

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

U.S. FOREST SERVICE POLICY

HON. RICK HILL

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 1998

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, something has gone haywire at the U.S. Forest Service.

In published news reports, and in testimony before the House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, it is clear that the agency is pursuing forest policies which are driven by politics and public relations rather than science and common-sense. I have to agree with subcommittee Chairman HELEN CHENOWETH of Idaho that the Forest Service's top-down policies have more to do with the 2000 presidential campaign than responsible national forest management.

What has been recently imposed in our forests is a moratorium on management. The hands of local forest managers have been tied. Combined with the recent weather trends in my home State of Montana, this lack of local management is a recipe for disaster during this upcoming fire season.

A recent article in the newsletter Conservation News (March 23, 1998) entitled "Sportsmen being excluded from public lands, House panel is told" is a clear example of the emerging agenda of the Clinton/Gore Administration and how they are using our forests in the most cynical way possible.

SPORTSMEN BEING EXCLUDED FROM PUBLIC LANDS, HOUSE PANEL IS TOLD

CHENOWETH HITS 'MEDIA MANIPULATION' PLAN

Sportsmen are increasingly being denied the right to enter public lands, Safari Club International told a House subcommittee last week.

Before the U.S. Forest Service is permitted to pursue its planned moratorium on forest road construction, Congress should require that the agency publish a list of all road closings in the last 10 years, the group told the forest and forest health subcommittee.

"We want to insure that this new effort does not further erode an already diminishing access to recreational opportunity on public lands," said Ron Marlenee, Safari Club's government affairs consultant. "Increasingly, sportsmen are coming up against pole gates, gates, barriers and 'no motorized vehicles' signs when they arrive at the edge of public property," he told a hearing.

The hearing was the second in two weeks to consider the Forest Service's proposal to impose an 18-month moratorium on the construction of roads in so-called "roadless" areas. The scheme has drawn angry protests from westerners, with several congressional chairmen threatening to slash the Service's 1999 budget (See Conservation News, March 9, page 1).

The focus of last week's hearing was H.R. 3297, which would suspend the continued development of a roadless area policy by the Service until public hearings are conducted on all Forest Service units nationwide. As of late last week, the measure had 24 co-sponsors.

Subcommittee Chairman Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho) again blasted the Clinton Adminis-

tration for its forest policies. She referred to a recent Washington Post article about a Forest Service communication plan to promote its agenda. "It's a detailed strategy on how to manipulate the media and everyone else to get support for the administration policies over the next eight months," the article stated.

The article quotes the plan as proposing to have Service Chief Mike Dombeck traveling to spectacular forest fires to gain media coverage.

"We now have seen a copy of Chief Dombeck's PR plan which was reported in the press," Chenoweth told the hearing. "After reading it, I am left to question, Where does the Forest Service get the legislative authority to manipulate the press and others to promote their agenda?" she asked.

"I am also left to wonder where Chief Dombeck gets the legislative authority to use this once proud agency—and I stress once proud agency—to take every opportunity to tie with the vice president's Clean Water Initiative and indeed provide a media event for the VP?" Chenoweth said, quoting from the plan.

She claimed that, "rather than protect the forest environment, Chief Dombeck has allowed the Forest Service to be used as a tool of the Clinton-Gore Administration to gain partisan political advantage and promote Vice President Gore's presidential aspirations.

"This blatant use of the Forest Service for strictly partisan political purposes will not be tolerated," Chenoweth said. "It is unthinkable to utilize catastrophic fire and the resulting devastation to human life and the environment for partisan political gain and to promote Vice President Gore's presidential aspirations."

The Safari Club's Marlenee suggested a hidden agenda in the roads proposal. "In an effort to further justify road closures, the Forest Service implies that hunting in the forest system is having negative impact on wildlife," he testified. "They contend that access has led to 'increased pressure on wildlife species from hunters and fishers,'" he said, quoting an agency notice.

"My experience has been that the Forest Service consults extensively with state wildlife agencies and that the jurisdiction of wildlife and hunting is primarily a state right and responsibility," Marlenee continued.

"Because the Forest Service allegation appears in their public document, because it impugns the role of hunting in conservation, and because it denigrates the capability of state wildlife management, I would suggest this committee require the Forest Service to name even one state wildlife agency that is not fulfilling (its) obligations. We know of none and resent the fact this ill-thought-out statement is being used to justify closure considerations that could be harmful to sportsmen and to wildlife management," he said.

ON THE PASSING OF FATHER ORESTE PANDOLA OF BALTIMORE

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 1998

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a truly great pastor and great person, Father Oreste "Rusty" Pandola, who has been chosen to receive the Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. Award for 1998. This award is named for my late father, who served as a long time Mayor of Baltimore and as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. It is presented annually by the Little Italy Lodge to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to Baltimore's Italian-American community.

Just a few days before his untimely death on January 17th, 1997, Rev. Oreste Pandola, SAC, known to everyone in St. Leo's as "Father Rusty," was asked what he would like inscribed on his tombstone. Always ready with a witty reply, he answered, "Well, I put an elevator in the church and another one in the school. How about, 'Going up!'" With that, he laughed heartily and made his familiar thumbs-up sign.

Although he had been suffering a constant battle against the debilitating effects of diabetes, little did anyone realize how soon afterward, those words would come to fruition. Father Rusty was only 54 when he died of a heart attack. He had been pastor of St. Leo's for eight years. One parishioner summed up his leadership by saying, "He affected the parish unlike anyone we've had in the past. His open friendship, his demeanor, his confidence. He could get people to do things for the church."

He was a priest who saw the needs of his community beyond the religious aspects, although he certainly was a wonderful shepherd of his flock. He never let personal health problems get in the way of his pastoral duties. After injuring his shoulder in a fall while attending a meeting in New Jersey, he celebrated Mass with his left arm in a sling.

Father Rusty enjoyed life, Italian food—especially pasta—and cream donuts, laughed loud at a good joke—even at his own expense—and was not afraid to try new things such as para-sailing.

One of his major achievements was the renovation and subsequent re-opening of the church school, closed in 1980, as an adult learning center. A man of vision, he saw a building wasting away and he saw many of the more senior residents of the Little Italy community with idle time and idle minds. He gave birth to the Adult Learning Center, which today bears his name and is in its third year and growing.

Father Rusty had a reputation of being involved in activities and interests that went beyond his duties as pastor. He was compassionate, understanding and optimistic. To him, no task was to great. Being happy all the time and being positive in his assessment of things

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