we are about is providing premiere public service. With that as your first premise you'll get the rest right.
- When there are difficult or politically charged issues we will do our best to make sure you have a consistent message.
- There are many good things in the FS that we want to endure, most importantly the Chief. We've had a wonderful experience with this leader. Process in naming a new chief was truly remarkable. There were many very strong candidates for the position – Forest service is deep with great leaders. Hard to identify just a few. Presented names to Secretary Johanns, who wanted to know first and foremost what Dale thought, then what Mark and Dave thought. Johanns said when the time is right to make your announcement let me know and then I'll let you know who I've chosen. Secretary didn't need to call anyone about it; we informed others after the decision was already made. We had the privilege to identify a leader from within its ranks. Unique and wonderful. The reason we were able to do that and not ask permission is because of Forest Service employees. We produce outstanding leaders - secretary said thanks a lot for making this so difficult, as difficult as any he had experienced. The agency's leadership has made his experience as good as it could be. Thanks to the field too.

- Make sure we serve, communicate, and perform to make Gail the best chief the agency has ever had.

Q - Will the FS move to political chief?

A - Happens in other agencies because it's either written in to the law or has arisen out of a political event and has now become practice. We've had some of that in the FS. There have been many occasions where the position has become politicized - we have to make sure that doesn't happen.

Q - Recreation facility master plan

A - Political issue, expect oversight about the FS trying to turn recreation sites into profit centers. We have to communicate. What are we really doing here? First task is to cast what this is all about in the correct and proper light. Make sure the public and elected officials are comfortable about involving the public to address their highest priority needs. Will require a look at what we're doing. In principle we're on target but we've communicated it poorly.

Q - Planning rule

A - This rule was conceived and drafted by the Forest Service. Mark and Dave should not be talking about it. It was good to see the regional executives speak out. Wise to respond to editorials from the field and with vigor. "Disappointing" is a good word for responses because they are misleading. Of all of the McClatchee editorials we've only been given 1 response. Also doing outreach on the hill. Expect variable response - how easy is it to explain and how does it fit with the other issues? How easy is it to craft an amendment on the floor? The appropriators will ask how much more it will cost with or without the rule. Will need to show the public is not being cut out.

Q- Revised package for NEPA

A - Applies to a whole variety of things - 11 specific items. What is a major federal action? What do we mean by cumulative effects? It will talk to public involvement. How do we go about alternative arrangements? If we have an EA and we have everyone on board, do you have to concoct alternatives? Or just compare to no action. These are emanating from the cooperative conservation listening sessions and work with the field.

Q - Forecast on roadless

A - We're presently almost completely enjoined by the northern district of CA. Still arguing about the scope of the injunction. We want final judgment. Litigation also in WY with motion to reinstate the previous injunction. Will take place in front of a judge who has a fixed view (injunction coming). ID and CA have issued petitions, and they expect one from CO and ID. Those petitions will proceed through the regular APA process. State of ID couldn't be more pleased. Other states are waiting it out.

Q - 2008 budget

A - There will be a desire to get it done. New majority wants to demonstrate that they want to run the place. They will look back to '95 and try to avoid it. They

will do it well and on time, and give back to the people who put them there. We will see interesting amendments, like possibly Alaska roadless. Don't want to see an amendment on site facility master planning. Would be an easy one - "no funds will be spent on ..."

Q - Recreation fees

A - Tied in to site facility master planning. General theme is that there is a backlog, we're trying to pay for it on the back of the taxpayers, and in the process we're trying to make money.

Q - Internal

A - What's happening in the agency has to happen. Way to handle change is to communicate as much as possible and not to run faster than you have strength. We've tried to be clear with OMB about how fast we're going. Field job is to communicate with WO, especially if hot bed of discontent is brewing. Face to face, knee to knee, family meetings are needed - a lot of personal attention.

Q - Congressional reaction to moving to Albuquerque

A - Are you saving as much as you say you are going to save? We've heard fixed costs and one time sunk costs are higher than you thought. Not resistance but watching closely.

[Congressman Tom Udall, NM](#)

- Congratulations to Gail, historic.
- Looking at forest role in a much broader context - what they do for people and wildlife. Ecosystem services. If we take care of our forests we will have good healthy watersheds that provide clean water for us. Many in cities don't realize everything that goes in to the clean water that comes from the tap. You will see more of a push from this congress to think about ecosystem management. Oversight from house approps and senate will all focus on it.
- We've been agonizing on a piece of legislation on global warming. The science is getting stronger every year. People like James Hanson say we have a 10 year window right now. If we don't step in we will lose the opportunity to help the world. Not even on committee but have been looking at the landscape and saw bills that didn't get attention. Asked what we can do in the next 3 years - looking for a bill that we can pass and Bush will sign.
 - 1st principle: we have to start now - quickly tackle the trend. Last 6 years in US we have been going up in emissions by 2% a year. We have to start on a downward trend. By 2050 we need to be at an 80% reduction from where we are now. What we are talking about is energy and energy runs our economy. 90% of our energy is dependent upon carbon fuels. We are tackling this issue knowing we have to pay special attention to our economic needs.
 - 2nd principle: don't try to solve all of it at once. We don't know what's going to be happening in 2050 much less 5 or 10 years from now. Put in place a strong signal and a price on carbon. We are still toying with 7 dollars a ton, recommended by NECEP. This would

- change the world. Right now no one pays. If you put a price on the market system you really send a signal.
- 3rd principle: work through the market system. We unleash creativity of American business.
- Final principle: be practical enough that we can get something that answers President Bush's doubts. They put in a safety valve - if price goes too high and causes economic disruption then you allow the president to bust the cap for a short time.
- Scientist on staff, Johanna. Rick Heely, chief of staff in house on the subcommittee, who has been with the committee 25 years.

Q - Changes in direction now that you're in the majority

A - First thing is oversight. You will see a lot more in terms of analyzing where we've been going. Forest policy - healthy forests and regulations being promulgated, real analysis on how well the law that we passed is working. Nick Rahall has said one of his top priorities is reform of the 1872 mining law. Bill passed house during Gingrich's time. Native American burial sites - piece of legislation Rahall had last time, will be the subject of hearings too. We have to think what we can legislate that Bush will sign. Common ground.

Q - How will you ensure bipartisan approach?

A - We had a bill on global warming ready to drop a year before he could find a R co-sponsor. We've really lost our way on that in Washington. Part of it was the short work week; first votes used to be 6:30 pm on Tuesdays, with departures Thurs afternoons. Now 6:30 on Monday until 2 on Friday.

Q - Earmarks

A - There are always projects that members of congress push in any legislative body. Department of Defense always plans 5 years out, so when local people come to him they work from the military's list and change the order. Does the FS say this is our mission, this is where we'll be in 5 years, and this is what we need from congress each year to get there? What can we do that will also make us look good. That's what he'll be pushing in the oversight process. Don't think earmarks will ever go away; we need to be smart about them. Over the last 5-10 years we made earmarks secret. They were added in the committee process, away from public scrutiny. They came out in conference reports, and it took media 1 week to get the bill and read it. New rules call for earmarks to be entered at subcommittee level with the sponsor's name, and the sponsor will need to defend it: transparency. Some talk about cutting the numbers way down which might occur. Hope we don't just cut the number down and then the earmarks get bigger. They work closely with all agencies on what their objectives are. Which are better, executive or legislative earmarks?

Q - Will there ever be a regional earmark that covers more than one state?

A - Happens all of the time. There is coordination that is then converted to how much each state gets to carry it out. Congress is grouped more by geographics. Easier for him to talk to R from the West who represents forest issues than D from the East. Someone from NY has a different perspective.

Q - Forests have great potential to help with global warming, yet we put a lot of carbon in atmosphere with fire. Our projects on the ground have slowed. What can we/you do to help?

A - We will do a lot of oversight on fire. If we spent more money up front we would not spend as much on suppression. We need to be able on a project by project basis to make sure that the projects move forward. Great deal of distrust between forest managers and in some cases other elements of the community. Are we going back to getting the cut out or are we moving to a new era? The more we focus on ecosystem services the better we will do.

Johanna added that Ken Caldeira wrote a NY Times editorial (last week) showing that reforestation in temperate forests does not make a difference in climate. What makes a difference is planting more forests, especially where there haven't been forests. Balance. As forests grow do we cut them down because they are bad for warming? No, because of other benefits. There is doubt about more forests in temperate climates. True sequestration is cutting down trees and putting it in a form that won't change.

Q - Secure rural schools

A – A lot of bipartisan support for payments; we need to re-think it. Challenge is not setting incentives to cut forests no matter what. On the other hand our rural schools are really hurting. Real concern about helping the states that have large amounts of federal land.

Q – Centralization of business services

A - Really torn about Albuquerque centralization because we need Forest Service people on the land, especially in small communities. Wind turbines are bringing back farmers and ranchers.

Q - Forest Service environmental footprint

A - This is the epic challenge of our generation and we want everyone involved. Walmart is pushing energy efficient lights. Part of the mission of a power company should be the most efficient use of energy. Buildings are a part of it too. 48% of CO₂ emissions in the US are from commercial and residential buildings. Heating and cooling. Talking to architects now about making a difference. We have the technology to cut energy usage by 50% with same results. Government does 5 billion square feet each in new buildings and renovations each year. His bill would require energy efficiency there too. Need a comprehensive, bold, galvanizing approach.

[John Pasquantino](#)

Office of Management and Budget

- Forest Service is an E-government leader in one-stop recreation information.

- Real property initiative - FS is leading participant in govt wide initiative in trying to determine how much we have, where it is, how much it costs to maintain or get rid of.
- \$3.8 trillion budget, 2/3 on entitlements, rest domestic discretionary and international, 1/2 of that domestic discretionary non military.
- Commitment to balance budget by 2012. Our '08 budget will show it and will force us to make difficult choices.
- Amount of available dollars to do on the ground projects has decreased by 60% in last few years. Add the effect of 10 year fire suppression average and we are really facing a lot of pressure. Are we organized efficiently? Are there alternative ways of doing things? What do we have to do versus go buy?
- What is the compelling story? What are the taxpayers getting for their money? Demonstrate performance and efficiency.

Q - Advice on telling the American public about budget cuts.

A - We look at this as an iterative process. Theme should be delivering value for the funds invested. Difficult choices have to be made. We have to align the available resources to meet the highest priority needs. Know thy priorities.

Q - We fight fires well

A - I take issue with that. We suppress fire well, even if it doesn't do that much on the overall fire. Might not be the best way of fighting it. Using the term "fight" for fire adapted ecosystems is interesting. How, where and when you suppress fires has a large impact on the cost of the incident and the aggregate over the years. Political risk aversion strategy needs to change to a risk informed approach that uses some knowledge developed by FS. Other already existing data can marry up with current suppression technologies and have an effect on how much money we spend. During WW II there were 2 theaters, Eisenhower in Europe and McCarthur in the Pacific. The Chief of Staff in DC made the decision on allocation of resources between the 2. In the FS ICs can make orders independently. A management control process that considers risk and looks at limited resources will be the best, one the includes decision space. Open to talking about other methods too. We're upside down as an organization, spending at rates that we can't sustain. 10 year cost has doubled in during administration alone. A lot of political issues on site can make a huge difference in cost. We step in to places where we don't have the lead. The ramp up of national resources available since the national fire plan has made us great neighbors; only 1 year was above \$900 million before the national fire plan. We are subsidizing too much. The politics are a real constraint. Our charge uniquely is to inculcate an expectation that this is no longer a federal responsibility. We may want to do it but there is nothing under the Stafford Act that requires us to help FEMA, or help cooperators. If we did not send everyone off to fight fires we would have to RIF many people.

Q - Look at ROs

A - Per FTE cost in ROs and WO grew compared to forests. Looks like it was due in part to conversion to seasonal staff. We are losing some land knowledge and

economy of scale. We are currently looking at ways to address this - national and regional offices are ripe for review. It's necessary but not sufficient. As we have become more dependent on emergency supplementals for fire we've made our decision space smaller. Projection is that in 3 years our NFS budget will only cover salary.

General Presentations – Internal Speakers

Chief Dale Bosworth, 15th Chief of the Forest Service

Gail Kimbell, 16th Chief

Dale –

- Thanks for all of the great work.
- FS better off when there are differences politically among the people we deal with. Most difficult questions in last 6 years of hearings have been from Republicans.
- FS will get extra attention as we head to presidential race but would happen regardless of who is in office. Worked hard over the years to develop relationships with both sides of the house and it's working.
- Need to be professional, accurate, prompt, consistent. Make sure responsiveness isn't the issue.
- Doesn't think the things we are focusing on are political issues - OHV, fire and fuels, invasives. We are doing the right things on the ground. The issue will be *how* we go about them.
- Opportunities to work with very difficult issues like the costs of large fires.
- No great increases in budget ahead but we may now have better opportunities to share our concerns with the new congress. OMB had a lot of influence over the last congress. We will need to create solutions.
- We will need to focus on things like rule changes.

Gail -

- Diversity of opinion makes the whole discourse around what we do so much more valuable.
- Importance of public dialogue; we have to be working together internally as well.
- Value of legislative affairs and communication staff work.

Q - Regional and WO restructure team

A - Randy will do an excellent job of providing executive leadership. Will require a lot of communications and dialogue. The 4-level structure has served us very well over the time but we may not need it any more. World is so much smaller due to technology and communications-- we cannot afford to have 9 regions doing things their own ways. We cannot afford grossly different interpretations that cause us to do some silly things in some places. It will be a very difficult task but we would have to do it regardless of whether OMB told us.

Dale - other savings needed on Research and S&PF. OMB projects 5 % budget reduction. We use 1 1/2 % because it's more real.

Gail - every region and station is going through some painful look right now. Significant changes over the 33 years of her career. We will keep going through tremendous change throughout our careers.

Q - Dale's advice for Gail

A - She has the leadership and intelligence to do well. Has one advantage over him - she has already worked in the WO at the executive level. One piece of advice he got was "don't inhale." People start to think they are really important - it's in the air. A lot of jobs can get people into a situation where they will puff up self importance. Gail comes in with much humility.

Q - How will Dale stay engaged?

A - Knows in 15 minutes you are irrelevant and don't know anymore what's going on. People make the mistake of thinking they are informed and relevant. Plans to read, pay attention and listen, and always be ready to help if asked. Doesn't want to be a retired person who interferes with an organization that is moving on.

Q - Do you feel pressure to produce revenue from the forests?

A - Dale - have not felt much pressure from anyone regarding revenue. Most is self imposed based on our desire to provide the goods and services people want, so we are looking for dollars to be able to do what people expect us to do. The pressure I put on myself is that in order to do the restoration work we need to do in the future we have to have some infrastructure, and we have to do enough to keep the infrastructure.

Gail - Most of the discussion around revenue has been around stewardship contracting. Not only about management and monitoring but also about recognizing that there is a value to what is removed. Our job is to manage the lands in a way that restores their vitality so they can be ready for what's next. Also to study what's coming next, and to let people know about it. To understand what these lands might produce and how that might figure into the whole economic equation. Our responsibility is to Care for the Land and Serve people. The mission of our state and private branch is where we started - we helped private landowners plan for their land. We did the measurements; our interest was ecological vitality.

Q - Discussions about "socially acceptable" tree removal in the Midwest (most related to EAB) -will it become acceptable?

A - Denver Post story pointed out that we will need to remove trees to get what we want from the forests. CA story about timber sale on the Sequoia National Monument for future old growth showed support too. People are starting to understand and put in laymen's terms, maybe better than we ever have, or from a different credibility. They are being heard and celebrated. It's a great thing. We also have an increasing job of conservation education in the urban population,

with grade school and scouts and more. We have a responsibility to be participating with the conservation community.

Q – Gail, what have you learned from Dale?

A - Many things. Dale has given us a focus that we haven't had in many years. The 4 threats have provided us a real focus that allows us to prioritize in a way we didn't have before that. "Threat" has even been picked up in other places. It has given us back our soul and our heart.

Q – Among priorities of congress per Rey, environment was tier 3. What do you see for the next 10 years in budget cycles, until American people understand.

Gail - As an old agency we've been through all kinds of cycles. We still have the acres, the research organization that interfaces with organizations all over the world, the interacting with state foresters all over the country. It's intricate and it will survive. Right now the issues are huge with Iraq and health care. We may be in the 3rd tier but depending on how well we do on the top 2 we'll move up again, especially with the population and the consequent demand on the natural resources. Water will be an issue for the future too.

Dale - As long as we have things like Iraq we won't be on the front line, and that's the way it should be. When we get to the top usually it's through people not being satisfied with the work we are doing. Issues like global climate change will change the way people see what we do. Interest in things like bio-fuels will also come our way. When we have huge fire seasons it also raises interest. Concern is when big fires become so regular that they become the norm.

Q - Compelling cases

Gail - As Regional Forester in Region 1, here's what she's thinking - climate change and what's happening with biodiversity of flora and fauna, need for active management at a landscape scale on public and private lands, working across boundaries, huge fires. The national fire plan was the first time she remembered dialogue at the national level that dealt with working with partners and doing something different on the ground. Recognize that tremendous change is taking place. We need to be working with our partners to make a difference.

Q - Proposal to merge USDA research with Ag research.

A - Every station director and Ann are looking at limited dollars and partnering. We are working across all concept boundaries now. There is a group of university and college deans who have proposed setting up an institute that includes all research organizations, which would increase the funding. Don't believe it will go anywhere with FS research. Forestry research would get lost in volumes of agricultural research. Also one of strength of FS is strong research arm that helps us make science based decisions; that would disappear. The proposal's not bad, just don't agree that the Forest Service should be a part of it.

Q - NLT conference calls

A - Dale believes they should be open. The more open and inclusive the better we are.

“If I didn't know it was the right time for the agency I'd probably get cold feet because I really love the Forest Service,” said Dale

Sally Collins

Associate Chief

- Exciting Times.
- Thanks to Stana for bringing a sense of direction and focus to communications. “Expanding the Circle of Conservation” is great.
- We are thinking about strategic issues that will define whether we are relevant to the constituents in the future. Who will be voting for conservation 20 years from now? Who will think nature is important? Who will think the national forests are important? Intoxicating technology is taking the kids away from it. Our challenge is expanding the circle to the next generation, more than 50% non-white, so we will need to be thinking about multiple languages and multiple cultures. And increasing urbanization means we have that more people not in touch with nature.
- All of us have created an infrastructure of communications with a constituency that will not be there in the future. We meet the public on our terms. In the future we will need to meet them on their terms, in their homes.
- We need to work in urban areas, develop more ways to partner... It's up to all of us to imagine what the future will be.
- We still speak a language from the timber era. It speaks to a certain constituency but it's not the language we need as we evolve. Many of our careers were defined in wars over timber wars that aren't there any more. Somehow we have to figure out how to clean the language up, reframe and re-communicate. A challenge for all of us.
- What we need to be thinking about ecosystem services -one of the 3 themes from the centennial congress.
 - Public wants to hear about it not when the log is on a truck but when the tree is standing. Clean drinking water, nutrient cycling, ... in addition we need to be looking at engaging markets for ecosystem services.
 - We are spending a lot of time questioning it. While we are debating it progress is happening elsewhere. It's already here. Ecosystem markets are taking off.
 - Friend of hers travels all the time but for the last year he's been offsetting his carbon created by the travel.
 - There are a lot of cowboys selling offsets; a credible one is the carbon fund. They invest in alternative energy, emissions reduction, and 4 forestry projects where they plant trees. All 4 are on the national forests in the US, and by far the most important part of their portfolio is the Sequoia National Forest.
 - Yesterday Mark Rey convened a market based council for USDA with investors from all over the country and Great Britain. Most of them are already investing in the European Union. Also interested in biodiversity and water, especially nutrient trading. If we could

- hand over a portfolio of projects on private and public lands that people would be interested in investing they would be ready to do it.
- Why is it important? Because we're losing forested land. Between 60 and 80 percent of private forest land has changed hands in the last decade. We have had a stable forest land base for 100 years in America. If we can get money in to conservation we can advance it to levels we've never dreamed of.
 - Elephant in the room is climate change.
 - We will have climate legislation and probably a system about trading for carbon.
 - We have the best natural resource research in government.
 - Proposed legislation includes trading carbon and there is an important role - if we can get forestry and forest offsets into it. That will be hard because there is a lot of skepticism about trees and carbon. More focus on emissions.
 - The offset side of the issue is very small. This is about offsetting by investing in anything that isn't carbon fuels. If the forestry community argues among itself and politicians make it a big issue then forests will not be included, and we will lose all the money that can help land owners keep lands in forest.
 - We want an organization that is something we can be proud of ecologically, environmentally, socially. No younger people want to work for an organization that isn't environmentally and socially responsible.
 - Lot of concern at last NLT about the 42% of the budget going to pay for fires and how that's draining all programs-- the message is not getting to our key partners, including the hill. We began to talk about the need to make a compelling case--a very strategic and deliberate way to approach these constituents that we need to be building in the future.
 - Need proactive media strategy over time - editorial markets. We are proactive with the Hispanic network and all the new multimedia markets. Same in legislative affairs-- need to be proactive, making sure messages are there before we are asked, deliberate about who we send up and what they say, who we take on a field trip, how we promote the spirit of bi-partisanship.
 - We have to reach in to non-traditional partners and groups, boards of directors of corporations, environmental groups, like the Tongass Futures Group. They looked at who's on boards of directors and who's making decisions, and as a result worked with Teddy Roosevelt group. We have examples of engaging non-traditional partners.
 - Takes a remarkable manager to be able to let go like of power and engage the public; we need to reward them and encourage them.
 - Start expanding in sectors we haven't thought of. Poverty alleviation. International partners. Less innocuous and more progressive.
 - Need to figure out how to connect with the next generation. Very deliberate strategy for bringing in youth. Engage them in our

decision making, thought process, projects on the ground. We need to have diversity in the room.

- Met with Wilderness Society Board of Directors outside Ely last year, Jerry Franklin included, and agreed on almost everything. Still might get lawsuits but also an unbelievably interesting partnership on post-Katrina effort.
- FS still trying to figure out what this congress is interested in doing. In the meantime, WO is working on a few very important proposals.
 - One is the farm bill, with proposals that will make us much more relevant to private lands owners. It's one of the single most important pieces of legislation in this country today. Our S&PF gets funding through that. A lot of funding is off line/mandatory. Looking at creating markets where ecosystem services can take off.
 - The second thing is climate change, and figuring out how forestry protocols can play in to a bill. If we can figure it out we'll have a good solution.

Q - Attracting and retaining multicultural employees

A - Executive Leadership Team spent a lot of time last week about how we take multicultural and diversity to a new level. We have great programs in our history but our numbers are really flat. So we're thinking about incorporating the notion of reaching diverse publics whether ethnic, age, background, or interest (investors from NY), and we have to do it in everything we do.

Q - Expand urban forestry

A - Jim Hubbard has been thinking about how to expand them and how to build support. Thinking of ways to get money in communities to build more parks. Urban Connections has huge potential.

Q - Caring for new employees

A - Does not want anybody to feel that they are drifting. With every one of our employment programs we need to track every single person. We loose a lot of our 1890 students. We're not doing a great job of bringing them in and keeping them engaged. Incorporate diversity in to our program of work every year.

Q - How do you change culture?

A - By changing your behavior every day. Do it 10 times a day. It needs as natural as breathing. Would love ideas. We don't want to be transforming people in to our image. We get great recruits for the presidential management fellows program because we send our fellows to help recruit.

Q - What about creating a mini-company in the FS so they don't get swallowed by culture?

A - Sounds like enterprise teams. That's what Anna Crabtree is already doing. We tend to keep pilots right were they start rather than helping them 'get legs.' How do we transmit information? Maybe the idea is to hold symposium on creative ideas. We need to think across disciplines. Sustainability, partnerships, climate change will touch all employees. So we will need to deal with issues internally in

a much different way that we have in the past. When you want to make cultural change you have to work within the culture to do it. The reason I'm so interested in the current multicultural effort is that it works within the functional organization to make it happen.

[Joel Holtrop](#)

Deputy Chief, National Forest Systems

- Thank you for all of the good work. Legislative & communication work is critical for maintaining relationships on the hill and building new ones.
- What will happen in this current congress? --A lot more communicating than legislating. What will that mean to us? Probably more oversight hearings, information inquiries, and calls for the executive branch accountability.
- How to be best prepared, best equipped, to show our best face? How will our issues fit in this congress? There are a series of signals. Climate change is one. Forest Service has a stake - need to think about how to be proactive.
- Energy will continue to be a topic. Variety of issues will include hazardous fuel reduction, fires, environment and resource conservation issues.
- Sense of optimism about new Congress. Looking forward to hearings. Will have to prepare differently and more intensely. Issues are not partisan. Opportunity to demonstrate that FS is a professional organization & our ability to do things on the ground transcends party lines.
- Meeting with Congressman Dicks, Chair, Interior Approps subcommittee, who asked to come to our office. He spent 1 1/2 hours with Dale and then time with each Deputy Chief. He was very engaged, asking questions about his key concerns (thinning, fish passages, and international programs, state and private and legacy). What an opportunity! On Monday, Jim Hubbard, Joel and Lenise will go to the hill to meet with the minority. We can take advantage of the opportunity that this transition gives.
- Priorities from NFS perspective. Synthesized 24+ papers prepared by NFS directors for Congressman Dicks -- resulted in 3 themes. 1)Enhancing opportunities for quality NF visitor experiences, rec site master planning, implementing the fee program, and addressing deferred maintenance. Lots of questions. 2) Improving and restoring forest and rangeland health. HFRA, HFI, fire plan, reforestation needs nearing 1.1 million acres, need for us to address rangeland health through grazing allotment and such. 3) Complexity of managing in this environment, planning rule, roadless areas conservation, 50-100 lawsuits.
- Key legislative proposals and issues important to us as we look forward to this congress: Ecological restoration through building communities. Cheapest restoration is not incurring the cost in the first place by doing it right.
- One of key conservation legacies will be the leadership role we play in restoring ecosystems (fire adapted, degraded watersheds, all of the impacts from the past couple of centuries) so new generations can enjoy what we have today.

- Anything we can do to help communicate with congress is very important. Be quick to provide info. Help congressional leaders understand that the decisions we make for the long term health of the ecosystems do not have to be reduced to polarized partisan debate.
- How can we change the American public's mindset from "*what is good for people is bad for nature*" to "*what is good for nature is good for people?*" Ecological restoration can do that.
- Rep. Walden's (post-catastrophic recovery) bill of last year should be good discussions. Also partnership enhancement bill had bipartisan proposal and needs to keep moving. Anything we can do to ease the burden on our partners is important.
- Change of chief was historic; we need to continue to emphasize our role as professional resource managers.

[Jim Hubbard](#)

Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

- Will be different to work with this new congress – I welcome it. We treat everybody the same and don't get involved in partisan politics. The hearings will take a different nature because of issues that haven't been surfaced with previous congress, but it will be good. We don't get to make too many points. Be ready. Some audiences will require witnesses to be there all day. Visuals help.
- Climate change is causing fire, insect, disease and carbon issues - fire season not just about drought but also about temperature. Causes a number of other kinds of problems beyond health, safety, and private property. Carbon and climate and air quality and atmosphere will get a lot of attention. Fire, insects, disease, clean air, clean water will all be connected to climate change. If climate can be tied to forests as well, we may get a chance to say a few things.
- Rep. Dicks very interested in maps. Maps project what will happen in 15 years in terms of susceptibility of forests and what creates risks.
- There hasn't been an Administration farm bill proposal in some time but we will see one this year. We may need to look at what a farm bill commits to commodity and shift that to conservation and forestry. An agricultural producer can still benefit from both programs, but are they ready to consider this? We will work closely with NRCS. We're not just focusing on a separate forestry title in the bill, but also how forestry is in all titles. How can we simplify programs?
- Ecosystem services - how do you establish a market, especially for carbon, in the US? Market in Europe is based on a cap and trade system. Our economy isn't ready for that. What's the federal government role? Good questions. We need to be ready.
- Some of the states have decided to take the lead. Major producers are asking for action because they don't want 50 sets of rules. Farm Bill may try to set

the framework: sustainability, restoration, ecosystem services, and certification.

- Fire suppression is getting more complex, costly and difficult with wildland interface and people's homes in the way.
- We spent \$1.5 billion in suppression this year. We are required to include a 10 year average in our budget. The year that dropped off was \$300 million. Huge increase, especially in a budget that isn't increasing. Big problem in '08. 20 fires cost us \$400 million last year.
- Good cost containment will help. Getting to a different finance method will require us to get more serious about cost containment and implement management control but will not necessarily solve it. Won't be pleasant hearings. National Assoc of State Forester will tell us where we went wrong. If we do the right things we might get a chance to do something about the problem that will free up money in the process to help everyone.
- Preparedness - aviation, engines, firefighters. What we're not doing: large air tankers. Every week we are asked why we aren't putting them under contract and taking care of problems, but we have no intention of putting any of those aircraft under contract. We will develop what it will take to put them under contract so we will be ready if forced to. We are not including them in our regular planning. Don't get confused by cost containment push versus 747s.
- We are a little worried that some firefighters are being charged criminally, way after the fact. We have to take a hard look at what we can do to avoid this. In terms of negligence we can help with liability, but it will take legislation. Criminal liability issues started after the 30 mile fire. Unintended consequences of direction led OIG to think that now they have to examine from criminal standpoint. We need to let people in the field know where they stand. OGC has not freed us up to talk about this in depth.
- Hazardous fuels reduction. Constantly pushed to do more acres. When we hold our target on acres, it's hard to get to some of the acres that we need to treated, such as a mechanical operation next to a community. We may ask communicators to recommend ways to involve others, putting plans together, guiding our case, showing we have the right acres. More than urban wildland interface hazard reduction projects, we also reach out in the landscape to accomplish an ecosystem restoration objective.

[Hank Kashdan](#)

Deputy Chief, Business Operations

- Change is forever. In Dale's video, my take on 41 years, he says we're not very good at change. Ag learn, new data centers, standards and protocols, Human Capital Management opening, ... A common question when we started business operations transition planning was "when will the change slow down?" It won't. It'll accelerate.
- WO and RO restructuring will be done rapidly over the next couple of years. Some of the concepts will be tested, like moving WO services west. Target of 25% cut is real and will only get us half way to where we need to be. We have

lost ability to do some programs on the ground. Available funds going down, fixed costs going up. They will cross unless we lower cost or get more funds.

- Major and significant changes are needed in the rest of the organization, particularly WO and RO. Key lessons learned in BOTP – we need to dedicate full time resources to accomplish this, with a lot of emphasis of internal rather than contractors.
- Randy Moore will lead the restructuring effort, helped by Kent Connaughton, Rita Stevens, & Bill LaVere full time. Additional support from Jill Leonard and Christine Murray. Employees across the country will be involved in operational design. Emphasis on communications: videos similar to “my take,” one pagers, more graphics, publications like the vision brochure.
- Continued consolidation where it makes sense. Examine Stations, travel costs and the environmental footprint-- a way of reducing costs and representing what the FS stands for in terms of social responsibility.
- Just a few years ago we weren't able to talk about foot printing - didn't make it past the OMB. We have an opportunity to take some leadership. Purpose of Dale's January 9 letter about monitoring 7 objectives around carbon foot printing was to interject the formality. Starting in September, theWO will measure 6 consumption type activities and report on them – units will not need to collect any information. In a matter of weeks we will have those data elements displayed real-time so that any FS employee can see how we are doing on our environmental footprint. We can help set the government wide agenda in this area.

Q – Status of current SES vacancies

A – External and Strategic Communications and Chief of Staff are in final stages with the Department, interviews are under way for the Director of Civil Rights.

Q - Applicants are having a difficult time with the continuous line officer rosters

A - First negative feedback he's had. Will work on it but need to realize that we have to do open continuous rosters.

Q – Communications about change

We will use multiple venues of communication - video, personal, formal channels, one pagers, more frequent bridge access, and conference calls. One of the things we have on the schedule is the first chief bridge call on change topics.

Q – Allowances for environmental footprints that need to be measured in older buildings?

A – There is a two-fold purpose here. First we want to have a low impact in measuring. Second we want to get the subject introduced so we can begin to get attention to sustainability. Some of the measures are not great. For example we would rather have information on kilowatts used than cost but we don't track that. Would also like to build incentives for trading back and forth, i.e. maybe trade 500 acres of fuels treatment for something else.

Q - How are costs of lost productivity being compiled when it takes an employee longer to get the help they need, as in when you make calls to support desks and then wait?

A – This is burden shift, and it's not being counted. You will always need to call an 800 number for these services; we hope to make it friendly. We hope the burden will be less over time. It will not work well right out of the shoot.

[Ann Bartuska](#)

Deputy Chief, Research and Development

- Reframed WO Directorates to the following: Environmental Science, Policy and Quantitative Science (FIA and RPA), Forest Management Science, Resource Use Science (includes FPL)
- FPL is refocusing 40% of their program to nanotechnology.
- RF&D budget \$280 million, 4.75% of agency's budget. Doesn't include national fire plan research.
- 1100 research grade scientists in '95 to near 500 now. Offset with grads and post doctorates so overall number of employees is the same. Over 1,000 co-op agreements.
- Brand new R&D strategic plan. Links to management side of organization.
- Issues Research is working on include: Climate Change, Fire and Fuels, Ecosystem Services....bio-control of invasive species, biomass marketing and utilization, urban natural resources research, global competitiveness of Forest Products, Pine Genome Initiative and Nanotechnology. Climate change research ties to research that began in 1800. Value in always thinking ahead and trying to address problems that we have no clue of now.
- Working to define ecosystem services, what are the tax incentives and economics (social research needed).
- New markets, new products, solid research in bio-energy. As the FS does fundamental science, we give it to industry so they can do developmental work.
- Michael Rains thinks about urban environments as ecosystems. How do we keep them healthy and bring the forest to urban dwellers? We need social science research and restoration of the urban core. Research shows a direct relationship between a reduction in Attention Deficit Disorder and the amount of nature people are exposed to.
- Pine Genome is 10-20 times more complex than a human genome. We plan to have a centerfold of the pine genome by 2020. Creating trees that will allow more functionality for things we really want, like climate change, pine with wet feet. Consortium of 25 universities asked us to be in the lead because. \$30 million a year once it gets going.
- Points to highlight: FS has network of research going back to '08. It covers 80 percent of forest type in US, a network to understand fundamental processes and integrate them at a regional level.

Q - Water

A - We have long history of looking at water—it's a strategic area. Snow research too. That's what many of the experimental forests were established for. One of the hardest areas to sell in terms of getting new funding. Last year an initiative that was added by USDA just fell. We need to connect water to what people value and would support.

Q - Effect of Danato Report.

A - Somewhat inconsequential paper that came out in Science, small study on post fire salvage. Basically said it had a very negative effect on the future forest. Issue was how it came forward and how it was reviewed. Reiterates paper done in 1956. What made the difference was off-line trying to influence opinion.

[Kent Connaughton](#)

Associate Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

- Just appointed comptroller for Forest Service last summer.
- 1 message for incident commanders in the meeting that is going on now: cost containment is essential. If you draw the pie for the FS budget, the fire piece of the pie is well over 40%, and that has doubled over the last 40 years. Not acceptable.
- Need fundamental changes in the way we go about dealing with fire. We can save hundreds of millions of dollars. OMB characterizes us as thinking we have a blank check. After we improve we can go to OMB and ask that they join us in requesting a supplemental from Congress. It's about our credibility.
- Treat issue with dignity, preference and prudence in the agency. Elements of cost containment include how it affects our partners and how we will improve handling the money we have now. We can cut aviation costs and improve our technologies. There are an infinite number of options.
- On fires we need to present a set of choices for investments which can be addressed at different costs.
- We need to improve our understanding of fire costs. Saving \$100 million would be great. It's about credibility with critics, who have studied our GAO reports.
- Role of States. Implications we are subsidizing the defense of communities, which is not a federal role. Our involvement in communities is subordinate to states. We have variation from incident to incident, and there are places where, if we had to do it over, we would probably do it differently. We need working agreements up front so that non-fed partners do not misread intentions. We will revisit agreements at an appropriate pace across the US. Need to move down to annual operating plans and get an agreement up front on how we will operate with state and locals. States are rattled.
- Suppression. Nationwide, we are fighting each fire independently of all other fires. Our colleagues are declaring incidents of national significance. How can we go about recognizing that when we are at preparedness level 5 we will do things differently? The way we do it now, the first fire calls out everything

and then there aren't any resources left for others. No one sees it more than Boise, but they have no authority to change it. This summer Chief will have personal representative visit these fires of national significance. Question will be are we doing the things we need to be doing given what's going on in the rest of the US. If true emergency we may really do things differently locally.

- National ownership of own hotshot crews. Will dispatch them centrally. Forest sups will not be able to hold them for initial attack.
- Will need to design strategies that could cope with resources available without declaring that we have shortages of everything.
- We will have cost savings. Payoff is credibility that we deserve. Instead of being adversaries our colleagues at OMB and on the hill will be with us, as well as our non-federal partners. Needs to occur soon. We can do something about it.

Q - What is the hill will and what about the political realities?

A - The hill did not understand this issue at all as of early December. That is changing due to hearings and briefings. Start fighting the fire well before the ignition so the relationships will serve you well when it hits.

Q - Feasibility study on aviation

A - Pleased with it. They've done an excellent job of teasing apart the different elements and dealing with them in a very intelligent way.

Q - Community wildfire protection plans, insurance companies. Any movement from ground up to address these problems?

A - Plans have been a success, not as plan but process of coming together. It puts citizens in charge of the environment. Insurance companies insure one individual at a time. Likelihood that one house is in trouble is low and you are charged accordingly. Also that fact that we are there is taken into account. But it's beginning to be paid attention to.

Q - What state response would be beneficial to OIG report?

A - We look forward to working with feds on those agreements. We believe we have done a good job so far and are therefore somewhat mystified. Never the less this is a good opportunity to improve our work.

Q - How do we respond to non-fire emergencies?

A - Consequence of Hurricane Katrina. Our folks can quickly get over their heads in these new situations. We are not prepared - available as an agency but trying to establish an awareness of where the boundaries are with respect to our expertise. Dept of Homeland Security is key to working it out. Not as murky as it was before Katrina.

General Presentations – Internal, By Topic

["Climate Change Research in the USFS"](#)

[Susan Conard and Chris Rose](#)

- House science committee called the administration's position "studiously neutral" on global warming. Scientists at NASA and NOAA were having difficulty talking about their science - the committee has helped investigate and change that.
- There is no American carbon cycle program.
- Most of the warming has occurred in the west, with significant warming coming to the East soon. 70% of water supply in West is coming off of forests.
- Climate change affects all products and services. Services include carbon storage, clean air, recreation, and biodiversity, aesthetic and spiritual benefits. How can we include it in our planning and do some mitigation?
- Climate change assessment is done whenever we do RPA assessment. US Climate Change Science Program is an interagency program; each agency has its own goals. There is a US Agricultural and forestry Greenhouse gas inventory. Models have been developed that allow landowners to calculate the impact of their activities on carbon.
- Questions every year about effect of management activities on carbon storing.
- Much of the climate related stress on trees can be managed. Just because they are dead trees it doesn't mean it's a catastrophe
- 3 page briefing paper on R&D website.
- Have to get the public involved in this debate.
- It's inevitable that we will have increased significant warming over the next 50 years. We have to learn how to live with it and stop it from getting worse. There will be a series of threshold events and recoveries.

["National Insect and Disease Risk Map"](#)

[Borys Tkacz, program manager, and Rob Mangold, Director](#)

- A national communication and planning tool that will provide congress, USDA officials, and federal and state land managers with a periodic strategic assessment for risk of tree mortality due to insects and disease.
- 5 year cycle. This is second in series. Last one was in 2002. Based on a method developed in the lake states.
- We lose more acres to these every year than we do to fire.
- Developed with a lot of partners.
- Current map is a database that can be queried with overlays (watersheds, congressional districts).
- Opportunity to provide consistent messages.
- Why? Program planning: Identify priority areas, allocate resources, and coordinate with other staffs

- Risk defined as catastrophic tree mortality - 25% or greater loss of stand volume over a 15 year period (a lot of mortality, a short period of time). But tool is capable of portraying any level of mortality. Flexible, not a one dimensional map.
- Forest health monitoring already a collaborative partnership of federal, state and local, so they used existing cooperative agreements, plus many internal groups. Built up from regional level.
- Science based that incorporates expert opinion.
- Top agents - mountain pine beetle, red oak decline, southern pine beetle, root diseases, gypsy moth, pine engraver beetle, fir engraver beetle, Douglas-fir beetle, spruce beetle, hardwood decline, and western pine beetle.
- They also do clusters. Can do analysis by watershed. Also watersheds most at risk, ranked across the country.
- Working on improving spatial resolution, from 1 km to 30 m (more consistent with LANDFIRE).
- Writing software tools that will help users create local risk maps on line. These locally developed maps can be aggregated across the country up to a national map.
- Dynamic as data improves so do our projections, conduct "what if" scenarios, like climate change. (Current map is based on current climate).
- 35-65% risk will be the target for action in the southern pine beetle.
- Database is available at http://ftp2.fs.fed.us/incoming/wo/fhp/risk_map (Background materials too)
- Once publicly available we will be able to compare to other assessments.
- Briefings will be conducted on Hill before the appropriations hearings.

["Biomass, Alternative Energy Developments"](#)

[Bryce Stokes, R&D](#)

- Woody Biomass Sources - small-diameter trees, forest residues, clearings and conversions of timberland, wastes, production. All kinds of wood.
- Wood Biomass Uses – bio-power (electricity, heat and cooling, conversion in terms of combustion or syngas or liquid fuels), bio-fuels (ethanol/biobutanol), bio-diesel, methanol
- Venn Diagram - energy (renewable, secure, sustainable), economy (costs, rural development, global competition), and environment (climate change, stand function, sustainability). Intersection is Biomass management and use.
- Oil dependence is only 1 part. Baseline domestic supply is bottoming out, we are importing more. Resources for the Future 2007; <http://www.rff.org/> Answers include increasing fuel efficiency, increasing production, and developing alternatives, both clean and renewable.
- It takes 8 billion gallons of gas for cars to idle at stoplight
- Gallon of gas emits 25 lbs of CO₂ equivalent compared to 4 lbs from ethanol.
- \$309 billion of oil imports now.

- There is no shortage of Biomass Policy
 - Woody biomass utilization group is a staff level working group across agencies.
 - National biomass initiative has approach for bio-fuels, bio-power, and bio-products.
 - President's initiative calls for cellulosic ethanol. Aspen Institute calls for 100 billion gallons of it by 2050.
 - Times 25 project calls for wind, solar and bio-fuels - 25% energy displaced by alternative energy by 2050.
 - '02 farm bill energy title had a lot of authority, not much appropriated.
- Bio-fuels - corn, animal fats and oils, and cellulosic. The 3rd is the plant, not the fruit, which is agriculture and forestry together (America's working lands). Ethanol goal is \$1.07 per gallon, which would make us a bio-fuels economy. You can make a lot of different things in wood conversion in a bio-refinery.
- Bio-fuels driven by high price of gas, a \$.51 per gallon tax credit, 54 per gallon import duty.
- Barriers to bio-economy - risk adversity (financiers want reliable supply, better returns, long-term commitment, and supporting policy, high start-up costs are a big gamble and don't know if it's over 25 or 30 years).
- Feedstock issues - sustainability, food/fiber versus fuel, costs, environment
- We have no cellulosic conversion plant in the US today. 1 in Canada, 1 in Europe.

["The Farm Bill"](#)

[Steve Hart](#), *Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs*

- FS and NRCS initiative on ecosystem services. It has been vetted through NRE, OK'd by the secretary. Additional vetting going on now.
- Will be released next week, January 31.
- Proposal has 2 parts.
 - First includes recasting some existing programs for private land owners, making them more competitive and shifting focus from aesthetic/good things to services. We hope state foresters will cost share. Will help landowners produce values. Much will focus on NRCS.
 - Second part is what the government can do to help ecosystem markets be established. Developing uniform standards. Would like standards of trade to be the US developed mea rues.
- Fostering market confidence is creating board to oversee how markets function. Providing market oversight so we can have confidence in market.
- Unknown whether we will have a specific proposal for the carbon market. Also don't know role of FS land in market.

[“Recreation Issues”](#)

[Jim Bedwell](#), **Director of Recreation and Heritage Resources**

- Context - opposition is stitching these issues together and creating a big story: travel management, fees, and rec site facility master planning. People are saying that the 3 work together to keep people out of the woods. As we continue to give messages on all of these we emphasize that we have a commitment to recreation in the FS. Recreation and ecological restoration are the 2 pillars of the FS future.
- Recreation, 193 million acres, 367 million visitors, our strongest link to the public, the way people get to know us and gain attachments to lands. We need to build awareness and understanding with our partners' help.
- A few years ago the rec leadership developed a sustainable funding model. Appropriations, fee retention (REA and also outfitters and guides, not yet special use fees), partnerships and volunteers, and savings and efficiencies. The executive leadership team bought agreed. We want to deliver quality recreation opportunities to the American public because we know it delivers a lot of benefits.
- Recreation Site Facility Master planning is a key strategic piece in that sustainable funding model oriented toward efficiencies.
 - It's been framed around there's not enough money, what can we shut down, as opposed to matching the facilities and funding to current needs. Meant to be a broad strategic document that helps us over time, a preliminary look at what we would close at what level.
 - Criticism has come in the collision of short term budgets, where it looks short term. Another criticism is black box.
 - Need to get the right messages out, deliver the findings. Among the critics there are a lot of fans - issue is more the black box.
 - Pasquantino (OMB) made \$93 million in fee receipts available to implement the plans because it's logical, transparent, and makes sense.
 - Chief will make an announcement this Friday. Convening a national team to review the public participation part, the terminology, how we deliver messages, how and at what stages we involve the public. Tricky situation because different stages across the country. 5-7 members, 2 externals, Forest Supervisor, Deputy, communications director, regional rec director, 2 months and then action plan within another month.
 - We've been encouraging a deadline by the end of the year. You may proceed with analysis, inventory, and public participation if it's in line with Holtrop's direction letter. Working on messaging about how much of a decision document it is.
- REA - another key part of model.

- Legislative proposal this year to pursue fee retention on rec residences and marinas and the like but that did not get carried forward.
- Large partners like NFRA and National Ski association are interested in helping us. They have some issues about how money would be used, but overall support is good.
- In terms of fees for the facilities we operate this is a big year.
- Recreation resource advisory committees are just coming on line. Critical that we start well, explain our whole budget picture. Critical that we have an explanation for our considerations for pricing. Social equity.
- Communications. Price Waterhouse Coopers employed to help us as well. Coming out soon.
- Would like communicators to get involved in the rate of change/implementation. We've been holding off on new fees for years because of trying to get permanent authority and RACs formed. Big backlog. What will the message be? Phase in? Don't just walk in to a tidal wave.
- We won the Wallace case regarding authority to collect fees in high impact areas in R3 last week, on appeal. Looking at getting the decision published. Western Slope association had used this as a test case. DOJ Arizona issued a press release on it yesterday.
- America the Beautiful pass is in there too. Benefits the frequent user, offering seamless opportunity on 5 federal agency lands. Issue now is with concessionaires accepting it.
- Travel management - 4 forests completed maps last year. The easy ones. Expect more this year, and expect a lot of public involvement. The organized motorized and non motorized communities have really taken this to heart, informing their users, hosting workshops. Some are considering this another dot in the story of restricting use.

"Foundational Principles"

"A Safety Culture for the 21st Century"

Sherry Wagner, *Director of Public and Government Relations, R-9*

- Purpose is to create a "Desirable Safety Culture for the 21st Century" by examining closely ingrained cultural factors that are contributing to our safety results.
- Contractor is Dialogos out of Massachusetts, known for their pioneering work in dialogue, organizational learning, and collective leadership.
- Phase one is underway: interviewing members of the national leadership team and conducting three field dialogue sessions to help build a map of our culture, which will be shared at the April NLT meeting (half day scheduled).
- Field meetings will be in Nevada City, CA, 2/28-3/1; Asheville, NC, 3/13-14; and Missoula, MT, 3/27-28.

- After the NLT meeting they will conduct dialogue sessions across the whole organization. It's important to realize that the dialogues will be very broad, about how our culture works.

Terri Gates, Director of Public Affairs, R-2

- The idea: if we had foundational principles written down they could guide our decisions in things like business operations. Similar to fire doctrine (same contractor).
- Feb 12-16 in Utah, 36 people working in small groups who will then come back together. Letter from Dale and Gail going out to invite participants. People who can think at big level, representative of agency, representative geographically.
- Still need to figure out how to move them in to agency after they take it back to the National Leadership Team.
- They will produce a document and a videotape

Presentations Specific to Legislative Affairs/Communications

Tim DeCoster

Acting Chief and Staff, Director of Legislative Affairs

- Exciting Times. Some issues are the same.
- Clean out old e-mails!
- Dale is still very much hard at work, continuing to work and build relationships. Met this AM with Udall on the Hill. Met with Walden too on restoration.
- Need to be more proactive and engaging in telling our story. This was a theme from the National leadership Team. Make the best case we can for what we can do. Be outwardly focused and look at how things appear to other people. i.e. saying it will make our lives simpler is not a great idea. How would we package this if it was a subject we wanted to draw attention to? We've focused on public in general, congress and media. Sally has expanded to partnership organizations, other non-traditional partners and academics. Broaden our base of understanding and support.
- As we go in to next congress position FS as a source of credible information and perspective on the hill. There was a time when we were seen that way, and a time when we were below it. Avoid spins. Will need to establish a lot of new relationships.
- Will be tracking house science committee from now on. Will have first hearing on Danato paper (University of Oregon scientist looking at reforestation after burns).
- Added Public Works too. They have 2 subcommittees on global climate change, public and private response. Pelosi also appointed a select committee.

- While we do want to be appropriately coordinated and consistent we don't want people to have to wait. If you need more information ask for it.

Stana Federighi

Director, Office of Communications

- Office of communications organization - moved FACA and committee management to Office of Regulatory and Management Services. Looking at a new home for visitor center (recreation or conservation education). MOU or shared services arrangement are possibilities. Also would like to use it for more conservation education and for reaching the next generation.
- Working on setting up new external affairs organization. Filling positions in ladders to get people from the field.
- Vision - 1 year ago directors asked for new vision. 3 meetings, 4 conference calls, presentation at national PA meeting, brochure shared at the National Leadership Team meeting. Now final. All directors signed it.
- Stana will be visiting with Deputy Chiefs and staffs to describe how Office of communications is changing and how they will provide services.
- Compelling case initiative came from the National Leadership Team. The task has been given to Tim DeCoster as acting Chief of Staff. James Malone, Presidential Management Fellow in the Chief's office, is working with them on messages.
- Joel says assume positive intent. St Benedict - sharing in a caring environment. I'm all about service.
- Just hired Shelly Gardner from PSW. Also hired Alita Harrington from S&PF. Pleased to say a lot of turnover and people are getting a lot of field experiences.
- Priorities for the upcoming year: competitive sourcing, developing actions to go with the communications vision and disseminating it to the rest of the organization, continuing to work with the steering committee on a compelling case and working to be integrated and seamless with legislative affairs and media.

More on Compelling Case

Steve Hart -

- Compelling case initiative started with concerns at NLT about appropriations. What has evolved is much broader and potentially much more effective. Part of the delivery of a coordinated, consistent, communications to the hill. The FS is a good investment for scarce federal resources. Originally a skeptic but it's an idea that has considerable merit - look beyond traditional matrix of how we think about communications. Board rooms, NGOs,...

Joe Walsh -

- We're all learning that today is not yesterday in the way we deal with the media. It's about reaching out. In the past we didn't respond because there was a belief that we would just stir the bowl and make it worse. If we get out ahead it's even better. Key part of that is keeping it within ourselves until we get to the point of the announcement. Likes the audio bridge where everyone gets answers at the same time. Stay in touch with media/editorial boards.

Allison Stewart -

- Stay grounded in the field. That's where we need to build our compelling case. She will keep in touch with us.

Q – R10 has had a lot of success on the internet and making short DVDs with images that they hand to staffers on the hill.

A – Agree that we have to look at new technologies and new ways of communicating.

Q: Do some research on the non-traditional partners without insulting the traditional ones.

A: Agree. We have been unsuccessfully engaged for several months with OMB, looking for a way to remove voluntary public surveys from oversight. Research and Recreation are very interested too. Changes in our internal process will hopefully improve our success with the OMB clearance. Part of the law gives each agency a budget for the amount of survey work can they do.

Q - Recreation forums.

A – They are not Forest Service forums; 2 external groups are running them to help us gain info about we can better serve youth and get kids back in the woods, and come up with programs that will meet their needs (American Recreation Coalition, Crandall). The 5 forums will be about access to national forests. In response to concerns raised Tim will gather recreation and partnership groups to see if we need to prepare messages. Find the right person with the right connection to deliver the message.

“Competitive Sourcing Update”

Jennifer Plyler, Policy Analysis and Ed Nesselroad, co-leader of MEO team and Director of Public and Governmental Relations in R-1

- Competition closed January 12, more than 1 bidder but can't disclose number.
- Formidable competition. 3 of the 4 who presented at the pre-bid conference in November were General Data, Equint, and the advertising company from Chevy – don't know if they placed bids.
- Prospectus showed competitive range of \$40 to \$52 million over 5 years for web posting, photography, and digital image library.
- MEO proposal had to show an organization that was big enough to do the work, nimble and adaptive over 5 years, represents the Forest Service well, and is competitive enough to win.

- There were no government services or equipment provided. Outsider bidders would have equipment but the MEO had to start from scratch. They had to determine cost for office furniture, computers, and everything else.
- Submittal was in excess of 500 pages, covering how they would do the work and what it would cost.
- This is low price competition (technically acceptable first), not best value like Information Technology. Not a Cadillac digital library.
- Source selection evaluation board starts next Tuesday. Announcement will be made the later part of April.
- We will have a centralized provider of services with costs paid off the top, plus a separate continuing government activity function. Office of Communications was told to streamline but they will need to add people for the continuing government activity.
- Team being assembled now to look at CGA - Pam Jakes, Donovan Albert, Carl Perry, Deb Dietzman, Stephanie Johanson, Stana Federighi, Jennifer Plyler, and Mary Jane Senter; they will meet the last week of February. Send ideas to them. Rough draft of organization chart was provided by the PWS team but nothing is in stone. CGA would manage performance AND governance of web. For instance PWS has approval process for web and photography - who will do it? CGA will be finalized post decision.
- First performance period starts Oct 1 (April until October is a transition period).
- Currently verifying the database; making sure percentages are accurate and all appropriate people are included. After the list is complete there will be a decision about whom the affected employees are (will not be everyone on the list). Will make affected employees have the opportunity to apply for jobs ("first right of refusal"). Don't know yet about buyouts.

Q - Has decision been made yet to pull money off the top?

A - Hank said we need to move forward. No specifics on how dollars will be allocated. We will not be saving money.

Q - People affected more than 50% would like to know role between April and October.

A - There will be a transition period between date of announcement of the winning bid (April) and beginning of performance period. People will remain in current jobs during the transition.

Q - Who will be affected?

A - 133 FTEs total but the actual number of people will be a lot less. Post announcement they will start having calls with the affected employees.

"Forest Service Internet Portal Governance"

Justin Thorton e-government office, Donnavan Albert, Office of Communications, (also present Joan Golden, Associate CIO, and John King, USDA)

Portal

- web site designed for users, organizationally consistent, easy to build and keep fresh
- internet and intranet
- One "site" instead of the multitude of web pages that we have now, FS.usda.gov. Will replace fs.fed.us and everything under it. Everyone will have their own area on the domain. (will be able to use an alias so you can keep your same mailing address, if desired).
 - Consistent branding,
 - site-wide navigation,
 - user-friendly categories,
 - content contribution sans HTML,
 - USDA style guide compliant,
 - Users can put in their own content if they are given access
- To the user it will look like a website. Instead of one person needing to do maintenance on each one it will come from one place.
- Will have google search (only the engine, not the public access for the intranet)
- Currently finalizing production tools and beginning to migrate sites. Looking at implications for material and people.
- Individuals will be able to publish and take down material (when given authority).

Portal Creation

- FS community feeds into to governance body, who feeds requirements to developers/ administrations and contributors, who build content on website, which goes to web customers.
- The OC service provider (SP) will supply development/administration resources to maintain the FS portal and contributor support resources to upload content (the muscle).
- Governance must be established to appoint authors, and to direct the new SP (the brains).
- SP support team can upload, verify, possibly author. Governance will be all FS.
- Content is organized into meaningful categories so it can be assigned to and developed by subject matter experts throughout the agency.
- Because these content categories do not align directly to the FS Organization, governance boards comprised of categorical authorities must be identified to take ownership of the new site and its contents.

Authorities

- Each level of the Authority has direct responsibility for pages on the FS web site - develop and adjudicate business requirement and user needs, determine page content types, navigation, and "look and feel" specification for developers, determine contribution policies, designate content contributors, evaluate feedback

- Authorities can identify and charter sub-authorities, Determine what content areas and pages are in scope for the sub-authority, determine the membership the sub-a will need in order to function effectively, specify the "degrees of freedom" of the sub-authority
- FS Web Content Authority will have sub-authorities in recreation, science and research, unit, education. Likely to charter responsibility for each forest too.
- Service provider will do the migration.
- Inciweb on it's own.
- If you're working on a web site now concentrate on getting the data together.
- Content contributors -create and publish content as directed by content authority and provide feedback about site's ability to meet business requirements and meet user requirements.
- New authorities established if requirements of users who come to site vary significantly.
- Higher authorities can claim as much "real estate" as they want.
- Portal is designed to allow immediate incorporation of new applications.
- PWS picks up when you move content to the web.

Summary

- Contributors (authors, editors, and publisher) author content, edit contributions, and approve and publish
- Content authorities- assign contributors and workflow; specify page design and rules, charter sub-authorities
- Developers and administrators develop and administer site (IRM and OC SP), manage environment (IRM and USDA ESS)
- 508 - accessible, could be in alternative format (i.e. call someone to get this in a diff format).
- PWS says be done with migration within 18 months.
- For the intranet, employee is major customer. What do we need to do to provide employee with easily accessible info.
- Governing body will decide when public can touch new system.
- Feedback all along the way.
- This calls for a culture change. Having templates will mean that we will not have total creative freedom. Big organizations want to concentrate energy toward content and not design. Not an easy transition.
- 80% of system and governance requirements will be done by October. Phase-in begins in October and runs for 4 months. 7 1/2 months for performance. So basically 1 year for walk-over. Will start incorporating sites in to this environment now. Part of the migration process includes extensive interviewing to make sure the new system meets customer needs.

[“Technology and Communications”.](#)

[Karl Perry and Steve Hart](#)

- The list of issues that fell on the cutting room floor when planning this meeting will be the subject of net meeting presentations: Jim Reeves on science synthesis (a new compendium of known science on particular subjects like reforestation, fire, insects and disease - roll out coming soon), startling information from law enforcement regarding border and drug issues, litigation and current guidance from program areas, budget roll-out follow-up meeting, farm bill (next week), Rob on ecosystem services, roadless update and clarification and legislative proposal related to secure rural schools.
- Conceivably similar use after mark-ups.
- Terry Gross (NA) has done analysis of savings from using net meetings.
- In mid-Feb all regions, stations and area will have videoconference equipment.
- For my meeting, Horizon is the contractor. It's called Web conferencing. They also have analysis of net versus face to face.
 - You can make reservations for a net conference (full time support on line) or instant net meeting (24-7, no assistance).
 - Schedule and manage through Microsoft outlook. Will pull addresses right from our address books.
 - Up to 1000 can participate without special accommodations, can record screen and audio, can also poll.
 - Verizon has people responsible for training us in how to use the format for roll-outs, press releases, or meetings. For technical support call 800-857-8777 (Emily).
 - Log on to web site and dial on to conference call. Gives a few more options than same time, which we will lose when we move to outlook.
 - EU support - administrative privileges to install live meeting plug-ins. It'll take about 5 minutes. Right now it's not supported. Kristi Ewing at IRM gives authorization codes. If you are not going to be a leader you won't need a plug-in.
 - Shows who's on telephone line and who's on the website.
- RSS is “Really simple syndication.”
 - fsweb.r5.fs.fed.us/unit/pac/newsmedia shows PAC- public affairs and communications media blog.
 - RSS requires a feed to be created in an XML file and for visitors to have a read program.
 - Will help us work better because we will do more communicating than we've done before.

Closing

- Commitment to try early warnings.

- Chief asked for follow-up with various outreach opportunities regarding the planning rule CE. Not scorecard but just understanding what's going on.
- Also need to be doing something on the WO/RO reorganization. There will be a chief's letter. There will be no press release but the public will hear about it.
- Make sure we're ready to quell misinformation. We will need to regroup quickly. We are all sensors and advisors, as well as representatives. In times of rapid change it's that much more important for us to fulfill that role. Actively engage with Forest Supervisors and the public. We are well appreciated by leadership and Chief's office.

Miscellaneous

- "It's beyond me" means don't ask.
- Tim is working on a calendar of upcoming announcements.
- Christine is working on a change management communications plan with Linda Feldmann.
- Drop Thiery Curtis a note about how to define external outreach at national level, GS 12/13.
- Renewed interest in getting field people in for WO details and in getting their people out for field assignments.
- Be sure to identify spokespeople on issues (i.e. rec fee); don't let chance provide the spokesperson. Consistent message. WO media will not accept forests bypassing ROs.
- Will work to get PA on safety reviews.
- AARP is the world's largest circulated magazine
- 20 state foresters in the northeast have agreed on media campaign on forest invasives. Gina Childs is the lead.
- Northern research station reorganizing based on science themes.
- New GS 13 collaboration position in R3 – Cathy Schmidlin.
- R8 Catastrophic event plan is on the web - has a strong communications component.
- OSHA just finished investigation on death of ISO employee. 6 findings, 4 for ISO and 2 for rest of FS.
- Big picture look at R10, looking at 30% cut over 3 years in program delivery.
- Linda Feldmann is working with Elle Page of CI International on change. Units are naming change teams who will attend a session. Randy's team is another major one, as is the foundational principles effort.
- Northeastern Area did a study on the loss of forests - when someone dies and it's left to heirs they often sell it. AARP will do an article next month on it.