

A Moment of Reflection

by

Chief Randy Moore

To All Employees,

I am writing to you today for two reasons. One, to let you know, as effective March 3, I am retiring after 45 years with the Forest Service and two, to address our current situation.

Our agency's work supports the nation's wellbeing and its economy by providing community protection, jobs, goods and services and a place to retreat and enjoy nature's beauty. Many small businesses generate their livelihoods through permits to operate on national forests and grasslands. We provide drinking water to over 80 million Americans. We also help provide energy independence to the nation, issuing nearly 3,000 oil and gas leases. I say that to say this: You and the work you do is vital to the American way of life and you are a valued employee who has performed admirably.

As you have likely read in the news or are personally experiencing, the federal government is undergoing a significant transformation. How agencies are structured, staffed, and operate is shifting and the Forest Service is not exempt from these changes.

The past several weeks has been incredibly difficult. As part of a broader effort to reduce the size of the federal government, we parted ways with colleagues we worked alongside, who successfully contributed to our mission, and who were valued members of our Forest Service team.

If you are feeling uncertainty, frustration, or loss, you are not alone. These are real and valid emotions that I am feeling, too. Please take care of yourselves and each other. I have been silent these last few weeks because these decisions are being made at a level above our organization, and I was and am learning about the changes the same time as many of you. Our focus now is on how we respond and adapt to new priorities and continue delivering on our mission with the workforce we have.

As we work together to meet new opportunities and expectations and leverage those we already deliver upon, give yourself and one another grace and support as our workforce evolves, including as we return to a stance of more in-office work (except for those of you who are always field-going). Our workforce must be nimble and flexible, so we will not restrict ourselves to limited roles; instead, we will help one another across boundaries. I invite you to make suggestions about how we can continue to rise to the occasion and improve our service to the American people.

The workforce will continue to be unsettling for a while. Thank you for your dedication to our mission and for the work you carry out every day. You and the work you do are meaningful and do not let anyone make you believe otherwise.

As I end my career and reflect on it, I am validated in knowing and believing that the Forest Service is about its people and its worthy mission. Our impact is global in nature and our mission reaches people around the world. I am so proud of the work we have done together.

Thank you.

Randy Moore

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