



LEADING PUBLIC FORESTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Leadership Challenges

1. Understanding the Broader Context within which we work—*What's changing and what do we do about it*
2. Ethical Pressures—*Maintaining Professional Integrity*
3. Some things I've learned...



I. 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”

- Learn what larger forces are affecting our work
- Determine if what we are doing is still important and relevant
- Study other ways to get work done—be open to new ideas
- Support the workforce to do the same, to expand the vision, encourage learning

How do we do this?

- Encourage organizational learning and growth, to give people time or pay to attend sessions (like this one), take classes, do cultural exchanges, etc.
- Allow for experimentation of new ideas as a result of this learning, understanding that not all experiments will succeed. Give people room to fail.
- Stay positive and cultivate a culture of innovation—the best, most creative and productive people will want to work for you

What do leaders too often do to stifle innovation?

- Discourage staff from doing work beyond what are tasks directly in front of them, the “urgent” but not always the most “important”.
- Discourage experimentation of new ideas by criticizing and highlighting failures, or simply not acknowledging successes.
- Cultivating a culture of fear—through judgment, shaming, etc.



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
- Leader: Chief Dale Bosworth support



Leadership lesson for me

Seminars like the one the USFS held in Oaxaca have to be orchestrated carefully

- Courageous leader who defended us but demanded from us good evidence to support them (cost evaluations etc)
- Careful relationships built with potential critics, some we brought to the seminar
- Pay-offs still endure: USFS certification of Nat Forests, 2 USDA offices on PES, collaboration/community forestry

II. Ethical Pressures on Forest Leaders



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* might be perceived giving *Preferential Treatment* for forest services (concessions/permits...) that are supposed to be ‘equitably’ decided through competition
- Community or business leaders ask for support for their projects/ideas

Ethical Challenges

Could be more extreme:

- Offers of money (bribes/corruption)
- Offers of future jobs
- Offers of other benefits (club memberships, meals, trips, etc.)

Destroys careers more than any single other issue (and lives along with...)

➔ *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.*

Ethical Challenges

- Examples I faced:
 - Friends asked if I would grant preferential treatment in permit applications
 - Family asked me to help influence the outcome of a land sale
 - My boss was caught cutting firewood without a permit on the public land (was fired).
 - Another boss I worked for was (falsely) accused of collusion (taking bribes) from a timber sale contactor (and years of investigation ensued).
 - Major timber theft occurred on the forest I was managing—requiring significant changes in log accountability and monitoring. Were the staff too lax in enforcement? Was there collusion?

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

- Critical that every forest agency has a code of conduct/ethics that clearly outline what is ok and what is not. **There must be definite consequences for failing to adhere to them.**
- Critical to have a “culture” of ethical behavior, established by the agency leadership
- YOU are the leader others will follow. You must be the leader *beyond ethical reproach. What you do and say is what they can do and say.*

III. Some things I've learned

Remember that *bad* things happen to everyone...

You don't get the promotion you want

Your advice is disregarded

You have a difficult boss

You have a staff you feel is undermining you

The measure of leadership is HOW you deal with these

Remember:

we learn the most from making mistakes

we mature as leaders when we lose

we grow the most from dealing with difficult people

Encourage People Daily

Support a young professional everyday

Find something nice to say to someone each day

Never miss writing a letter of support

Know that the kindest thing you can do is give honest critique

Lead from where you are

- Don't wait for formal leaders to act
- You can influence issues beyond your current positions, its essential that you do so

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

- aging parents
- children and pets
- time for sports/recreation/vacation



Finally...



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

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





Thank You!