



November 26, 2008

Mr. David J. Hayes
President-Elect Barack Obama
Energy and Natural Resources Transition Team
Washington, DC

RE: 100-Day Priorities for Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Dear David,

On behalf of the undersigned ninety-nine organizations representing over 1.5 million members and citizen activists, we are writing to ask that you consider the following requests for early action for the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that have jurisdiction over public lands and fish and wildlife resources. These organizations represent grassroots citizen activists who work at the local, regional and national levels on public forest issues. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit our recommendations to you for your team's consideration.

We strongly agree with President-elect Obama's fact sheet on "Promoting A Healthy Environment," which states that "we need a new vision for conservation that both protects our existing publicly-owned lands while dramatically expanding investments in protecting and restoring forests, grasslands, and wetlands across America for generations to come." We stand ready to work with the new President to make that vision a reality.

Often federal land and resource management agencies operate under conflicting policy mandates, with timber, mining, motorized recreation, and grazing allowed to exploit resources at both the environment's and taxpayer's expense. Increasing pressure on public lands from energy as well as urban and suburban development add to these stressors. Climate change also presents a significant challenge to protecting these natural resources. In light of these pressures, and the importance of public lands for protecting and maintaining biodiversity and functioning ecosystems, federal land management agencies should prioritize managing public lands for ecological sustainability to protect the irreplaceable benefits and ecosystem services provided by public lands, including clean drinking water and air, reservoirs for biodiversity, core refugia for wildlife and fish, flood control, carbon sequestration and storage, and appropriate recreation. Importantly, the budgets for these agencies should reflect these new priorities.

Just as you have identified the opportunity to create a Clean Energy Economy that will create green jobs, a similar opportunity exists to create an Environmental Restoration Economy that will create family-wage jobs to help restore our public lands and watersheds while helping to significantly contribute to rural economies. These rural, green jobs would be directly complementary to those in the Clean Energy Economy. In addition, forest and watershed restoration will help ensure that our natural ecosystems, both terrestrial and aquatic, are as



resilient as possible to the consequences of climate change, and provide critical linkages that allow species to disperse to new areas in response to changing temperatures and conditions.

While these proactive opportunities create both long and short-term priorities, the nation cannot implement them without first reversing the Bush administration’s damaging environmental legacy. Those actions and regulations dramatically reduced existing protections for federal forests, watersheds and wildlife, public participation, and scientific integrity. The hallmark of the Bush administration has been political interference in science to pave the way for extractive uses on public lands that puts numerous species at risk, and cuts the public out of the decision-making process on federal forests at the planning, project, and accountability levels.

The list below identifies what we have determined are high-priority issues for early action that would both reverse damaging policies promulgated by the Bush administration and begin to promote the type of positive change that President-elect Obama envisions. We ask that the policy transition team begin to address these in the first 100 days of the new administration. The list also contains actions for your consideration for the second 100 days. In addition, we ask that any last minute Bush administration rule-makings be reviewed and considered for rescinding.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our requests and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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On behalf of:

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