ONE WHO MADE IT IN A FEDERAL RESOURCE AGENCY

Susan Brook

How do you keep your identity while working in a bureaucracy? What can be done if you and your boss don’t get along? Is it better to shut up and play the organization game, or speak out and probably expose yourself to some flack?

These are some of the questions I had for Sherma Beirhaus, Superintendent of Timpanogos Cave, New Mexico, and one of only eleven women in the National Park Service working in the capacity. After five painful months cruising timber for the Forest Service, I wanted to talk with someone who had faced such problems and had been successful in dealing with them.

Even in this enlightened era, communication remains an overwhelming problem, especially between people with different goals and values. The total lack of communication between my boss and myself was a mutual downfall. He could not bring himself to criticize or encourage me to improve my performance. Continued Page 4

PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

"If I were..." "Now I am..."
"Wish I had..."

Mac Thomson, Forester
Logan Ranger District
Wasatch National Forest

At different times of our lives we can use foresight, present tense, and hindsight. These tenses or time frames tend to be analyzed in reverse order, since we are all normally smarter when we finish than when we begin. There is a tendency of late, however, to look more closely at the proposed than the accomplished. Hopefully, it is because we tend to learn from mistakes and realize that it is less costly to avoid rather than to repair.

The title of this bit of philosophy is the result of contact with, and being one of, a group of people called land managers. We studied land management principles with the idea that: "If I were more knowledgeable, I could do what is best for the land and have a voice which would be heard." After the courses and graduation we felt like: "Now I am knowledgeable and can really get to the nitty gritty of management."

What we find now, however, is that we receive direction, in some cases, from groups or individuals who know little or nothing of resource management; that we cannot communicate the management principles to them in order for us to be allowed to do what is correct. This

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Drawing by Mesia Allen
Ten participants arrived back in Logan on April 27 from Arcata, Califor-
nia, from the four-day annual Amer-
ican Western Forestry Concave, accord-
ing to Jim Upchurch, president of the
sponsoring USU student chapter of the
Society of American Foresters.

Held at Humboldt State Uni-
versity, the concave centered on redwood
management. Logging, yarning, and
sawmilling techniques, a seminar on
redwood ecology, second-growth man-
agement, a nursery inspection, and viewing
groves of old-growth redwoods comprised
two days of field trips. Simpson Timber
Company, Louisiana-Pacific Corporation,
and Pacific Lumber Company lands and
facilities were toured.

A highlight of the concave was the
woodsman’s competition, where teams
from each school competed in speed
shopping, double and single cross-
cutting, chainsaw competition, axe
throwing, boring, boom running, and
back-pump relay. While the University
of Montana’s team won the overall
competition, USU placed third in
the back-pump relay.

According to Upchurch, the con-
clave provided the participants with an
opportunity to meet foresters from
other schools and compare different
techniques and perspectives of the
forestry profession. The overall
friendliness of the Humboldt State
University community helped make the
conclave enjoyable for the 150 par-
ticipants.

Places to Go Near USU

Despite myriads of complaints about
“nothing to do in Logan,” a great many
opportunities exist for interesting and
rewarding activities. For students of
natural resources, the region around
Logan has some especially inviting places
to visit. This article is the first of a
series which will explore these areas,
where they are, and why they are inter-
esting.

Bear River Bird Refuge

Bear River Bird Refuge is located 15
miles west of Brigham City, Utah, and
within an hour’s drive of USU. The
refuge offers an extremely wide range
of interesting activities and possibilities.
Its 65,000 acres of wetland habitat and 219
species of birds make it an enjoyable place
for almost anyone to visit.

The major activities in the refuge are
bird watching, photography, and just
plain getting off on nature. A twelve-mile
auto-tour around one of the dikes is the
most popular way to see the refuge. In
addition, a small interpretive center and
pamphlets highlight the history, mission,
and wildlife of the refuge. Fishing is
popular, and the success is fair for
channel catfish early in the year. Although
the facilities are limited, a small area is
provided for picnic lunches and lounging in
the sun.

For natural resource students, the area
has many more interesting possibilities.
The unique wetland habitat and abundance
of wildlife make the refuge an ideal area
to study animal behavior. The diverse
and interesting ecosystem offers a challenge
to those who wonder why the area exists.
Conflicts between preservation of habitat
and recreational uses are apparent, and
the managers are more than willing to
talk about them. Your imagination and
interest are the only limits to what the
refuge can offer.

The next time the “Logan Blues” hit, don’t
just complain about nothing to do—
pack a lunch and drive to the Refuge.
Although I can’t guarantee the best time
you ever had, it’s better than sitting
around the apartment and bitching.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

Reid Smith

The most common complaint heard
around campuses today is that many
classes are impractical, irrelevant,
and useless. Whether these charges are
ture or not is somewhat of an academic
question at best. Numerous student
referendums, complaints, and organiza-
tions have had very little impact in
changing or widespread revamping of
curricula. But recent programs for under-
graduate research may be the answer for
those who feel their education is lacking
something.

These programs range from directed
study to actual hands-on original research.
The common thread they all share is
that the individual student chooses and
plans the details and scope of the projects.
This individuality is the brightest
feature of the program and should pre-
cede any irrelevancy or uselessness. As
an added bonus, most projects are worth
credit hours commensurate with the amount
of work they take, and in some cases, money
is available to pay research expenses.

To take advantage of these opportuni-
ties you need to follow a few simple steps.
First, decide exactly what you would like
to study and where. Then, write a short
description of the subject and why you think
it would be a valuable study project.
Present this to your advisor, department
head, or a professor you think would be
interested and helpful. Many projects
of this type can be set up through
the URCO office in room 208 of the
UC. Whatever method you use to get
approval, be persistent. Remember
that anything worthwhile is worth going
through some hassles to get.

Although these programs are hardly a
panacea for irrelevant curricula, they do
offer unique opportunities to individual
students. The personal, self-planned
nature of the programs is a nice way to
sidestep the institution and leave it
smiling. If you feel that your education
isn’t what it should be, then get into
undergraduate research and do something
about it.
WILDLANDS RECREATION FIELD TRIP SLATED

The Department of Forestry and Outdoor Recreation is sponsoring a 14-day wildlands recreation management field trip again this summer. The trip is planned primarily for Outdoor Recreation majors after their sophomore year, and will be required for graduation from OR in 1977 and after. Attendance is not restricted to OR majors, however, and anyone in resource management could benefit from the trip.

According to Steve McCool, the field trip will serve many purposes. It will expose students to actual field management situations and problems and relate these to classroom work. Students will have opportunities to meet and question managers about their management problems, the job situation, or any other questions relating to wildlands management. Also, the trip will give the OR faculty and students a chance to informally interact and get to know one another.

The itinerary for the field trip is varied and should be both interesting and exciting. The first area visited will be Dinosaur National Monument where the Echo Park controversy and white water river management will be discussed. Energy development will be discussed at the Jim Bridger power plant on the Red Desert of Wyoming. The Bridger wilderness will be visited next and wilderness management will be discussed with area personnel. Grand Teton National Park will be the next stop, and the topics discussed will include fire control policies, private land holdings, backcountry recreation, and general park management.

Mass recreation problems and grizzly bear management will be the main topics discussed while visiting Yellowstone National Park. Virginia City and Big Hole National Battlefield will be the next stops with the emphasis on management and interpretation of historic sites. The next stop will be the Sawtooth National Recreation Area where mining and landuse planning will be studied. Sun Valley, Idaho, will be the last major stop, and the management of ski areas will be the major discussion topic. In addition to the major areas highlighted above, a number of smaller areas will be visited.

Altogether, the trip will cover about 2,000 miles of the intermountain region. Dr. McCool said the trip was planned and the areas chosen to maximize the time spent at them and minimize travel time and expense. The emphasis will be on discussing management problems and situations at the actual areas where they occur. The structure of the trip will be loose and ample free time will be allowed for.

If you are interested in going on the field trip, an orientation and planning meeting will be held on May 27 at 7:30 PM in the NRB lounge. The departure date is June 6 and June 19 is the planned return date. The cost will be approximately $135 per student, which covers transportation, food, and lodging. The only special gear students will need are sleeping bags.

It appears that the wildlands recreation trip is a unique opportunity to have a lot of fun, further your education, and visit some interesting places without spending a whole lot of money. Also, two hours of credit is available for those who want it. If you wish credit, the course is OR 305, Index Number 3448. Any additional information you need can be obtained either at the orientation meeting or the Outdoor Recreation office on the second floor of the NRB building.

ON BEING WISE TO THE WEATHER

David Hutchinson

Weather affects us all the time, but most people take it for granted. E. Arlo Richardson is one person who doesn’t.

Richardson is the state climatologist and has worked with weather for over thirty years.

I went to talk with him about the flood possibilities and crop outlook for Cache Valley and had a refreshing conversation with a very interesting person.

"Precipitation has been very heavy this spring and there has been quite an accumulation of snow in the mountains," he said. "Temperatures have been cool so that snow has not melted as rapidly as normal."

What will happen on the weather scene is a matter of natural timing, he said, and the timing of warm weather will importantly affect local water levels.

"I am sure that we will get some flooding that will affect some of these people down right next to the river," the climatologist said.

"If we have an early fall and a cool summer, then crop production is going to be way down. I’m sure it will be less this year than last year," he said, warning that home gardeners may have serious problems.

Richardson believes that the effects of weather are often underestimated in planning. Local weather patterns might be a key variable in determining the optimum landuse for a given site.

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on being wise to the weather
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Utah State offers several classes in meteorology, some of them taught by Richardson, a veteran of the National Weather Service. He recommended that natural resource majors include weather classes in their curricula.

Referring to predictions, he said, “Weather has its ups and downs. If you wait long enough, anything you say is going to happen, happens.”

If the cheerfulness and humor of this long-time weather expert are any indication of the extended outlook, we are indeed in luck.

“[In the future...],” “Now I am...,” “Wish I had...”
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brings about the last of the title: “Wish I had the ability to communicate and ‘sell’ what is known to be best for the resource, public, and even opponent.” We can find our knowledge unimportant, our education wasted, and direction dictated. All because of the lack of knowledge of how to sell our product and service.

Foresters graduate and can talk to trees, Range Conservationists with cattle, and Wildlife Biologists with squirrels, but when we must deal with our “buyers” we talk to deaf ears because we cannot talk their language. We need to know what makes people tick. How can we influence their behavior, acceptance, or cooperation. We must know how to talk, write, and act when we deal with our buyers (public). We must be adaptable, flexible, and understanding. Most important, we must realize that our knowledge is not necessarily the only alternative product to buy. We must listen to the other sellers, and even more so—the buyer. The communicative system is not one way.

If we are going to be able to really do what we originally thought we would “If I were...” we must become more accomplished salesmen, believe in our product, and provide the best product and service our knowledge will allow.

GROWING UP FEMALE IN FEDERAL RESOURCE AGENCIES
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(because I was a girl and had to be handled delicately) and I didn’t have the courage to tell him that was what I needed (because he was the boss and a male and wouldn’t listen anyway). As a result, we silently suffered through the summer and fall until the last day when we finally exploded. If only we had let our thoughts out earlier! We could have spared ourselves and our work so many problems.

Talking with Sherma was like a ray of sunshine after days of grey, depressing weather. She is an up-from-the-ranks success story: starting as a clerk-typist, then advancing to personnel. Everyone knows those are deadend jobs, but through initiative, persistence, and support from superiors, she was finally accepted to the Park Service Mid-level Management Training Program. Combining academic study with work on actual problems, the program gives Park Service personnel intensive management training.

One of the team assignments involved Timpnogos Cave, where she was appointed Acting Supervisor. “When the place didn’t blow up or flood, they decided I could do the job permanently,” Sherma said.

Sherma credits much of her success to her supervisors’ interest in her. Almost without exception they were supportive of her goals and offered invaluable assistance. She believes there is a new breed of managers coming up: the Civil Service who are genuinely interested in helping women and minorities make the most of their abilities. The striking of the Civil Service rule that jobs with law enforcement duties were only open to men and the enactment of the EEO have also been tremendous aids.

However, Sherma stressed that managers “will only be interested in you if you are interested in your work. Show them capability and desire to do more. Try to improve yourself and keep plugging, you’ll eventually get there,” she suggested.

But how could I, a normal, unselfconfident human, maintain those virtues in the face of day-to-day routine? “Meet situations head-on,” she suggested. “Accept the fact that you have shortcomings. Try to change them but don’t get bogged down in constant worry and self-doubt. Think through a problem to the best of your ability and then have confidence in your decision.”

The road to Timpnogos hasn’t been all smooth for Sherma. Controlling her temper has been one problem. She feels that constructive advice from her superiors and just plain growing up has helped. “Take criticism in stride and decide in the beginning to leave your temper and emotions at home,” she said. “Blowing up at someone doesn’t do either of you any good. If you feel strongly that your boss is making a mistake, tell him or her. Your boss isn’t receptive to suggestions from subordinates, it’s best to keep quiet, but don’t let it eat you up.”

Supporting and caring for four children while remaining mobile in order to be promoted has also been a problem for Sherma. When considering a woman’s application, the Park Service automatically questions her ability to move: does she have a family or spouse that can’t pick up and go? With men they have no such doubts.

I came away feeling more hopeful about my future and the future of the federal resource agencies after talking with Sherma. My experience with the Forest Service was unfortunate, but hopefully, everyone learned some good lessons. The biggest mistake was not really the misconception my boss and I had of each other, but that we didn’t try to do anything to change.