

ELRC/WSLCA
2001 Joint Spring Conference
Draft Synopsis

Strengthening Partnerships In a Time of Transition

Monday, April 2, 2001

Mixed Ownership Projects: Decision-Making and Cost Sharing

Moderator: *Eric Schwaab*, Director, Maryland Fisheries Service

Panelists: *Gayle F. Gordon*, Eastern States Director, BLM

Gene Piotrowski, Director, Resource Planning, Maryland DNR

Curt Johnson, Commissioner, South Dakota Office of School and Public Lands

This session was not recorded

A Senate Perspective

Introducer: *Charlie Daniels*, Arkansas Commissioner of Public Lands

Speaker: *The Honorable Blanche Lincoln* (D-AR), Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

Senator Lincoln provided her perspectives on the challenges facing the 107th Congress and discussed briefly some of the legislation in which she has a special interest.

She views the 50/50 Party split as an opportunity to get some things done through compromise.

She believes that Arkansas is in the throes of an agricultural crisis, as are many other states; a strong agriculture policy is sorely needed and hopefully a new Farm Bill will help to reduce the number of family farms that are going out of business.

Senator Lincoln believes in fiscal responsibility and sees this as the biggest challenge facing the Congress.

She applauded the grassroots organizations for their efforts in support of CARA. Lincoln supported the 106th CARA "Light," and is now working with Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) to move 107th CARA along.

She advocates combating the national gas crises through new energy resources.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Mandates and Criteria for Land Sales, Exchanges and Purchases of Inholdings

Introducer: *Paul Thayer*, Executive Officer, California States Lands Commission

Panelists: *Ray Brady*, Lands & Realty Group Manager, BLM

Kevin Carter, Assistant Director, Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration

Michelle Chavez, New Mexico Stat Director, BLM

Ray Powell, Commissioner of Public Lands, New Mexico State Land Office

Panelists discussed the pros and cons of the Land Exchange Program.

Ray Brady explained the National Land Exchange Team's role to provide oversight for land exchanges, and to respond to Congressional, GAO, and external criticism or comments. Brady discussed two successful land exchanges that originated with agreements between Secretary Babbitt

and the Governors of Utah and Arizona; two projects slated for this year's LWCF-Ft. Eugene Wetlands and the Potomac River Project; and the Title II, Baca Bill signed and passed last year.

Michelle Chavez related a successful land exchange within the Petroglyph National Monument involving BLM, NPS and the State of New Mexico. Key to success was a commitment to working toward what is good for the public and keeping the interagency communications among the highest level managers.

Kevin Carter spoke to the opportunities and the problems associated with the land exchanges in Utah. Carter cites valuation differences, lengthy process, lack of enthusiasm, and entrenched inertia as some of the land exchange problems Utah has encountered. Carter advises to establish your own comparables, be persistent and develop a rapport with your partners. Land exchanges are very effective, but can be expensive and time consuming to make work.

Ray Powell believes person-to-person interaction is vital to the success of potential land exchanges. Simply talking with partners and ensuring all parties understand issues can make or break negotiations. Turf issues can be a problem but public land managers must not let personal issues cloud efforts to work with partners.

On the Environmental Front

Introducer: *Elinor Schwartz*, Washington Representative, WSLCA

Speaker: *The Honorable Joseph W. Westphal*, Acting Secretary of the Army

Acting Secretary Westphal discussed some of the challenges faced by the Department of Army, specifically the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). Like other Federal agencies, the COE's funding has been reduced and the workload has increased. The Congress has authorized a significant number of projects which has led the American people to expect more from the COE, yet equitable funding has not been forthcoming. The key to meeting COE's mission objectives which has evolved from flood control and road construction to a more environmental mode, is interagency cooperation and strong State partnerships.

Filling the Gap: Responses to Changing Federal Protections of Wetlands

Moderator: *Doug LaFollett*, Wisconsin Secretary of States

Panelists: *Hope Babcock*, Professor, Georgetown University Law Center

Scott Hausmann, Chair, Association of State Wetland Managers

Robert H. Wayland, Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds, EPA

Julie M. Sibbing, Wetlands Legislative Representative, National Wildlife Federation

Panelists discussed the impacts of the U.S. Supreme Court Decision on *SWANCC – Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, EPA Regulation of Discharges and Swampbuster Provisions of farm Legislation.

Hope Babcock summarized the *SWANCC* decision, stating that it struck down a 15-year old decision, in that the Corps could no longer protect wetlands premised on migratory bird habitat. It found nothing in Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act that would provide the authority for this type of regulatory jurisdiction. The decision did not rescind the Corps' authority over wetlands adjacent to navigable waters. Between 30% and 60% of the nation's wetlands were effectively deregulated by this decision. It provided no handle to protect wetlands on public lands under Section 401. Not all is lost for isolated wetlands. The Corps could redefine its definition of "adjacency" to navigable waters. The states can pass laws to protect these wetlands. NEPA, the federal Endangered Species Act and other laws could possibly be used to provide protect.

Bob Wayland asked the group for the definition of a pollutant, or water for that matter. The Corps is the premier on the ground implementing the provisions of the Clean Water Act. The farm Bill will be one of the most important pieces of legislation now being considered. Everyone should pay close attention to the farm Bill process. He questioned whether Congress could actually deal with the Clean water Act.

Julie Sibbing stated that in 1989 the federal no net wetlands loss policy was adopted, and then the government planned to gain 100,000 acres of wetlands per year for the next ten years. We no longer have a no net loss policy. Though wetland losses continue, the rate of decrease has lessened. Because of this, some type of regulation is needed. The states have been looking for some official guidance from the Corps as to what is covered under the Supreme Court decision. SWANCC has set wetlands protection 20 years backwards. New wetlands protection tools are needed. She talked about the “Clean Water Network” and its effects to encourage federal policy development and legislation. The Clean water Network will also be “working” the next farm Bill to strengthen “swampbuster” provisions and to produce a report about systems and species at risk. The Farm Bill needs money and reauthorization of the “wetlands reserve” provision. She said that the National Academy of Sciences’ wetlands mitigation report is forthcoming and we need to take note of it.

Scott Hausmann said that the Association of State Wetland Managers (www.aswm.org) is interested in policy and legislative issues that are based upon science. It has developed model wetlands legislation that would fill in the gaps made by SWANCC. He reminded the group that 75-80% of the wetlands in the U.S. (not including Alaska) are privately owned. All of the states were asked how SWANCC would effect their wetlands protection efforts, because its meaning is a legal determination, we don’t really know what its true effects will be on the ground. States that deal with more than one Corps district deal with different policies. This is all going to make the States’ jobs that much more difficult.

Federal-State Collaboration on Managing Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs), Snowmobiles and Motorized Personal Watercraft

Moderator: *Mike Fraysier*, Lands Director, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

Panelists: *Henri Bisson*, Assistant Director for Renewable Resources & Planning, BLM

Don Barry, Executive Vice President, The Wilderness Society

Derrick Crandall, President, American Recreation Coalition

Considering User Compatibility and Environmental Impact in Designating Available Trails & Access Points

Mike Fraysier talked about the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) 5000+ mile trail system. He described the recently conducted, legislatively mandated, environmental analysis of establishing an ATV trail system on state-owned land. He said that a fair amount of illegal ATV use does occur in Vermont, and that a legislative initiative is underway that would establish an ATV Council and would require an investigation of establishing an ATV trail system on state-owned land.

Henri Bisson said that OHV use on state land happens and is legitimate – “it’s fun and interesting”. He said that snowmobiling is “a hoot.” He said that there is growing public interest in these sports and their technology. He talked about BLM’s national OHV strategy, which is on the World Wide Web and the public review process associated with its development. It has five components, which he articulated. It is not a new set of regulations but it does impose top down designation and does not

impose trail establishment or closures. Cross county OHV travel is prohibited in Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), but is allowed on trails and roads if the use was allowed prior to the WSA designation. Issues addressed in the strategy include: fees, education, road inventory and recreational facilities needs.

Don Barry stated that he was proud of being responsible for throwing jet skis and snow-mobiles out of the National Park system. Snowmobiles account for 1/16 of the motor vehicle traffic but generate 65-90% of the air pollution in the National Parks. Snowmobiles can be heard 95% of the time at Old Faithful. He said that there are 140,000 miles of dedicated snowmobile trails in the U.S. and asked if we need the additional 700 miles in National Parks. He said that the EPA needs to hear from the states in terms of air pollution. Glaring non-compliance with federal environmental law exists with regard to NPS. The National Park system should be the one component of the federal land holdings where snowmobiling is prohibited. Now the snowmobile industry says that it is looking toward a cleaner, quieter technology. It is looking for regulation, not prohibition, but its written material appears to project speed, adrenaline highs, etc., why? His response to the question is that a cleaner, quieter technology is slower and provides less power. He welcomes this conversion by the industry as we have a serious pollution problem in areas of concentrated use. You can't assume that because it's a small problem now, it will remain a small problem. He also said that carrying capacity studies are needed.

Derrick Crandall characterized himself as an "unmitigated champion of outdoor recreation". He said that outdoor recreation is important and not being physically active results in a significant cost to society. It is a tension reducer and a bonding relationship builder. Public lands play a key role in providing outdoor recreational opportunities as they constitute an incredible resource. Public lands support the public's mental, physical and spiritual well being. Though there has been a significant growth over the last 15 years in snowmobile use of Yellowstone NP, he said that positive actions can be taken to temper the public's impact upon the land. Management of visitors is essential – "visitors to our public lands are not the enemy". How can this be done? Alter physical sites, such as installing boardwalks. Spread people out beyond paved roads. Manage people. "Tread Lightly". Behavior modification, peer activity guidance, pricing modifications to alter timing of visitation & levels of visitors, providing alternatives to using cars, providing story telling/interpretation/education during bus rides (value added) and limitation of visitors & segregating uses are all means to accomplish this goal. The private sector offers wonderful ideas that will enable necessary visitor management to control impacts; ex: if a visitor takes advantage of three interpretive programs, their next visit is free.

Issues in Natural Gas and Oil

Moderator: *Mindy Koch*, Chief of the Land & Mineral Services Division, Michigan DNR

Minerals Management Service Agenda: *Tom Kitsos*, Acting Director, MMS

Tom Kitsos feels that given the energy crises, the OCS program is being looked at more closely than ever before. The MMS is now in the middle of a 5-year period for leasing off shore oil and gas tracts. A sale was recently held in New Orleans where industry was enticed to participate through the use of incentives, such as reduced royalties. Another discretionary off shore oil and gas sale will include an area within the Gulf of Mexico. Florida Governor Jeb Bush has requested the MMS to cancel a sale scheduled for December 2001 which is to include tracts in the eastern Gulf of Mexico area

Kitsos also spoke of the reengineering process which MMS is undergoing to more effectively manage royalties. When completed, the program will provide better benefits to customers and could possibly save \$75 million.

Gas Demand, Supply & Production Incentives: *Albert Modiano*, Vice President, U.S. Oil & Gas Association; *Pary Shofner*, Director, Minerals Management, Oklahoma Commissioners of the Land Office

The most significant issue for the industry is ACCESS, ACCESS, ACCESS according to **Albert Modiano**.

There are questions regarding national resources vs. regional resources vs. state resources. The industry is extremely interested in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the Rocky Mountain Region.

Pary Shofner reveals that it takes 900 drilling rigs to maintain the levels of oil and gas that we have now. On the average, we can meet our demands because what is used in the winter is replenished during the summer months.

Shofner predicts retail prices for oil and gas rising dramatically; looks to coal in the future. Considering that the U.S. is using more energy than any other country, Shofner believes conservation is the key.

Gas Post Production Costs: *Lucy Querques Dennett*, Associate Director for Minerals Revenue Management, MMS; *Lee Ellen Helfrich*, Attorney, Lobel, Novins & Lamont

Associate Director Dennett provided background and status on the current rule published in 1997 covering gas transportation allowance regulations—transportation components are allowed, marketing components are not allowed. The implied covenant of a lease requires the lessee to market production at no cost to the lessor, and the costs to place production in marketable condition is not allowable. IPAA and the API challenged this rule by refuting the appropriateness of these costs. The Federal District Court ruled in favor of IPAA and API in March 2000. The MMS was allowed to amend the judgement seeking clarification of certain issues. The Justice Department filed a protective notice of appeal which was approved with the first brief due June 12.

Ms. Helfrich related that her firm has a client for which she will be filing papers supporting the Federal Government's position.

In Kind (RIK): *Lucy Querques Denett*, Associate Director for Minerals Revenue Management, MMS; *Walter Cruickshank*, Associate Director, Policy & Management Improvement, MMS

Ms. Dennett provided some background and the current status of MMS Royalty In Kind Program. As a result of the 1997 Feasibility Student Pilot RIK projects are now underway to evaluate RIK's part in royalty management process—Oil Pilot with Wyoming; Gas Pilot with Texas; Gas and Oil Pilots in the Gulf of Mexico. Other RIK activities include the refill of Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the Small Refiner Program.

The Minerals Revenue Management (MRM) has replaced the Royalty Management Program and includes a new RIK office. The MRM has responsibility for all RIK activities. Currently, RIK operations are manual processes, however, MRM is reengineering its business process and systems. New systems will provide support for taking RIK to include: accounting, accounting reconciliation, partial invoicing, knowledge of producing properties and transportation systems, and identification of significant RIK opportunities.

These systems will be incorporated with the infrastructure needed to manage an RIK program. From this, a separate oil and gas management system will be built supporting pricing and agreement structuring, production estimation and scheduling, contract administration, billing and accounting, industry-provided software packages, data warehousing to support RIK IT infrastructures.

MMS has a 3-year plan in place to advance RIK in a logical progression using the pilots' results. The RIK Road Map will help manage and evaluate the RIK pilots and other activities and streamline information reporting or change the regulations to support RIK. The Road Map focuses on Gulf of Mexico oil and gas leases because, among other considerations, the Gulf production offers RIK portfolio management with

small numbers of contracts. Also, MRM will work with Tribes if and when the Tribes express an interest in the RIK approach.

RIK will help to position the MRM as the consummate royalty manager.

Walter Cruickshank discussed Wyoming's RIK Pilot which resulted from the 1997 Feasibility Study. The Wyoming pilot was done in partnership with the State; the evaluation covers the period October 1998 through April 2000.

The Wyoming pilot accounted to nearly 30% of the Federal production in Wyoming (1.6 million barrels; \$27+ million).

Preliminary Findings of the Wyoming pilot showed that RIK is not appropriate for every property; the RIK process provides certainty in a reduced time frame; the administrative savings is difficult to quantify.

The comment period for the Wyoming pilot will close on April 27. A full report is available on mms.gov web site.

eline Safety: *Stacey Gerard*, Associate Administrator, Office of Pipeline Safety, DOT;
Suzanne TeBeau, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

Ms. Stacey Gerard addressed the mission of the Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) to ensure the safe, reliable and environmentally sound operation of the Nation's pipeline transportation system. Ms. Gerard prioritized the OPS's short term goals as follows: (1) address the requirements of the November 3rd Presidential Order to DOT—close link to legislative proposals; (2) complete a series of Integrity Management rule makings; (3) rebuild State partnerships; (4) strengthen the enforcement program; (5) expand R&D; (6) enforce operator qualification regulations; and (7) obtain resources to implement the priorities.

OPS welcome States' assistance in oversight, modification of OPS policies, damage prevention and emergency response planning, long-term agreements to improve State/OPS collaboration, and communications and accountability improvement.

Other significant activities for which OPS has responsibility include damage prevention, a national pipeline mapping system, data improvements to make more inspection data available to the public, the Common Ground Alliance, and Technical Advisory Committees.

Ms. Gerard encouraged state participation in their R&D needs assessment, helping to finalize the Natural Gas Integrity Management program, getting involved in the national consensus standards process, assisting with communications and supporting the Common Ground Alliance.

More information about OPS is available online at www.rspa.dot.gov Or www.ops.dot.gov

Suzanne TeBeau said that the chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is Don Young (R-AK); Pipeline-related bills have been referred to Committees; Chairman Young wants to provide the new Administration an opportunity to look at the issues, hear individual views on pipeline safety, and go forward.

Ms. TeBeau discussed the OPS Integrity Management Program, the energy crises' impact on our fuel supplies and the need to ensure customers of pipeline safety. She reiterated pipeline safety is paramount to not only to the Federal Government, but State and Local Governments and collaboration among the entities affected is more critical than ever.

as Natural Gas/Electricity Program: *Spencer Reid*, Senior Deputy Commissioner, Texas GLO

Spencer Reid provided an update on the Texas General Land Office Power Program that allows the Land Commissioner to contract with energy companies to convert in-kind oil and gas royalties into electricity. Electricity generated from state royalty oil and gas is sold to public schools at a discount, lowering their operating costs. The cost schools pay for this electricity, even after a discount, results

in an annual increase in revenues for the Available School Fund, which is distributed on a per capita basis annually to all independent school districts.

Currently this Program provides full electric requirements to 45 schools districts and 30 state agencies. It fully demonstrates the benefits of the government and industry working together in a cooperative and constructive manner. The Power Program has proven to be a win-win situation for Texas taxpayers and their schoolchildren.

Carbon Dioxide Valuation: *Gene Gallegos*, Attorney, Gallegos Law Firm

Gene Gallegos represents several west and Midwest States against the Oil/Gas Industry regarding the equitable valuation of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). Gallegos discussed the problems associated with using CO₂ in oil and gas production. The methodology employed uses repeated CO₂ injections to move oil into a well reservoir, thus recovering greater quantities of oil that might not be recovered otherwise from one source. Valuation of CO₂ is not easily determined. The majority is delivered “in kind;” CO₂ is considered part of the oil and gas lease in some states; and CO₂ can be recycled for repeated oil recovery efforts—all considerations which add to the complexities in valuing this commodity.

April 3, 2001

Professional Agenda for Natural Resources

Introducer: *David T. Terry*, Director, Utah School & Institutional Trust Lands Administration

Speaker: *The Honorable James V. Hansen* (R-UT), Chairman, House Resources Committee

Mr. Hansen related his perspective on various natural resources issues of interest to the House Resources Committee. He believes in the concept of multiple use of our Public Lands and fully supports public access to these Lands. He is concerned about the previous Administration's designation of large pieces of public land as National Monuments with no provisions for their maintenance. Regarding the energy crises, Mr. Hansen feels we need to look at generating power differently and would consider developing ANWR if it seems reasonable. Hansen understands that Congress has created too many obstacles to getting land exchanges accomplished, i.e. appraisals are extremely difficult and time consuming. He feels the CARA legislation should benefit the country, not private interests. Also, Hansen believes in many cases, we may have gone beyond the intent of the law when it comes to the Endangered Species Act. It is far too easy to get a species listed on the Threatened or Endangered List and much too difficult to have a species removed.

Identifying Public Land Policies: Historical and Legal Perspectives

Introducer: *Steve Planchon*, Executive Director, Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office

Speaker: *Jim Snow*, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Natural Resources Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Jim Snow kicked off the first of the U.S. Forest Service presentations with a slide show on the history of the Public Lands, discussing chronologically, the acquisition of the public lands, the congressional efforts to deal with the disposition of this land, the establishment of the U.S. Forest Service, and the creation of the BLM. Mr. Snow predicts the merger of the USFS and BLM into a Department of Natural Resources within the next 50 years.

The Challenge of Landscape-Scale Ecosystem Management

Introducer: *Bob Jenks*, Deputy Commissioner, New Mexico State Land Office

Panelists: *Harve Forsgren*, Regional Forester, Northwest

Elizabeth Estill, Regional Forester, Southern Region

Brad Powell, Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region
Ann Hanus, Director, Oregon Division of State Lands

Each panelist has implemented large-scale ecosystem management principles on the ground and discussed issues relative to their specific Regions. All emphasized the value of working with other agencies, industry and the public to achieve the best solution to managing the land.

Northwest Regional Forester **Harve Forsgren** described his view of successful landscape-scale ecosystem management as one in which knowledgeable people work together with the available resources to gain a greater understanding of the principles of sustainability.

Elizabeth Estill from the Southern Region feels that landscape-scale ecosystem management is broader than our individual abilities and that agencies must work together as a group to achieve successful ecosystems. Estill finds an increasing demand for forested lands within her region and sees future challenges related to air and water quality.

Brad Powell, the Pacific Southwest Regional Forester, feels the rapid population growth and high demand on resources in his region will be a compelling factor in the future on the Southwest.

Ann Hanus discussed Oregon's ecosystem plan specifically related to salmon habitat which includes coordinating agency programs, community-based actions, monitoring progress, and applying corrective measures for the future.

Effectively Using a \$1 Billion Budget Increase for the National Fire Plan

Moderator: *R. Bruce Mackey, Lands Steward, Washington State DNR*

Panelists: *Lyle Laverty, Associate Deputy Chief, State & Private Forestry, Coordinator, National Fire Plan*

Jack Blackwell, Regional Forester, Intermountain Region

Dale Bosworth, Regional Forester, Northern Region

Tim Hartzell, Director, Office of Wildlife Fire Coordination, BLM

Lyle Laverty and Tim Hartzell provided an overview of the National Fire Plan which resulted from a Presidential request after severe fire season of 2000. The Plan calls for actions that will reduce immediate hazards to communities in the wildland-urban interface, and will ensure that fire management, and personnel and resources are prepared for future fire conditions.

In turn, Laverty and Hartzell discussed the basic provisions for the \$1.8 billion fire budget that will be split between the Departments of Agriculture and Interior—firefighting; rehabilitation and restoration; hazardous fuel reduction; community assistance and accountability.

Jack Blackwell and Dale Bosworth, both regional foresters, shared their perspectives and suggested that there were specific actions that were important such as hiring additional personnel, training these new hires, complete restorative work through contracting, and work on the urban interface.

The Internet was used heavily during the 2000 fire season to get information to interested publics almost instantaneously. This is just one of the many tools available to get local communities involved in helping natural resources agencies to achieve healthy and safe ecosystems.

Natural Resource Challenge

Introducer: *Curt Johnson, Land Commissioner, South Dakota*

Speaker: *Phil Janik, Acting Chief, Forest Service*

Phil Janik spoke briefly about some of the upper level personnel changes that had occurred during the past few months; however, he made no predictions relative to the appointment of the new USFS Chief.

Janik sees the FS becoming more collaborative through the many opportunities for state and federal agency partnerships—mixed ownership issues, watershed management, Fire. Priorities include protecting communities, providing resource protection, use, and conservation, strengthening relationship with private landlords; eliminating a backlog of road and trail maintenance. To achieve their goals, the FS is working toward improving their performance and accountability, their customer service and some of the processes, such as contracting NEPA work.

Navigating Controversies about Exchanges and Access

Moderator: Jim Lawler, Assistant Director, Land & Minerals Management, Minnesota DNR

Panelists: Jack Craven, Director, Lands Staff, USFS
Vaughn Stokes, Engineering Staff, USFS
Bob Jacobs, Regional Forester, Eastern Region
Ellie Towns, Regional Forester, Southwestern Region

Jack Craven described some lessons learned from GAO/IG Reports on Land Exchanges. He advises principles involved in land exchanges to remember that public land does have value and to pay attention to the dollar value; to ensure there are no hidden agendas among those involved; to know that the public will be interested in the outcome; and to be patient.

Vaughn Stokes talked about the proposed Roadless Rule which was published in January. He discussed the rule's exceptions and policy objectives for a safe road system that is responsive to the public's needs.

Bob Jacobs and Ellie Towns, both Regional Foresters, shared their experiences and problems associated with land exchanges and access in their regions. Regarding access, Jacobs reminds that the public's interest must be served and that reasonable access can't be denied. He encourages the public to investigate other sources for access before coming to the FS. He also feels the land exchange process is too lengthy and difficult. Towns suggests that you can't manage what you don't own. She said managers need to use common sense solutions to deal with issues important to all owners (public and private). She reiterated the need for and importance of face to face communications.

Revolutionizing Ways to Capture and Use Public Land Information

Moderator: Mike Paus, District Office Administrator, Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands

Panelists: Fred Norbury, Director, Ecosystem Management Coordination, USFS
Rick Cables, Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region

Fred Norbury piqued interest in the USFS Natural Resource Information System with his power point presentation about the system's evolution, problems, solutions, and benefits for State agencies. Norbury described the system as a series of databases, designed for field level work, that would help management make better informed decisions. The system was demonstrated on Wednesday morning.

Rick Cables supports the NRIS and feels that data sharing has been an excellent way to begin successful partnerships.

Everything Else You Wanted to Know

Moderator: Ed Leary, Operations Director, Vermont Department of Forestry, Parks & Recreation

Panelists: Sally Collins, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System Forest Service
Randy Phillips, Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation
Michael Rains, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

Michael Rains wants to improve stewardship on all forested lands. Ways to accomplish better stewardship would be to inform, involve and influence partners through actions; implement the National Fire Plan; Service people in town and cities; emphasize stewardship in the wildland interface; teach children; enhance program delivery, and enhance competitiveness through analysis. Some of the key issues for state and private forestry managers are (1) forest fragmentation; (2) protecting communities from wildfire; (3) non-federal forest land stewardship; (4) air and water quality; (5) invasive species management.

Randy Phillips discussed the status of legislation, described frustrations in our processes and is working to find ways to break gridlock. Phillips says that Congress has requested the Administration identify issues which require assistance.

Sally Collins talked briefly about last year's MOU signing between the ELRC/WSLCA and the USFS, recognized the high calibre of the Regional Foresters, and offered USDA training opportunities to state land managers.

Forest Service's Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

Moderator: Mike Paus, District Office Administrator, Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands

Panelists: Paul Bradford, Assistant Director, Ecosystem Management, USFS

Chris Frye, Branch Chief, NRIS, Fauna

Shaun McKinney, Branch Chief, NRIS, Water

USFS Representatives demonstrated of the capabilities of the Natural Resource Information System described by Fred Norbury on Tuesday.

Rail to Trail Issues

Moderator: Ed Meadows, Manager, Exchanges & Special Services

Ed Meadows led an open discussion about the various issues that emerge when purchasing land for the Rails to Trails Program. Meadows described unique situations that have occurred in Michigan. Representatives from Alaska, South Dakota, Florida and Vermont spoke from experience and offered comments about appraisal of the land, legalities of permitting or denying access, the value of access, allowance of easements, establishment of a fee schedule. There was consensus that rails to trails issues abound in all states and are worthy of being addressed at future conferences.

Emerging Issues for the Farm Bill

Introducer: Ernest Hellwege, Secretary, Oklahoma Commissioners of the Land Office

Speaker: The Honorable Frank D. Lucas (R-OK) Chairman, House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Rural Development & Research

Although **Congressman Frank Lucas** saw 1996 Farm Bill as the best possible piece of legislation for the farmers at the time, in hindsight, he sees that it did not provide for the farmers adequately. He is now working on a new Farm Bill with plans to hold town meetings and hear from commodity groups. Lucas wants to educate his colleagues to increase possibility that new bill will meet needs of the farm communities.

Lucas will be conducting a survey relative to other conservation issues and is soliciting opinions or suggestions. States may participate in the survey through ELRC/WSLCA contacts.

Lucas discussed briefly CRP trust lands and suggests that this program will probably stay around.

Update on the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA)

Moderator: Dan Wisniewski, Secretary and Chief Executive, Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands

Panelists: Gary Taylor, Legislative Director, Internal Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Mike Henry, Congressman Don Young's staff

Dan Beattie, Congressman John Dingell's staff

The panelists provided respective overviews of the CARA legislation and discussed some of the most significant changes within the Act between the 106th and the 107th congressional sessions such as: (1) wildlife program references; (2) allocating wildlife funding for tribes and Alaska Native Corporation; (3) fully funding the Historic Preservation program; (4) funding the maritime heritage programs; (4) removal of Agriculture programs; (5) fully funding PILT and Refuge Revenue Sharing and (6) protection of Social Security and Medicare.

The panelists were unanimous in their feelings that annual funding will be a primary concern of the present Congress especially with the support CARA received from all affiliations during the past.

Adjourn