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Reply To: 2610

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To Regional Foresters, State Directors, and State Government Members of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

The purpose of this letter is to reaffirm our mutual commitment to the "Policies and Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Management in National Forest and Bureau of Land Management Wilderness (FS, BLM, and IAFWA -- August 1986)

These guidelines contain specific policies for fisheries and wildlife management activities in the wilderness, including guidelines pertaining to threatened and endangered species, chemical treatment, and fish stocking. These guidelines serve as a framework for cooperation among the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the States in the coordination of fish and wildlife management in wilderness areas. Along with existing policy (FSM 2640 and FSM 2323.3), these guidelines contain the direction necessary to carry out management activities in wilderness areas.

Within the guidelines, it is incumbent upon land managers, State fisheries and wildlife managers to work together to meet wilderness and fisheries management objectives, whether managing for endangered species recovery, community diversity, or for recreational fishing opportunities. State and Federal agencies and their partners, working together in a spirit of cooperation, can resolve most issues that may arise to their mutual satisfaction. Conflicts, which cannot be resolved at the local level, should be elevated to the regional forester/state director level and then, if necessary, to the Chief/Executive Director level for resolution.

Our agencies share a common vision and compatible goals for wilderness management. It is important that successful resource management bonds remain strong. Just as wilderness is a complex of resources, habitats, and communities, the management of those resources is best accomplished by mutually coordinated efforts. This approach is consistent with ecosystem management principles, with sound science, and with common sense. We reaffirm

our shared vision and look forward to continued successful collaborative approaches to natural resource, fisheries and wildlife management in wilderness.

Sincerely,

for JACK WARD THOMAS
Chief, USDA Forest Service

for MIKE DOMBECK
Director, USDI Bureau of Land Management

R. MAX PETERSON
Executive Vice President, International Association
of Fish and Wildlife Agencies