



# Some Thoughts on...

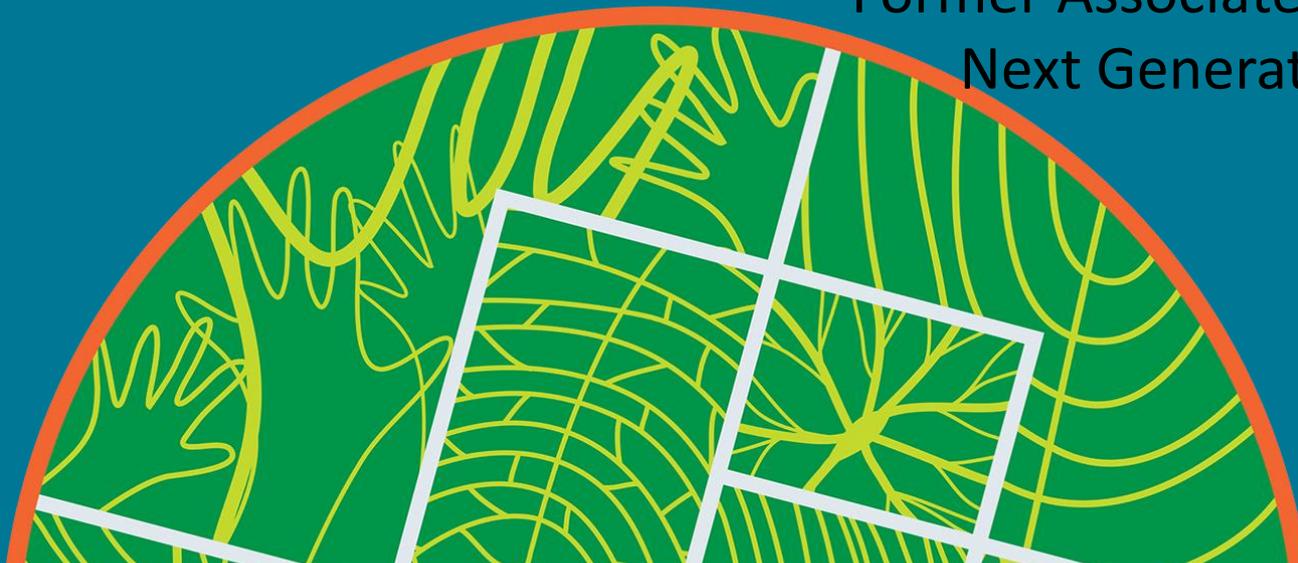
## Leading Public Forests in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Sally Collins

Rights and Resources, Fellow  
Former Associate Chief, USFS

Next Generation Leaders

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## NEXT GENERATION LEADERS

### Leadership Challenges

1. Understanding the Broader Context within which we work—*What's changing and what do we do about it*
2. Political Transitions—*Surviving and Managing with Dignity and Grace*
3. Ethical Pressures—*Maintaining Professional Integrity*

A final *Post Script*



## UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH WE WORK

### *What's changing and what do we do about it*

It is our responsibility to get outside our own “bubbles” and learn what larger forces are affecting our work and to know if what we are doing is still important and relevant.

- Challenges to Land Ownership/Tenure
- Climate Change and its effects on Forests (Invasive Species, Catastrophic Fire, Diseases and Insect Infestations, etc)
- Forest Conversion due to: Agriculture, Urban Growth, Energy Production, etc.
- Changing Public Demands on Forests
- Global Market Changes-- traditional forest products, new markets



# What Can be Done to Broaden our Thinking?

## Hundreds of Ideas:

- Professional Exchanges with other Ministries (Agriculture, Mining...)
- Professional Development/Reading/Seminars
- Sponsor Interns from Outside Government to import ideas (NGOs, private companies, World Bank, etc)
- Monthly seminars on emerging topics (certification, REDD, illegal logging, markets for ecosystem services...)
- Professional Exchanges with other countries
- Create “sister” agencies (eg CONAFOR and USFS?) to encourage joint projects
- Your thoughts?

# One Example from USFS



## Support Global Seminars like this one

- 2003-2008 USFS held 5 seminars on Global Forestry in Oaxaca, Mexico
- Nearly all 65 Senior Executives in the USFS attended
- Goal: Deepening the understanding of how US forestry fits in the global forestry world: who are we selling to, buying from; what ideas are we exporting and what ideas do we need to import?
- Topics: Trends in global trade; emergence of non-market forces: certification, payments for ecosystem services, business sustainability principles; community forestry, regulatory reforms around world

# An idea that found its time...

## Results:

- Influenced many of our long-term strategies: ecosystem services, revised planning regulations, climate policy, forest and sustainability certification
- Gave context and provided understanding to the changing US timber market and the role played by both public and private lands
- Provided time for top leaders to reflect, away from the pressures of daily life...essential for leadership
- Expanded to include senior leaders in a sister agency (agriculture), creating synergies/exchanges
- It is time for you to do something like this?



Chief Tidwell, Oaxaca 2007



## POLITICAL TRANSITIONS

### *Surviving and Managing with Dignity and Grace*

- In nearly every country of the world, ***forestry is highly political***, and political transitions can be dramatic and traumatic
- New leadership is inevitable, it will happen
- The success of your personal career and that of your staff depends upon how you manage it



# Managing a Successful Political Transition—a few secrets

- **Who is your boss?** Always remember that you work for the new leaders coming in (despite political differences you may have personally).
- **They may not trust you.** You may be perceived to be from the last administration, aligned with their ideas, particularly if a new political party comes to power. The higher in the hierarchy you are, the more this is true.
- ➔ **To overcome this:** be responsive, professional, factual, timely in acting, and never gossip.
- **Never “bash” the former leadership,** it looks like pandering and does not work. Find “safe” people to talk to about the difficulties you face with the transition, but stay focused on making it work.

# Managing a Successful Political Transition—a few secrets

- **Study the issues the new leadership is interested in** and be ready with some ideas to offer them:
  - Political leaders operate on shorter timeframes, based upon election politics. We can often advance our good ideas through them, within those timeframes. But make sure these are THEIR ideas, not yours.
- External groups can help – provide “political cover”, lobby for you for resources, carry-out some of the work, provide ideas and support. This was essential to me, personally. But has to be done very carefully.
- Despite all of this, you may need to leave. **How** you leave is VERY important:
  - Do you stay until they fire you, or
  - Do you offer your resignation?

# Managing a Successful Political Transition—a few secrets

- If you **are** the new political leader:
  - Quickly *use/trust* the career staff. If you mistrust them, you will lose valuable time in pursuing your goals.
  - Solicit the best ideas from the career staff—they have years of experience knowing what works and what might not.

Just before President Obama was elected, I took the position of the first director of a new office:  
**USDA Office of Environmental Markets**

Established to promote private markets for water quality, carbon, and biodiversity

Goal to provide additional income for private landowners in the US for conserving resources critical to society and restore key ecosystem services

## Why established (by Bush Administration...)

- We are losing valuable ecosystem services to development, in part because values like clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat have no “market value”.
- By developing these new markets, a “market signal” or value could be established, better enabling these key resources to compete with other land uses, like agriculture.
- Small markets for air, water, and biodiversity exist, but they are scattered across government agencies, inconsistently applied, and very difficult and confusing for land owners to participate in.

## Was it successful? Yes and No

- We gained great support and credibility in our first year, by doing strategically focused, quality work, efficiently delivered.
- We had incredible external support from collaborators, which gave us tremendous political capital.
- Still continues 4 years after establishment
- BUT has not provided the promise hoped for, yet.
  - Lack of political support, lack of budget
  - In a holding pattern
- Requires a new and bold interagency governance model to take these markets to scale/realize results.

## What did I learn?

I underestimated the magnitude of two issues:

- 1. The political transition in 2009**—new political appointees viewed the office as a product of the last administration. I was a career professional, not a political appointee, but was viewed as one by “the new guys”.
- 2. The difficulty of standing up a new office** (get a budget, hire staff, find office space, buy computers, set up protocols...) **and** do the work (meet with landowner groups, congressional staff, market designers, other agencies; give presentations; develop work products, etc..

**Would I do it again? Absolutely.**



## ETHICAL PRESSURES ON FOREST LEADERS

### *Maintaining Professional Integrity*

What are typical ethical challenges?

- Friends or relatives ask for privileges (jobs, permits, influence on policy)
- Potential forest license holders “be-friend” you, ask for “favors”
- *Advice* turns into *Preferential Treatment* for forest services (concessions/permits...)
- Community or business leaders ask for support for their projects/ideas—a hard one...



# Ethical Challenges

- Could be more extreme: offers of money (bribes/corruption), future jobs, other benefits (free ski passes, club memberships, meals, trips, etc). None of us are immune from it, they touch us many ways, and the higher you are in the organization, the more pressure on you.
- Examples I faced:
  - Friends asked if I would grant permits non-competitively
  - Family asked me to help influence the outcome of a land sale
  - My Forest Supervisor (boss) was caught cutting firewood without a permit on the public land (was fired).
  - Another Forest Supervisor I worked for was (falsely) accused of collusion (taking bribes) with/from timber sale contactors (and years of investigation ensued).
  - Major timber theft occurred on the forest I was managing—requiring major changes in log accountability and monitoring. Some of my staff scrutinized.

## So how do we handle the inevitable ethical challenges we face?

- Imperative that every forest agency have standards or codes of conduct and consequences for failing to adhere to them. Do you have them?
- Critical to have a “culture” of ethical behavior, established by the agency leadership (informal codes of behavior towards one another and the public--see Gifford Pinchot’s *11 Maxims*)
- YOU are the leader others will follow. You must be the leader *beyond ethical reproach*. Your staff knows that *what you do and say is what they can do and say*. Think about building your own “maxims” of behavior.



## PINCHOT'S GUIDE TO THE BEHAVIOR OF FORESTERS IN PUBLIC OFFICE (First USFS Chief, 1910)

- 1) **A public official is there to serve the public and not run them.**
- 2) Public support of acts affecting public rights is absolutely required.
- 3) **It is more trouble to consult the public than to ignore them, but that is what you are hired for.**
- 4) Find out in advance what the public will stand for. If it is right and they won't stand for it, postpone action and educate them.
- 5) Use the press first, last, and all the time if you want to reach the public.
- 6) **Get rid of an attitude of personal arrogance or pride of attainment or superior knowledge.**
- 7) **Don't try any sly, or foxy politics. A forester is not a politician.**



## PINCHOT'S GUIDE TO THE BEHAVIOR OF FORESTERS IN PUBLIC OFFICE

- 8) **Learn tact simply by being absolutely honest and sincere,** and by learning to recognize the point of view of the other man and meet him with arguments he will understand.
- 9) **Don't be afraid to give credit to someone else even when it belongs to you.**  
This is the mark of a weak man, but is the hardest lesson to learn. Encourage others to do things. You may accomplish many things through others that you can't get done on your single initiative.
- 10) **Don't be a knocker. Use persuasion rather than force, when possible. [There are] plenty of knockers to be had. Your job is to promote unity.**
- 11) **Don't make enemies unnecessarily and for trivial reasons.** If you are any good you will make plenty of them on matters of straight honesty and public policy and will need all the support you can get.

# What can we learn from all of this?

## SUMMARY

1. Develop a strategy to take your staff and/or agency out of the professional “bubble” we all operate in: stretch your staff to grow and learn. Make sure what you are working on is relevant and important in today’s world.
2. Forest agencies around the world are heavily influenced by politics, and political transitions are difficult but manageable. Plan deliberately how to manage this transition for you and your staff.
3. When faced with challenges to your personal or professional ethics, have standards to rely on and respond honestly.



## Post-Script *One...*

Balance is critical to being successful in both a professional and personal life. Manage your time to enrich your life.



### *Personal Needs/Issues*

- *aging parents*
- *young children*
- *time for sports/recreation/vacation*
- *personal difficulties—family, job, financial*





## Post-Script Two...



So....

- *treat every encounter as that special one*
- *build and sustain a strong network*
- *develop an interesting professional reputation that draws other to you*
- *stay open to new people, ideas and opportunities*



*You never know when you will meet that person who will change the course of your life and career.*