

Forest Service changes; women in more top jobs



NORTHWEST

GRANTS PASS (AP) — As the U.S. Forest Service finds its way between the clearcuts and the spotted owls, more of the pathfinders than ever before are women.

No one would say that Smokey Bear is female, but as the agency embraces the idea of biological diversity in the forest and drops the emphasis on producing two-by-fours, it is doing so with a work force that is more diverse, as well.

"There is a recognition that we can no longer continue to be a militaristic type of organization of white men making all the decisions. Our organization needs to look more like the public we serve," said Gloria Brown, the Ashland District ranger on the Rogue River National Forest.

Women weren't always something the

Forest Service wanted.

The 1931 "Forest Ranger's Catechism" for the national forests in California includes a picture of the ranger on horseback, wearing his Smokey Bear hat, gazing up a rugged, rocky slope.

"Can a woman become a forest ranger? No. Women are not appointed by the Forest Service as members of the field force even if they pass the civil-service examination," the catechism says.

By 1992, a civil rights report showed 40 percent of the Forest Service's 32,000 employees nationwide were women, including 10 of the 122 national forest supervisors and 100 of the 671 district rangers.

The numbers continue to increase. This year 23 women are heads of national forests and 112 are district rangers.

By far, the region that has done the most to promote women has been California, where a 1973 discrimination lawsuit filed by a female scientist produced an affirmative action program. Now women make up 45 percent of the work force, and are six of the 18 national forest supervisors.

Women made the fastest gains in fire management, where they hold 55 percent

of the professional positions, said Vicki Jackson, who monitors the affirmative action program in California.

It was easier to recruit women for fire-fighting jobs because they didn't need as much schooling as they would for forestry or engineering, Jackson said.

At the same time, the Forest Service is developing more professional diversity in management, said Jackson. District rangers once came almost exclusively from the ranks of foresters and engineers. Now biologists and recreation specialists are common.

That helps to broaden the agency's mission, which was heavily focused on producing timber before lawsuits over the northern spotted owl forced the Forest Service to recognize it had to do a better job protecting wildlife.

Mary Lou Schnoes was with a group of Forest Service biologists last year who met with Jack Ward Thomas. Appointed chief of the agency last fall, Thomas is the first biologist to hold the top job.

"He asked us how many of us aspired to be district rangers," said Schnoes, who works on the Galice Ranger District.

Not many hands went up.

"He said, 'How do you expect to change this agency unless you take it by the horns? That is exactly how the agency will change, through a change in personnel,'" Schnoes said.

Joy Belsky, an ecologist for the Oregon Natural Resources Council, blasted the agency for failing to invite more than a few women to present their research at a recent conference on ecosystem management.

"Where men are already dominating a field, there is no way for women to get into it," said Belsky. "They become leaders in new fields."

Sue Olson, spokeswoman for the Siskiyou National Forest, said she wished women in the Forest Service did a better job of serving as mentors to other women, so they wouldn't have to break the same ground over again.

The conflict between logging and the northern spotted owl in the Northwest illustrates that the Forest Service is facing more complex questions than the ranger on horseback in the 1931 catechism.

"I think having less testosterone in the Forest Service is going to improve our outlook," said Joel Pagel, a biologist on the Rogue River National Forest.

Umatilla tribe to fish Willamette River

(AP) — The Umatilla tribe decided Wednesday to send fishermen with dipnets to Willamette Falls this weekend to assert their traditional rights to take salmon for ceremonial use and to feed their families.

"The state now provides us fish from the hatcheries that are 'surplus,'" said Don Sampson, chairman of the board of trustees of the Umatilla Tribe in Pendleton. "We don't want handouts. We want to catch those fish ourselves. We want to exercise our treaty fishing rights."

The tribe's decision meant increased pressure by the four tribes under the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission to re-establish their rights to fish on the Willamette River, which now is restricted to sport fishing.

Laura Berg, spokeswoman for the commission, said the tribes' treaty rights to fish on the Willamette are clear, though they have not been used in the past because enough fish were available on the Columbia.

Unable to catch enough fish on the Columbia to meet ceremonial and subsistence needs, two fishermen from the Yakama Nation went to Willamette Falls last weekend and were cited for fishing illegally.

After meetings with the Yakama tribe Wednesday, biologists for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife decided they had no objections to

allowing Indian fishermen to take as many as 2,500 salmon at Willamette Falls, located near Oregon City, this year only.

Biologists expect 16,000 salmon to be taken from the Willamette and Clackamas rivers below the falls this year by sport fishermen.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission was scheduled to meet Thursday morning to make a final decision.

Any agreement made with the Yakama nation would also apply to the Umatillas, as well as the Warm Springs and Nez Perce tribes, said Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife spokesman Jim Gladson. The four tribes are all under the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission.

"This is an act of partnership on our part to help them in their time of need," said Gladson. "It is not in any way, shape or form any recognition of usual and accustomed fishing rights on the Willamette for the Yakama tribe."

Ultimately, the Umatilla want to re-establish their rights to fish on the Willamette, said Sampson.

State and federal fisheries agencies have failed to successfully manage salmon runs, and the four tribes are coming out soon with their own plan for restoring salmon runs in the Columbia Basin, said Sampson.

DeFazio among lawmakers honored for fighting deficit

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Rep. Peter DeFazio was among 16 lawmakers honored by a deficit-fighting group Wednesday for the contributions they make out of their own paychecks to reduce the federal debt.

"We want to recognize the members of Congress who are standing up on an individual basis to do something about the deficit," said Lucile McConnell, head of the Fund to End the Deficit.

During a brief ceremony on Capitol Hill, she presented DeFazio and three other lawmakers with a model of the Statue of Liberty and a "debt buster" certificate.

Of the 16 House members singled out, most contribute a share of their congressional pay raise to the federal treasury.

Through the first nine months of 1993, the 16 combined to contribute nearly \$85,000, said McConnell, whose group is a nonpartisan, charitable corporation.

DeFazio was the only Northwesterner on the list. He said he has been returning government pay raises for 11 years, since he was a county commissioner in Oregon.

Since he was elected to Congress in 1986, DeFazio said he has returned \$138,000 worth of congressional pay raises.

About one-fourth of that went directly back to the Treasury to help reduce the deficit, his spokesman Patrick Dorton said. Most of the rest DeFazio has contributed to scholarship funds for Oregon youth.

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