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Memo to Vice President from Katie McGinty - Forest Conference Discussion with President March 18, 1993

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MEMORANDUM TO THE VICE PRESIDENT

FROM KATIE MCGINTY

RE: FOREST CONFERENCE DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT AT THURSDAY
LUNCH

3-17-93

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management plan. Remember our goal is to produce a comprehensive forest management plan that is based on sound science; that fulfills our statutory obligations; that will allow the injunctions to be lifted. Legal analysis is not yet complete, but the working assumption is that at least part of the strategy will have to be legislated. The plan, therefore is to have the forest management plan complete and ready to be sent to the Hill by June 1. Overall goal (altho this will be very difficult to reach) is to have this done by the August 19 deadline set by Judge Dwyer.

-- ECONOMIC PLAN. I have created three working groups under this category: (1) a group to explore forest-related economic opportunities (e.g. incentives for mill retooling; value-added manufacture, etc.); (2) a group to look at community development initiatives; (3) a group to look at worker training initiatives. The NEC has become involved in this process and will help to oversee the work of all three of these groups.

o JACK WARD THOMAS REPORT/COURT DATE

There are two outstanding lawsuits that have a bearing on both pre- and post-Forest Conference decision making

(1) In 1991 Judge Dwyer placed an injunction on the sale of any national forest timber within spotted owl and associated old growth related species habitat until the Forest Service developed a plan that would protect such species.

(2) In 1992 Judge Frye placed an injunction on 13 timber sales that the Bush Administration "exempted" from the Endangered Species Act. In other words, this timber could be cut even though it was Spotted Owl habitat.

When the Forest Service came back in 1992 with an owl protection plan, the Judge found it to be insufficient and asked the Forest Service to answer three questions and present a revised plan by **August 19, 1993**. Monthly updates on progress are due to the Judge on the 19th of each month.

SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT TEAM REPORT:

Judge Dwyer asked the Forest Service to assess the: (1) effects of the BLM's exempted sales on its plan; (2) validity of new information that was presented at the hearings; and (3) risks to other old-growth associated species. To answer these questions the Forest Service asked Dr. Jack Ward Thomas to chair the team of 24 Forest Service scientists that made up the SAT. Dr. Thomas is a well known Forest Service scientist who has completed a number of highly acclaimed -- and controversial -- reports on spotted owl and old growth issues.

The SAT has finished its assessment and their report is ready to go to the printer. Their answers to the three questions

mentioned above are:

- (1) The exempted sales have minimal affects on the plan
- (2) The new information presented at the hearing is not valid.
- (3) There are -- in addition to the owl -- 387 old-growth related species which are at risk and mitigation measures to protect them will be needed to assure their long-term viability.

The answer to the 3rd question is grim. In short, the scientists have concluded that -- if viable populations of the indicated species are to be maintained -- harvest levels on Federal lands will have to be significantly reduced. (Note that the report does not specify a sustainable harvest level. BUT the trained eye will be able immediately to translate the science into forest management numbers. BOTTOM LINE -- Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management will have to reduce harvest levels on federal lands by 75% to 85% from historical levels. (This represents a total regional reduction of 25% to 30% when state and private resources are accounted for.)

DECISION TO RELEASE.

Needless to say, this is an extremely powerful and sobering message. I met with senior White House staff in order to come to some decision as to whether the study should be released by the Forest Service in appearing before Judge Dwyer on Friday. The decision was that it should be released. Our reasons:

- o the report is finished and people are expecting and waiting on it. we did not want to be accused of sitting on this information.

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o if we release it now, we have some hope that it will be chewed over and the dust will settle somewhat by the conference.

o the truth is that the President is not going to be able to make all well again in the timber industry and it is important to begin to bring some reality into expectations of what we are going to deliver.

OUR REACTION TO QUESTIONS ON THIS

The important point here is that this is a scientific analysis. We are producing it for the Judge in order to honor his directive to the Forest Service.

Our production of the report for the Judge does not mean that we have decided as a matter of policy that we fully embrace its conclusions. We have every reason to believe that it is a thorough and credible scientific assessment. However, the scientists involved had to make some important assumptions and we will want to hear other scientific perspectives through the forest conference process before making any final conclusions on the forest management strategy.

Note also that, again, this is a scientific assessment. It does not represent a policy determination. No policy determinations will be made until all perspectives are heard through the forest conference process.

DRAFT AGENDA
(please do not distribute)

FOREST CONFERENCE
Portland, Oregon
April 2, 1993

(to be held in roundtable format)

- 12:30 President's (and Vice President's) Opening
- 1:00 [The Current Situation: Who is Affected and How]
Roundtable Discussion #1: How is the controversy over forest management on federal lands affecting the people and the communities of the Northwest and Northern California?
(15-20 representatives from churches, labor, community groups, school boards, environmentalists, etc.)
- 2:30 BREAK
- 2:45 [How Did We Get Here? The Nature of the Problem]
Roundtable Discussion #2: What are the scientific, economic, social, political circumstances that lead to the extremely difficult situation this region currently faces?
(10-12 "experts" that have analyzed the situation from various perspectives, including the science, the economics, and the sociology) (these panelists will be encouraged to use graphics)
- 4:00 BREAK
- 4:15 [Where Do We Go?]
Roundtable Discussion #3: What are our best ideas for addressing regional economic challenges for workers, for business and for the environment, and how can the Federal Government provide leadership and encourage new, innovative and creative approaches? (12-15 individuals that have creatively responded to the challenges facing their communities, either within the timber industry or through alternative economic development strategies)
- 5:30 President closes with "impromptu" directive to his Cabinet for next steps
- 6:00 Adjourn (Reception?) (Press Conference?)

Technical Pre-Briefs
for the Forest Conference

(to be held in "hearing-style" room)

9:00 Opening Statements by Cabinet Officials
 Secretary Babbitt
 Secretary Espy
 Secretary Reich
 Secretary Brown
 Administrator Browner
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 Chair Tyson

Expert Panels (to provide Cabinet Secretaries with a fairly
 indepth view of the different facets of the
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 ~4 panelists will describe predominant issues in
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