UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
 *** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** ***
news release

For Release to AM's, DECEMBER 1, 1961

ADDRESS BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, Jr. BEFORE THE
WASHINGTON SECTION OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS IN WASHINGTON, D. C.,
NOVEMBER 30, 1961

It is said that at least half the battle of making an acceptable speech to a
tough and knowledgeable audience in Washington, D. C. can be won by successfully
establishing rapport with the group. I'm going to try to do that by assuming that
you'll automatically be favorably disposed toward me when I tell you that my
forestry experience began at the very bottom--pulling ribes in the Kaniksu
National Forest in Northern Idaho.

I learned two lessons then that have stuck with me ever since, in theory if
not in practice. The first is that you will get along a great deal better in the
woods if you can successfully conceal the fact that you've even heard of a college,
much less attended one. Two types of young men earned fifty cents an hour, less
board, at BRC 422 in 1936--college boys from Southern Idaho and town boys from
the terribly depressed lumber and mining communities of North Idaho. I threw in
my lot with the town boys and survived--my college friends in some numbers did not.

The practical application of this lesson survives--in the Interior Department
(as in some other Departments) the real battle is between the lawyers and the
administrators. I try to avoid being identified as a lawyer.

The other lesson was also of a down-to-earth quality--it is not only possible
to eat a meal without conversation of any kind, much less speeches, it may also be
necessary. At least that was the rule our camp cook enforced, and I mean enforced.

In 1948, when the first post-war slump in lumber began to squeeze some of the
marginal mills in central Idaho, I got some more lessons--I found that you
couldn't pry money out of the RFC to refinance a shaky deal without knowing enough
about the way the business operated to keep your client from fooling you. Because
for sure you couldn't fool that wonderful old man who managed the RFC's Spokane
office for so many years, O. M. Green. There was a tough-minded administrator,
if ever there was one. He could look out for Uncle Sam's interest without acting
like a banker--though he'd been a good one for many years.

Some successes with getting government financing led to post-graduate
experience--negotiations for customer financing. Some of you know all about how
the demand for shop and select lumber (oh happy, by gone days!) had the sash and
door companies financing dozens and dozens of mills in order to secure adequate
supplies of these grades, and some of the resultant distortions of the market.
In a period of three or four years Ponderosa Pine stumpage advanced from $3.50 to $35.00—and I've bled in the defense of law suits brought by pitiful old widow ladies to set aside options at the cheaper price.

Suffice it to say that not only the physical smells, sights and sounds of the woods and the mill, but the interplay of economic forces always at work on the entrepreneur came to fascinate me, and still do.

The dilemmas which face the legislative as well as the executive branch of the government in the management of the public's reserve of land and timber can at least be seen and recognized better as a result of these experiences, whether or not the experience contributes to progress toward their resolution.

But tonight I don't intend to talk about anything as orthodox or familiar as timber or lumber operations, or silviculture—these are not really the concerns of most of us, whether we draw our pay from government, from trade association, from producer, from manufacture, or directly for our professional services in a consulting capacity.

Rather, I'd like to talk about a specialization in the profession in which many of you are engaged, and in which engagement you may from time to time have reason to deal with my Department. I doubt if the term is exactly new, although I can't recall its use in my experience—I speak of "political forestry."

I intend no invidiousness. I shan't attempt a theoretical definition, but rather a few practical examples in my experience to illustrate my conceptions—loosely formed and amorphous though they may be.

A couple of months ago I went back to the scene of my lawyering activities in the wood business at Grangeville, Idaho, and stood up to a hostile assemblage of old friends on the subject of the Wilderness Bill—a bill supported by this administration, including both the Agriculture and the Interior Departments. The mill owners are getting closer and closer in their circles of operation to the timbered stands contained within the boundaries of the Selway-Lochsa Primitive Area—they have their eyes on some of the stands in the primitive area.

I patiently explained that the Senate-passed bill would not change the managing agency, and would not change the applicable management principles. It would require the Forest Service to complete its review, and at the end of the time limits set forth, the area would become immune to change from Wilderness status except by approval of one or both houses of Congress.

My listeners weren't and aren't stupid, and they understood clearly—they still didn't like it. So (and Forest Service people were at the meeting in force) I asked them: "Boiled down, aren't you saying that you think it will be easier to knock over the Forest Service than to knock over the Congress?"

The question (or at least the affirmative answer I imply) expresses one example of "political forestry": carrying on your forestry duties in such a way as to leave with the using public a belief that you will, when the chips are finally down, see things more their way than you now publicly profess.
Again I repeat I have no trace of criticism of these foresters, all friends of mine. Without doing or saying anything even slightly questionable they've finessed the politicians who would have the public believe that under any and all circumstances the Congress is more reasonable than the bureaucracy.

My second example is more complex, but it comes out the same way. I'm referring to the Multiple Use Act of 1960, Public Law 86-517.

Amid assurances to the Congress of the United States that the bill was not really new, and that the principles enunciated in the legislation had been adhered to for all the years there has been a United States Forest Service (I don't know what was said about its predecessor Division of Forestry in Interior), and without giving the least hint that it would cease to follow such principles if the bill should fail of enactment, still the foresters were able to communicate a spirit of vital urgency and secure passage of legislation it promptly hailed as the most significant in a generation.

Political forestry? This feat was and is the envy of most of the whole profession of land managers. If you don't think so, I invite you to consult almost any official of the Bureau of Land Management in my own Department. They recognize a tour de force when they see one, and they want it.

We've been practicing multiple use all the years, too, they say—but we need this bill.

You will notice I say they, not we. I have to, for I have a couple of other bureaus in my part of the Department which don't share this enthusiasm for the new magic term—the National Park Service and the Indian Bureau.

Since I was introduced by an Indian Bureau Forester, I think it only fair to mention that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as trustee for the Indians' forests, is willing to accept the multiple-use definition with the exception of the final high-minded phrase "and not necessarily the combination of uses that will give the greatest dollar return . . ." The Solicitor has reminded them that the courts have told the Bureau on more than one occasion that it had jolly well better get the greatest dollar return, if it is to carry out its duty as trustee.

As to the National Park Service's attitude, I can't say much to you which you don't already know on the subject of its fondness for the term.

I might throw in, however, as a subordinate example of what I mean by political forestry, my observation that of the articles and editorials I've seen about maintaining the "integrity" of the park idea, and protecting park "standards," and of the various other learned discussions about the national parks as "single-use," the best examples seem to show up in forestry publications.
I can mention two other types of "political forestry." The Department of the Interior administers the extensively timbered O & C vested lands in Oregon. I thought when I first came to the Department that our relative immunity from bureaucratic attack against this seeming anomaly must surely rest on the sterling quality of our administration, or to put it another way, our skillful practice of political as well as traditional forestry. An examination of the relative benefit to counties in the area under the two systems has made me a little doubtful, if not cynical, about this initial judgment. Maybe the failure to demand comparable status for comparable publicly-owned land represents negative political forestry.

The other type might be termed political forestry, international division—the perplexing problems surrounding the export of logs to meet the burgeoning demands of Japan. A cabinet group recently visited Japan on various trade matters, and of the information brought back, none was more striking to my mind than the annual expansion rate of that industrial country's demand for lumber and wood products. Cutting their own reserves at more than twice their own yield, the Japanese need between nine and ten percent more each year than the previous year.

They are purchasing Siberian logs; they are purchasing both logs and lumber from the United States, principally Oregon and Washington; and they have a dollar deficit. Oregon and Washington lumber operators are very disturbed about the export of their logs, and their concern has spread into the lumbering communities whose people would like to be sawing these departing logs, and through them to the Senators and Representatives.

In the meantime, to complicate the picture, government regulations now prohibit the export of logs from Alaska, a State which is not even fractionally close to harvesting its mature timber. Alaskans, nevertheless, understandably don't want to export a potential industry--Japanese capital already is in Alaska at two mills.

Here are all the ingredients to test political forestry--politics and economics at the State, Federal, and international levels. Practice of this kind of political forestry is a high calling.

It both consoles and disturbs me, as I dip into Harold Ickes's diary for bedtime reading, to note how frequently my activities as Assistant Secretary are mirror reflections of Oscar Chapman's or E. K. Burlew's. I think my Secretary has some of the same feelings as he contemplates the Department's aspirations under him and under his predecessor, the Old Curmudgeon.

For example: In thinking about what I was going to say tonight, I came to the conclusion that until recently, and certainly in Harold Ickes's time, the struggle for bureaucratic ascendancy had centered around the function of forestry in its traditional, or orthodox sense. I proposed, to myself, to suggest to you that in the context of political forestry, today's struggle revolves around something different—the function of recreation.
Mr. Ickes torpedoed my claim to have found something new in the world—on February 14, 1936, he observed that Mr. Delano, the President’s uncle, and then chairman of the National Resources Planning Board,

"was in full sympathy with my position on conservation and my desire to build up a Conservation Department. With reference to Forestry, he said specifically and categorically that Forestry had no right to establish recreation areas, that all such areas ought, as a matter of course, to come to Interior, and that we also ought to have all forests that are not to be lumbered for commercial purposes, leaving it to Agriculture to administer lands where new tree crops are to be grown ... I believe that in the end all of the forest activities would come to this Department if we once got them headed this way, and even if they didn’t, we should have in the Department the established forests and the recreational facilities which are now being set up in the forest areas."

There may, however, be a little life left in my thesis that the focal point of the struggle is now the so-called recreation function.

The war for bureaucratic ascendency in the field of recreation goes on on a number of fronts. I’ve already mentioned the Multiple Use Act of 1960. That act didn’t put the foresters in the recreation business, for they had been in it (as Mr. Ickes’s diary notation shows) for many years. But it did give Congressional sanction of recreation on a par with range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes, as a policy objective for the national forests.

Congress in 1958 authorized the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. Section 7 of the authorizing bill provides the basic take-off point on recreation as a function of the Federal Government.

"The Commission", it says, "shall recognize that lands, waters, forest, rangelands, wetlands, wildlife, and such other natural resources that serve economic purposes also serve to varying degrees and for varying uses outdoor recreation purposes, and that sound planning of resource utilization for the full future welfare of the Nation must include coordination and integration of all such multiple uses."

To a greater or lesser extent, all of the agencies concerned with the management of water and land resources owned by the United States recognize that they must include, so far as practicable, management for outdoor recreation in their overall management of the land or the water. The orientation of this management may differ greatly. In my own Department, the National Park Service is Congressionally charged with the duty of promoting and regulating the use of the national parks to provide for the public’s enjoyment of the same. The National Park Service manages lands which belong to all the public; the companion Indian Bureau assists in the management of land which belongs to Indians. A recreation project on Indian land does not seek to satisfy the needs of the greatest number of people for recreation but rather to get the maximum economic return to the owners.
Water projects constructed by the Corps of Engineers or by the Bureau of Reclamation have to satisfy a basic Congressional requirement of flood control, navigation, reclamation, or the like. Having satisfied these requirements, the recreation benefits involved may be considered as a part of the public investment which the power or water users ought not to be required to repay. In their terms, the Corps of Engineers formulate their projects to "maximize net benefits, including those attributable to recreation." In their land acquisition, they conform to the same policy as the Department of the Interior, that the development and utilization of the public recreation and fish and wildlife potentialities are purposes on reservoir projects.

I would like to give credit to the political foresters in the private sector of our economy for their recognition of the high public relations value of recreation. Your own Journal of Forestry last March reported the policy statement of the owners of timberlands along the Allagash River in Maine wherein they call attention to the fact that they have preserved the natural scenic value of the waterway, and provided for the economic and recreational needs of the State of Maine. They publicly declare that they will preserve the natural wilderness beauty and the land bordering on the lakes and water courses and will continue the policy of public use of the area for recreational purposes.

Not only the forest industry, but the electric power industry, and even other owners of private lands devoted to livestock operations have capitalized on this upsurge of national interest in recreation.

Sometimes, out of all this, we mainly succeed in confusing the public. Nature in its inscrutability dammed the Madison River in Montana with millions of tons of the adjacent mountainside and created a new lake. The same earthquake caused several hundred thousand dollars worth of damage in Yellowstone National Park, but the dramatically new natural feature in geography happened to be on National Forest land. Now thousands of visitors to Yellowstone also see Quake Lake (and vice versa). At Quake Lake a green-uniformed ranger every half hour or so explains to the visitors how it all happened. Query: How many of the visiting public really know that the personable young man giving the talk is a Forest Ranger and not one of the crew of Naturalist Park Rangers they might have heard the night before around a camp fire explaining Old Faithful?

In a real sense, all Government agencies concerned with recreation have to meet a standard of courtesy and service, including accommodations and facilities furnished, at least equal to the best furnished by any other agency of the Federal Government. In truth, the standard ought to be higher, for the American citizen interested in camping or other usage of public recreation facilities, forms his impression of the efficiency of Government on such practical tests as how clean the camp is, what kind of rest rooms are furnished, and whether he is courteously treated. Make no mistake about it. Most of the public isn't well enough informed to distinguish among various Federal and State agencies. The blame falls impersonally upon the "Government".
I think we have passed the point of questioning whether the Government has the responsibility. Although the Congress has never specifically said so, the Senate Select Water Committee recognized that this is truly a Federal interest in one of its recommendations:

"In the early years of the Nation's history there was little need for the exercise of these Federal responsibilities, and in fact there was a reluctance on the part of many to accept them. As water resources development needs and problems increased in scope and magnitude, they began to exceed the abilities of private interests and State and local governments, and the Federal Government was called on to exercise its responsibilities, first in the field of navigation, then later, in reclamation of arid lands, flood control, hydroelectric power, recreation, fish and wildlife conservation, municipal and industrial water supplies, and occasionally in other areas. A great body of laws governing Federal participation in these areas has evolved, not always consistently, but to meet the needs of the times."

"To meet the needs of the times." The population of the United States today reached 185 million. A Frenchman has come over here to tell us in 805 pages what we all know—that from Washington to Boston is one great megalopolis. The surge to the cities has as counterpart massive weekly or seasonal counter-surges to the open spaces. Government reacts. Congress enacts matching aid provisions for open space acquisition in the Housing Act of 1961; the ORRHC continues its monumental tasks; bureaus, offices and agencies with land or water seek and get funds from the Congress to try to keep up with the stampede which is recreation.

You foresters are pioneers in seeing the real meaning of these trends, and have given me the opportunity to call the reaction "political forestry."

You are not alone—the engineers who build Corps or Bureau Dams see it—cabinet officers see it—the Congress sees it. What it means is that political forestry is not only honorable, but necessary. All of us must look beyond the trees to the forest, beyond the forest to the land and all its uses, and the water and its uses, and beyond all of these to our duty as citizens of a free country to provide, as near as may be, for a good life, and an environment in which we can enjoy our freedom.

x x x