

# Conference

THE FUTURE OF

OUR PUBLIC LANDS:

A Symposium on  
Federal Land Policy



# Report

A Conference Report on

**THE FUTURE OF OUR  
PUBLIC LANDS:**

A Symposium on Federal Land Policy

John C. Freemuth, Ph.D.  
Senior Fellow  
The Andrus Center for Public Policy

Sponsored by:



Cecil D. Andrus  
Chairman

## *Acknowledgments*

Our special thanks go to the keynote speakers—Assistant Secretary Bob Armstrong, Chief Dombeck, Director Stanton, and Director Shea—for their thoughtful and candid presentations and for their willingness to make the long trip from Washington, D.C. and to spend the entire day speaking, listening, and answering questions.

We appreciate also our well-informed panelists, whose spontaneous and open responses to the presentations played a major role in the success of the conference: Bob Munson, Jim English, Jaime Pinkham, Laura Skaer, Carl Pope, and Brad Little.

Without our generous sponsors, the conference would not have been possible. Thanks are very much in order for all of them: American Conservation Association, American Forest and Paper Association, Elam & Burke, Hornocker Wildlife Institute, Idaho Association of Counties, Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Intermountain Forest Industries Association, Fred Meyer, Inc., National Parks and Conservation Association, Northwest Mining Association, Potlatch Corporation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, J. R. Simplot Company, The Sierra Club, and Trout Unlimited.



Cecil D. Andrus  
Chairman  
Andrus Center for Public Policy

The analysis presented in this report is that of the author and does not reflect the official position of any federal official or invited guest who spoke at the symposium.

Copies of the conference report are available for \$7.50 each. Copies of the transcript of the entire conference are also available for \$22.50 each. Contact:

The Andrus Center for Public Policy  
P.O. Box 852  
Boise, Idaho 83701  
208/385-4218 • FAX 208/385-4208

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## ***Foreword***

*By Cecil D. Andrus, Chairman, The Andrus Center for Public Policy, Former Governor of Idaho and U.S. Secretary of Interior.*

There is no more contentious or important issue in the west today than how the federal government manages the land that we all own. The conflict over competing uses and competing visions for how the public land ought to be managed has become a daily fact of life in the west.

The only way I know to begin to resolve a problem of this magnitude is to bring all the players into one room and begin a serious, civil, comprehensive discussion. Accordingly, for the first time in anyone's memory, the directors of three of the largest federal agencies, which jointly control one-third of the land in the lower 48, came together for a public consideration of the issues surrounding federal land management. Following their presentations, representatives from six of the groups concerned with using and/or protecting federal lands responded. They represented timber, livestock, and mining industries, Native Americans, environmentalists, and sportsmen. The conference drew a sellout audience, and several hundred were turned away for lack of space.

We plan to bring the same players together in the spring of 1999 to revisit the goals and conclusions that emerged from this conference and to look at the progress that has been made toward those goals or the additional problems that have arisen. The following conference report, prepared by Dr. John Freemuth, Senior Fellow at the Andrus Center, will serve as the starting point for that second conference on the future of our public lands.

It is the hope of the Andrus Center that these conferences will not only articulate the differing visions of how we want to treat our public lands but will also bring forward specific solutions to the escalating conflicts.

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**Conference Report:**  
**THE FUTURE OF OUR  
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Introduction**

On February 11, 1998, the Andrus Center for Public Policy convened *The Future of Our Public Lands: A Symposium on Federal Land Policy*. The leaders of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and National Park Service (NPS) were invited to Boise to address conference attendees and then respond to questions and observations from a panel representing various groups interested in land management and from the audience. BLM Director Pat Shea, USFS Chief Mike Dombeck, and NPS Director Bob Stanton were urged, before the conference, to focus their remarks on three questions:

- 1) What is the current status of land policy in your bureau?
- 2) In what direction would you like to move that policy?
- 3) What would you need to achieve that goal?

This paper will focus its discussion on one federal bureau at a time, starting with the USFS. The three keynoters had a number of common themes in their presentations: for example, their support of “collaboration” in reaching land policy decisions. The areas of common discussion will be presented in detail where they first appeared during the day.

This report will provide momentum for next year’s conference by highlighting key points of discussion that need to be evaluated in a year’s time. Conference attendees will also be asked, through a mail-in card, to help set next year’s agenda by offering their comments on what ought to be evaluated at next year’s event. These suggestions will help us ensure that the next conference moves the discussion into more specific issues of federal land policy.



## I. THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Chief Dombeck's early remarks were centered on the theme of "change," suggesting that there is something about current forest policy arrangements that needs to be altered. The word "change" implies that American society views the national forest system in new ways and is moving forest policy toward new and specific policy proposals. For example, in discussing his recent policy on roads, the chief mentioned that "shifting public demands, and...social and ecological values of roadless areas" appear to be the reasons for the new policy (Future 5).

The fundamental purpose of the national forests has frayed, and people no longer agree about the purposes of the national forests. The turn-of-the-century understanding that forests were to be *used* for the good of society, later codified in the 1960s phrase "multiple use," no longer exists. A number of Americans are now likely to argue that forests are to be protected, not used, for the good of society though many would argue that recreation is a "use" that should be given priority. It is resource extraction activities that are to be curtailed to a great degree under this view. It is clear that we disagree on which uses of the forests should be emphasized, and it is in this environment that forest policy is made today.

Chief Dombeck focused on four policy areas that suggest the direction in which he wishes to move bureau policy: watershed health, sustainable forest management, roadless area management, and responses to increasing recreation demand. Taken together, these four areas suggest a policy direction that moves away from the historic dominance of timber harvesting. The Chief also suggested that this direction needs public approval: "The concern for natural

***"It's imperative that we align our approach to what the public needs and supports."***

resources is linked to economic, cultural and social values. It's imperative that we align our approach to what the public needs and supports" (Future 4). The General Accounting Office (GAO) confirmed the Chief's observation when it noted in its 1996 report, *Forest Service Decision-Making*, that there is an "ongoing shift in emphasis under the agency's broad multiple-use and sustained yield mandate from consumption (primarily producing timber) to conservation (primarily sustaining wildlife and fish)" (52). Yet it remains unclear to many affected interests whether such a change has ever been specifically announced as policy. A case can be made that it ought to be announced in order for the American public to have the debate that we may need over the direction of forest policy.

It is also obvious that there is a tension between the needs of wildlife and fish and the growing demands of recreation users. Still, some attendees suggested that it might be well for the chief to send some signal about the USFS's new emphasis on recreation. One idea that was mentioned is for the chief to use some of his discretionary budget authority to enhance recreation at a unit already designated with recreation as a primary purpose, such as the Sawtooth National Recreation Area here in Idaho.

In answering the third question asked of each of the keynoters, the chief argued that, in order to achieve success for the four policies he mentioned, the USFS needs and must gain public acceptance. How will such support be achieved? Here we are at the crux of the chief's address to the symposium. In order to gain public acceptance, the chief stressed collaboration and partnerships, accountability, and science.

## COLLABORATION

"Collaboration" has become a buzzword in natural resource policy in the 1990s. There is no agreed-upon definition of the term, though the chief referred to forming "coalitions" among communities, elected officials, conservationists, and industry to work on common goals. He provided several examples of what he had in mind, and one was restoring the health of the elk herd in the Clearwater drainage. Yet serious



questions remain about collaboration, and we hope we might have clearer answers to some of these questions when the symposium convenes this time next year. Those questions are conceived by this report as follows:

***What is the role of the federal land management bureaus?***

The nature of that role is open to question, and defining it clearly is one of the challenges of developing a collaborative model. Already, one collaborative model, the Quincy Library Group, has been criticized because of its failure to involve the USFS and national environmental groups in its deliberations.

***“The trick here is to determine how a collaborative group and process become accepted as the appropriate forum for decision-making.”***

***What level of federal official should be involved?***

Ideally, the appropriate level is the *supervisor* of a national forest and the *resource area manager* for Bureau of Land Management lands. The report says “ideally” because collaborative processes often spring up in a way that makes it hard to dictate what federal official ought to be involved. Yet for any collaborative process of significance to happen, it would seem that officials at this level are appropriate. Those officials must be delegated enough authority to be the federal decision-maker of record in any collaborative process. It is difficult to envision much success in collaboration if higher officials overrule these federal officials. Director Shea, in an answer to a question on collaboration, remarked, “Federal statutes are the highest standards we can achieve. Obviously, there are going to be times when we are going to have to pull back from that because our partners at the local level are not fulfilling that standard” (Future 20).

***What interests are represented in a collaborative process on federal lands?***

It seems simplistic to say all interests must be represented, but that is the case. One of the common objections to some collaborative efforts is that only local interests are supposed to be represented, clearly a recipe for failure. Interests represented by national groups must have the opportunity to have seats at any collaborative table. The trick here is to determine how a collaborative group and process become

accepted as the appropriate forum for decision-making. One way would be for the Secretary of Agriculture and/or the Secretary of Interior to “accept” a current collaborative group as legitimate. It is unclear whether such a group exists currently though the RAC or Resource Advisory Council might have merit for a BLM collaborative effort. A second way would be for a group to create itself and apply to the relevant Secretary for authorization. Such a group should form itself based on the widest range of interests.

***Does “venue-shopping” present a problem?***

Yes. Another problem with collaboration is that many people view collaboration as simply another “venue” for policy involvement. Interests may choose to support collaboration when it suits them but seek out other forums when those forums appear likely to be more sympathetic to the group’s concerns. Thus, some penalty would seem necessary for an interest that chooses to exit a collaborative process for other forums. Yet, devising and implementing such a penalty is difficult.

***Is more control by interest groups desirable?***

One could argue that it is not. The words of James Madison are helpful here. Madison reminded us that even the majority could have a “united interest” that is “adverse to the rights of other citizens or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community” (Hamilton 78). We have no way of evaluating what comes out of any collaborative process that can tell us definitely that it is in the permanent community interest. Such a process is more likely than most, however, to approximate that interest.

***What are the legal constraints to a collaborative process?***

There are numerous federal laws that must be followed by federal bureaus. Thus bureaus are collaboratively constrained.

Also, other laws related to bureau decision-making allow citizens to bring suit for a number of reasons. The status of federal law remains a very problematic area for collaborative processes. For example, a key reason that the Quincy Library Group solution has yet to be accepted by the Senate appears to be uncertainty over existing federal law. Without some

public agreement over the desirability of keeping or changing current federal laws, collaborative processes may be limited in what they can accomplish.

***Are there limits to the geographical size of a collaborative effort?***

***How does this question relate to what is to be “collaborated” on?***

Collaboration has gained attention and interest because of “gridlock” in federal land policy. Yet, it remains unclear how large the scope of a collaborative effort can or should be. There have been small successes, but not large ones. Is it possible to collaborate on the revision of a forest plan, for example? Should a collaborative process be about the actual management of a national forest with the Forest Supervisor reporting to a collaborative body that oversees forest management?

#### SCIENCE

Another key to Chief Dombeck’s agenda is the use of “best science” in bureau decision-making. Although it is hard to imagine anyone being opposed to the use of science, its use is more problematic than first appears. First, it is a fallacy to assume that science is able to be anything more than a necessary but insufficient condition for successful policy-making. Science can inform our decisions, but it cannot make them for us. As Woodrow Wilson once remarked: “What are we for if we are to be scientifically taken care of by a small number of gentlemen who are the only men who understand the job?” (Smith 1) What has become increasingly obvious is that science has become politicized. We see more and more “advocacy science,” the use of science to support policy directions that have already been agreed upon by scientists conducting research.

***“Science can inform our decisions, but it cannot make them for us.”***

Second, the chief used his roadless policy as an example of a situation in which science was helpful. “I want to compliment the people who have hung with the Interior Columbia Basin effort because we’ve learned a tremendous amount from that effort. We’ve learned the importance of roadless areas...” (Future 4). In other words, one of the reasons for the roadless moratorium is that these areas have been substantiated by the Interior Columbia Basin process as having ecological integrity. Yet one of the proxies for

determining ecological integrity was road density, according to the Scientific Assessment for the Interior Columbia Basin project. We need to know more about the role of scientific assessment here.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Finally the chief addressed accountability. Certainly, holding our public bureaus accountable is one of the hallmarks of a democratic society. As the chief noted: “We need to improve our measures of accountability. They must be tied to the land and to land-based performance measures” (Future 4). The chief was alluding to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a little-known law that has ramifications for how all federal bureaus approach the question of accountability.

GPRA has several purposes. According to the GAO, the law “will fundamentally shift the focus of federal management and accountability from a preoccupation with staffing and activity levels to a focus on ‘outcomes’ of federal programs. Outcomes are results expressed in terms of the real difference federal programs make in people’s lives, such as the increase in real wages earned by graduates of an employment training program or a reduction in the fatality and injury rates in workplaces or on highways” (United 1-2).

GPRA also requires each federal agency to draw up a strategic plan and relate that general plan to performance plans required elsewhere in the law. In reviewing the Forest Service’s development of its draft strategic plan, GAO’s Barry T. Hill noted in the 1997 report, *The Results Act*, that USFS has “an organizational culture of indifference toward accountability” (1). The chief did not address the specifics of how USFS will become the accountable bureau he wants it to be. What will be the land-based performance measures? What will be done differently if they are not achieved?

GPRA also requires something from a federal bureau that speaks directly to the third question asked of the keynoters. The strategic plan is to contain “an identification of those key factors external to the agency and beyond its control that could significantly affect the achievement of the general goals and objectives” (5 U.S.C. 306 (a)(5)). At the second

Andrus Center conference, it would be well for attendees to hear a thorough and open accounting of the external constraints on bureau goals. One thing we may need to hear, to paraphrase Pogo, is that part of the problem may be “us” and our lack of consensus about what we desire from of public lands.

Certainly, if one views the USFS budget as a constraint, there is cause for alarm. A 1997 GAO report offered the following comparison of operations budget trends in millions of dollars for federal land management bureaus:

<i>AGENCY</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>CHANGE</i>
Corps of Engineers	\$1,681.5	\$1,739.2	3.4%
USFS	\$1,607.4	\$1,215.7	-24.4%
NPS	\$812.5	\$1,052.3	29.5%
BLM	\$666.7	\$702.1	5.3%
USFWS	\$435.9	\$557.4	27.9%

*Spending is defined as gross obligations. FY 1997 obligations are estimated.  
Source: President’s budget, FY 1987-98  
In millions of 1992 constant dollars.*

Many inferences can be drawn from the above table. One is that the USFS budget is in serious decline and that this decline has an effect on the bureau’s ability to meet its various program obligations. Considering the increases in NPS and U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service budgets, another implication is that there is a new priority for federal land policy, a priority emphasizing resource protection.

USFS funding for building roads has also declined. Chief Dombeck pointed to a drop in the roads budget from \$228 million in 1958 to \$92 million in 1996 (Future 5).

***“...the USFS budget is in serious decline and this decline has an effect on the bureau’s ability to meet its various program obligations.”***

Finally, Chief Dombeck had one more comment on the Interior Columbia Basin project. He asked those in attendance “what the alternatives are” to the project (Future 6). Actually, alternatives to current land policy arrangements

are being discussed these days. Many of them are controversial: trusts, decentralized collaboration, a new Public Land Law Review Commission, even the abolishment of one or two federal bureaus. As we convene next year to evaluate the previous year's record in federal land policy, it will be important to note whether these calls for reform are continuing or have begun to fade.



## I. THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Director Robert Stanton set out a threefold vision for NPS: protection of natural, cultural and recreational resources; increased availability of NPS programs and services; and higher efficiency of operation (Future 7). He then listed a set of priorities for achieving aspects of the overall vision. As was the case with USFS, Director Stanton cited GPRAs as the vehicle for meeting the priorities he listed. NPS, however, does have a strategic plan (1997) in place and is developing strategic plans for each unit of the park system. Readers of this report may wish to consult *The National Park Service Strategic Plan* for a comprehensive sense of where these plans might lead. For example, one of the long term goals, subsumed within the NPS Mission Goal of protecting park resources, is that “air quality in at least 50% of class I park areas improves or does not degrade from 1997 baseline conditions” (9). Another mission goal is visitor safety and enjoyment with a long-term goal that “80% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreation opportunities” (10).

This last goal relates to a more specific policy discussed by the director concerning automobile overcrowding in national parks, such as Grand Canyon and Zion. NPS is

***“Parks...play a major role in legitimizing beliefs and values and giving them currency in today’s society.”***

experimenting with a policy that would reduce automobile access to those parks (Future 39). A recent poll of Idahoans supports NPS policy in this case: 83% of the state’s residents support limiting automobile access in those two parks.

Another point brought up by Director Stanton concerns the role of the park system in American culture. “[...] values associated with parks... may be held by one group or individual but may not be widely shared by others. Parks, in

my view play a major role in legitimizing beliefs and values and giving them currency in today's society. This is particularly true of cultural parks, which include most of our historical areas, monuments, and memorials" (Future 10). The NPS can be increasingly viewed as the keeper of American mythology. Director Stanton reminded us that there is more to our park system than the large natural areas or what many refer to as the "crown jewels," known worldwide. In this sense, the NPS increasingly reflects the diversity of the American experience, and it would be valuable to hear a report from Director Stanton next year about his observations on the role of NPS in promoting multi-cultural understanding through the symbols contained in the national park system.

Director Stanton also discussed an upcoming conference on "gateway communities," those towns on the borders of many of the better-known units of the national park system. We have all come to realize that the parks and these communities have a symbiotic relationship. As NPS moves away from increasing the number of developments inside a park unit, it must rely on the gateway communities to provide key visitor services. The communities, of course, find that much of their economic success depends on being next to a well-known park. It is as if the border between the park unit and the community is both vital and non-existent, and certainly what happens on one side of the boundary affects what happens on the other side. It would be well to revisit this issue next year to see what progress has been made.

Finally, Director Stanton spoke to what may be the most important part of the NPS mission: protecting park resources. Certainly, there is debate over the proper emphasis given the NPS mission to both "conserve" and "provide enjoyment" of park resources. There are intense debates within the bureau over this balance and over what set of skills in employees would be most helpful. Director Stanton spoke to this question when he noted that more NPS employees would need advanced degrees in the future (Future 9).

To our audience, especially speaker Robert Munson, one manifestation of protecting park resources had to do with the "natural regulation" policy and the question of whether



large but incomplete ecosystems like Yellowstone can have a management policy that is heavily dependent on natural processes (Future 28). A debate rages over whether Yellowstone has too many elk and thus is overgrazed. Many observers have called for rethinking NPS wildlife policy. The history of NPS wildlife policy suggests that the bureau has sometimes made policy changes on its own, but at other times Congress has chosen to intervene. To some, political intervention and NPS sensitivity to that intervention have characterized wildlife management policy, a charge undoubtedly true. But what can or should be done about the role politics plays in the management of national parks? NPS will find it difficult, if not impossible, to insulate itself from political influence. NPS can lead, however, by presenting to Congress and the American people some of the difficulties in managing wildlife in the national parks. Such a presentation might well cause people to back up a step and see that some of these difficulties stem from the mission of the bureau.

***“...the dialogue is needed, and it must be between NPS and those it seeks to serve and respond to.”***

Regardless, the dialogue is needed, and it must be between NPS (and within the bureau) and those it seeks to serve and respond to. From this dialogue could then come both the ideas and the support for policy change. Congress is probably the appropriate forum for resolution of conflict over wildlife policy, but it is NPS that has been charged with protecting parks for future generations. Solving this puzzle is the major challenge facing NPS and other bureaus.



## I. THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Director Pat Shea listed three priorities for his tenure as BLM leader: being a good neighbor, using best science, and promoting multiple use (Future 11). He then told the audience that they should ask themselves where they will be and what they want to see in thirty years in the 264 million acres that he is responsible for as the Director of BLM (Future 11).

Posing this question allowed Director Shea to talk about demographic change in the Intermountain West. People are moving in, and they often come in contact with our open spaces, sometimes without adequate preparation.

***“...the value of the west’s federal land as open space would only increase with time.”***

Director Shea echoed the words of a later speaker, Bob Armstrong, Assistant Interior Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, when he said that the value of the west’s federal land as open space would only increase with time. Armstrong also noted that newcomers often arrive with different expectations about the uses of the federal estate: “These people are not coming to the west to homestead, to mine, or to make a living in timber or ranching” (Future 23).

Demographic change was also linked to economic change. Here, Shea’s point was that shifts were occurring in the makeup of dominant sectors of economic activity in the west. He commented:

*There has been a dramatic shift, both because of technological efficiencies that have been achieved, particularly in mining and livestock, but also because of the imperative need for developing other types of economic activities. This chart shows you that the service industry, in which I would include tourism as a main component, has had the most significant growth in terms of new jobs and new opportunities. (Future 13)*

Director Shea then stated the direction he wished to take BLM, using language similar to Chief Dombek's: "BLM's mission is to manage the public lands in a manner that accommodates multiple use of these lands while ensuring the health and productivity of the lands" (Future 12). Director Shea's other points dealt with familiar issues: employee diversity, collaboration, and use of GPRA to develop a strategic plan for BLM. That plan and the subsequent 1999 Performance Plan provide similar measures of accountability as discussed earlier in relation to NPS.

As in the case of the other two land management bureaus, there is an opportunity for the next Andrus Symposium to help focus on a key component of bureau accountability: external factors. Once again, those external factors relate directly to the third question asked of all bureau heads regarding obstacles that might interfere with the achievement of bureau goals.



## I. THE AUDIENCE AND PANEL RESPONSE

Attendees of the symposium were given two opportunities to ask questions, once after the three presentations discussed above and the other after the afternoon panel discussion by affected interests. These questions and the comments of the panelists are grouped together in this section of the report. Key topics and more general themes have been identified and emphasized.

### 1. SCIENCE

The role of science in bureau decision-making was a common concern. Here, the focus was on the meaning of “using the best science.” Pat Shea cautioned against the growing use of what might be termed “advocacy science” (Future 15), wherein science becomes a tool to further a public policy agenda, e.g. science “done” in a selective fashion in order to support pre-chosen policy goals. Bob Stanton called for more peer review as a way to determine more objectively a consensus position among scientists working on an issue with public policy ramifications. Panelist James English, President of Idaho Forest Industries, noted that “‘best science’, I think, is a mystery” (Future 28). Jamie Pinkham of the Nez Perce Tribe remarked, “I don’t think we can really define it [sustainability] with science because there are so many other things that we’re talking about today, like the social impacts Jim [English] is facing, when we try to talk about sustainable communities” (Future 30).

**“...best science’, I think, is a mystery.”**

### 2. LOCAL CONTROL

A number of people were concerned that individuals and areas economically dependent on federal lands do not have enough influence on policy decisions. All three land management speakers stressed the difficulty in balancing

local, regional, and national issues. Both Director Stanton and Director Shea spoke of the need to be good neighbors, and Shea went on to say that BLM “will not weigh in in favor of any particular individual or geographic location” (Future 16).

What remains unclear is agreement on what local control actually means. To national groups like the Sierra Club and the constituents they represent, there is a problem with local control. As Carl Pope said: “There is an anxiety that the reasons local processes are being sought is so that the majority of the people, who own the public lands and who don’t live close to most of them, will really not be represented” (Future 37).

To Pat Shea, the issue was more a “community-based decision process,” where “community” might mean those people interested enough to be directly and personally involved (Future 13). Brad Little talked more about “localized administration” of federal land policy, rather than local control, an emphasis that resembles some of the discussion of collaboration presented earlier (Future 35). Here, the key move is to localize federal decision-making as much as possible and avoid, where possible, making decisions in Washington D. C.

Localized federal decision-making led to another theme, the issue of “top down” management. Laura Skaer, executive director of the Northwest Mining Association remarked:

*We’ve got to stop this top-down command and control. Katie McGinty’s management philosophy gets imposed on the land managers at the local level where they are spinning because the law and the policy tell them one thing, and they are getting political directives to do another. (Future 37)*

The problem with this comment and others like it from all sides of the political spectrum is consistency. Not many parties interested in federal land policy are constant in their views towards decision-making. If a James Watt is the Secretary of Interior, then different interests are suddenly in favor of more “top-down” decision-making. The issue is the politicization of decisions as they move higher up the executive branch ladder.

### 3. POLICY GRIDLOCK

Here, the focus appeared to be on BLM and USFS lands. Idaho rancher Brad Little humorously remarked that federal land policy had so many players following so many different agendas that it seemed like a hockey game where the puck had become “frozen” (Future 35). Another term might be “policy gridlock.” Chief Dombek spoke of the need for more coordination in bureau decision-making. During his luncheon speech, Assistant Secretary Armstrong used the Clean Water and Watershed Restoration Initiative and the Abandoned Mine Land program as examples of “community based partnerships,” which could further collaborative problem-solving on specific issues (Future 24).

What these examples may indicate is that partnerships and collaborative problem-solving might have some ability to allow interested parties to see beyond gridlock or beyond what some have called the politics of “I must end your use to protect my use.” If they do, then we need to follow such examples closely to see whether they do bring a new perspective on policy gridlock.

Conversely, many people seem to forget that the U.S. political system was designed with a bias towards gridlock—checks and balances, separation of powers, and federalism. The design was in part based on suspicion of either a majority or minority “faction” (today we would say “interest group”) gaining control over all the levers of power. We must remember James Madison’s earlier words.

If we more or less all agree on a policy, then there will be no gridlock. But since we no longer agree on the purposes of many of the federal lands, then it should not surprise us that the natural tendency of the political system toward gridlock has kicked in. The question before us is what to do about the gridlock, especially if cooperation and partnerships turn out to be not enough.

***“...collaborative problem-solving might have some ability to allow interested parties to see beyond gridlock or beyond what some have called the politics of “I must end your use to protect my use.”***

#### 4. NATIVE AMERICANS

In another of the conference's best moments, Jamie Pinkham of the Nez Perce Tribe reminded attendees that his people had their own "in-migration map" (Future 29), a remark that underscored a perspective too often missing in discussions of federal lands.

***"Pinkham called for an 'elevated relationship' with federal bureaus, one in which tribes and bureaus could be seen more as co-managers of rather than advisors on natural resources..."***

He went on to suggest that federal land policy began with the signing of Native American treaties during the last century (Future 30). Thus, in response to a later question, Pinkham called for an "elevated relationship" with federal bureaus, one in which tribes and bureaus could be seen more as co-managers of

rather than advisors on natural resources, using as his example a recent Secretarial order on the Endangered Species Act and its relationship to the treaties (Future 45). The notion of tribes as co-managers of natural resources is an idea worth more discussion, especially given environmentalist rhetoric about the worthiness of native values towards the land.

#### 5. ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Ecosystem management is another frequently-heard term in federal land policy. Again, Chief Dombek offered it as the only option that is actively being considered today and asked symposium attendees, "What are our alternatives?" Other speakers were much more skeptical. Yet efforts to bring about ecosystem management have important parallels with an earlier time in natural resource policy. We would do well to think about the Progressive Movement for clues as to how to develop and implement a management regime that is accepted by most of American society. If the American public does not accept ecosystem management, then it will probably fail. The Progressive Era institutionalized expert-centered public land management. The federal bureau that best represented the Progressive Era in land management is the Forest Service. In the case of USFS, the expertise brought to bear on forest management questions came, not surprisingly, from the science and profession of forestry. Is ecosystem management a new version of the expertise theme

of the Conservation Movement with other sciences, ecology for example, taking the place of forestry? Does the faith in expertise and professional judgment remain at the core of ecosystem management as it did earlier?

Perhaps more important, however, is the degree to which the themes of the Conservation Movement caught the public imagination. Advocates of ecosystem management should pay close attention to that earlier time. Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of USFS, once noted, "In the long run, Forestry cannot succeed unless the people who live in and near the forest are for it and not against it" (Pinchot 17-18). The key to Pinchot's success lay not in his advocacy of professionalism and expertise but in the service of both to a democratic vision of forests and natural resources. Forests were to be managed for the good and the use of all. As the author and Professor Gregg Cawley of the University of Wyoming have argued in the *George Wright Forum*:

*The federal lands, whether as national parks, national forests, or ecosystems, are owned by the American public. But they are also places in which local communities have developed. In consequence, management decisions are as much about defining the character of those local communities as they are about defining land use practices. It would be misdirected, of course, to allow local desires to dictate national policy. However, it is not only misdirected but ultimately counterproductive to dismiss local concerns as somehow not part of the public discourse over national policy.*

*What early conservationists like Pinchot understood was that major policy shifts required developing a discourse in which scientists, professionals, local publics, and national publics could find common meanings. It was not an easy task, nor did it occur overnight. Nevertheless, conservation did, at least for a time, define a **consensus position** about the management of the federal estate. To expect that the changes implied by ecosystem management will be realized without an equally lengthy and difficult effort is to doom the project to failure. (31-32)*

We anticipate hearing concrete discussion about the success of implementing ecosystem management at next year's conference.





# '99 I. NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE

At the close of the conference, Governor Andrus gave the charge for next year's conference:

*One year from now, gentlemen, we hope you will come out here. We're going to have the paper, and we're going to sit down and ask, 'Where are we? Did we actually accomplish some of the goals of communication, cooperation and resolution that we've been talking about, or has it all been a farce? (Future 46)*

In the spirit of that charge, the report offers several key questions that we hope can be addressed and discussed next year. This year's conference attendees will be asked, through a mailing, to add to this list.

- 1) What have been successes in collaborative decision making?

Why have things worked? Why have they failed?

- 2) What is the status of the USFS roadless policy? Has the American public come to accept the policy? Why or why not?
- 3) How has the automobile access policy worked at Grand Canyon and Zion National Parks?
- 4) Does BLM have some examples of a successful "good neighbor" policy? Has it promoted more collaborative decision-making?

***"We're going to have the paper, and we're going to sit down and ask, 'Where are we? Did we actually accomplish some of the goals of communication, cooperation and resolution..."***

Let us add to these questions and return to hear the answers next year in Boise.

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