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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES?

- **Changed Conditions**
- **Different Professional Roles**
- **Impacts on Agencies**
- **Suggestions for Change**



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The Federal Role has been relatively constant



- Allocation of the public domain
- Conservation of individual resources
- Retain range of options for future generations
- Problem: Still trying to do these things in the face of changed societal goals
- Further problem: Old methods don't serve new goals well

The Federal establishment: Major Change?



- Transition from “conservation” to “sustainable management”
- Essentially the transition from “metering out” to “maintaining complex systems”
- Sustained yield to sustained system: “get what you want” to “keep the system and take what it gives you”

What is at Risk?



- Resource National Security (A component of “Environmental Security”)
- Don’t run out of resources
- Don’t fall behind other countries
- Don’t make unnecessary enemies
- Maintain a livable environment
- Support economic development

Functions Necessary to “Sustained Systems”



- **Knowledge creation** (research and outreach)
- **Regulation** (stop loss actions, level playing field)
- **Direct management** of public estate
(application of knowledge and regs to specific places)
- **Support** of state, local and private efforts
(collaboration)

Functional Problems re “Maintaining Systems”



- Most important are least funded: knowledge creation and support
- Most funded is most easily done by others: direct management
- Least understood is most critical: regulation

Natural Resources and the Environment: A Long View



- Of natural and policy processes
- For a sustainable legislative agenda
- With a high level of citizen involvement and awareness
- Of support for other national goals (economic, diplomatic, social)

Implications of the Current Situation



- **More people**, more science, more complex goals and problems
- **No more effort** in terms of budgets and numbers of people than before
- NR less central to economy
- Fewer people on the land
- Agencies less important
- Less bipartisan support for goals

What have agency professionals lost?



- Access and influence at the highest levels of policy making
- Ability to provide clear answers to questions and solutions to problems
- Unequivocal public support
- Clear message

Impacts on agencies, professionals, resources




- Resources burn while Rome fiddles (forest fire)
- Agencies lose their compass (Forest Service)
- Professions weaken even as they proliferate (Rather fight than win)
- **REDEFINE, RENEW, REFOCUS**

What Could be Done?



- Define principles for “perfect” agencies
- Develop criteria and indicators to see how closely the principles are followed
- Define gaps between real and ideal
- Integrate analyses
- Set limited goals and do incremental change



“It is time begin a comprehensive functional and legislative review. It should be bipartisan, include broad citizen involvement and be a multi-year process. Only this will insure resource national security.”

Let's Get Together and Do It.