The Forest Service and Its Clients: Input to Forest Service Decision-Making

William B. Devall
THE FOREST SERVICE AND ITS CLIENTS: INPUT TO FOREST SERVICE DECISION-MAKING

By William B. Devall*

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1960's, the United States Forest Service, along with other federal government agencies concerned with the natural environment, underwent many changes. Partially as a result of the environmental movement and the renewed interest in natural resources, the Forest Service began to broaden the scope of its activities and to encourage more input to the decision-making process from diverse client and constituent groups.\(^1\) New federal laws, including the Wilderness Act of 1964\(^2\) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969\(^3\) increased the visibility and complexity of Forest Service decision-making. Many client and constituent groups lobbied for changes and continue to agitate for more changes in Forest Service policies and procedures.\(^4\)

This article discusses the input to Forest Service decision-making at the level of the Forest Supervisor. It describes how diverse publics attempt to influence the Forest Service, who makes what kind of input to the Forest Supervisor, and how different client groups relate with one another and with local Forest Service officers.\(^5\)

Data collected in Six Rivers National Forest in northwestern California are presented to illustrate the process by which groups and individuals help formulate policy. A heuristic model of interorganizational relations is presented.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before proceeding, several terms used in this article must be defined.

*Clients* are those groups and individuals who receive some service from a government agency. These may include economic benefits
such as cutting timber, grazing cattle, or holding a mining claim on lands administered by the Forest Service. Recreationists are also included as clients. Among these are backpackers who hike in wilderness areas in national forests, hunters, fishermen, campers at Forest Service campgrounds, and recreationists who take off-road vehicles onto Forest Service lands.

Constituencies are groups or individuals to whom the agency is accountable. The Congress, and particularly specific congressional committees, hold federal agencies accountable to their policies. The Congress establishes agencies and makes annual appropriations for their continued existence. The Senate and House Interior and Insular Affairs Committees, along with the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, are particularly important for the Forest Service because legislation affecting the Service is referred to these committees. A federal government agency may also be accountable to other administrative agencies. The Office of Management and the Budget, for example, tries to implement the fiscal policies and the overall style of the incumbent President on the federal bureaucracy.

Some groups may be both clients and constituents. The Sierra Club, for instance, receives benefits by using public lands for Club-sponsored outings and at the same time, presuming to act "in the public interest," holds the Forest Service accountable for its decisions. The Forest Service is not by law required to consult with or win the agreement of the Sierra Club before making a decision, but the Club has engaged in court action in attempts to overturn Forest Service decisions which the Club leaders felt were not "in the public interest."

The importance of client groups is emphasized by Wildavsky, who concludes that if an agency does not have client groups to serve, it will try to create them. An agency, such as the United States Information Agency or the Peace Corps, which does not have domestic client groups will have difficulties getting appropriations from the Congress, according to Wildavsky, and difficulties with other government agencies in the jockeying for power and prestige.

The decision-making process discussed in this article is seen as an input-output process but not as a mechanistic process. It is a process which can better be understood by an interactionist perspective. Input is defined as all written and oral communications by clients and constituents who provide information to aid in the decision-making process or which attempt to influence the decision
process. The input to the Forest Supervisor and his staff include statements of personal preferences by clients, statements of preference for philosophy of management of natural resources, and technical information concerning some aspect of a national forest (wildlife, timber volume, etc.). Input may be in the form of a letter, public testimony, personal meeting with Forest Supervisor, or court action, among other means. The output is a policy decision or decision on a substantive issue—the boundaries of a wilderness proposal, the routing of a road, the type of recreationists allowed in a certain area, etc.

The decision-making process consists of at least the following activities:

1) recognizing an occasion for decision, i.e., a need or an opportunity for action;
2) analysis of the existing situation;
3) identification of alternative courses of action;
4) assessment of the probable consequences of each alternative; and
5) choice from among alternatives.

Informal interaction, such as a telephone call, between spokesmen for some client and constituent groups occur at any time, but at various times presentation of formal statements on proposed Forest Service policy is required by law, usually between steps four and five of the decision process. Conflict may occur, of course, not only over the choice among alternative courses of action but at any stage of the decision-making process including the definition of the problem itself. Although final authority on major decisions, such as the establishment of wilderness areas, lies in the Chief Forester or the Congress, the Forest Supervisor of each national forest participates intimately in the process. Because action is frequently initiated at this level, the focus of this paper is on this middle management level.

The Forest Service

The Forest Service has been described in books by Kaufman and Frome. Writing in 1961, Kaufman said that the Service was noted, among federal government agencies, for the autonomy of field officers and the short chain of command from district ranger (the lowest line officer) to the Chief Forester, who is the top career officer directly responsible to the Secretary of Agriculture. Only two steps separate a district ranger from the Chief Forester: the Forest
Supervisor of each national forest, and the Regional Forester of each of the nine regions in the United States.

The Regional Foresters have wide autonomy in decision-making. The implementation of legislation and directives from the Chief Forester may be quite different in different regions because of the philosophy, personality, and priorities of different Regional Foresters and the different problems in each region.9

The Forest Service makes decisions under several constraints. First are the Congressional mandates embodied in the organic acts which state the purposes and goals of the Service.10 The Forest Service also operates under other federal laws establishing land use policies such as the Wilderness Act11 and the National Environmental Policy Act.12 Congress may also effect its will through the budgetary process, through reports of Congressional committees, and through expressions of the will of key members of the Congress in the form of statements and criticism of proposed Forest Service policy.13

Executive constraints are effected through the issuance of Presidential executive orders and the use of executive budgetary powers through the Office of Management and the Budget. The Forest Service is also accountable to the Council on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Judicial action to restrain the Service may be exercised through suits which charge errors in decisions made by the Forest Service based on different interpretations of the legislative mandates of certain acts or on interpretations of the federal Constitution. Examples of this kind of action include the Sierra Club suit concerning Mineral King, a proposed ski development in Sequoia National Forest, California,14 and the Sierra Club suit concerning de facto wilderness adjacent to “primitive areas” in national forests.15

New bills are proposed in virtually every session of the Congress to restrict the actions of the Service in certain areas or direct the Service to carry out certain actions.16

Within these legal and executive constraints, decisions at all levels in the Forest Service may be tempered by the ideological preference and personal desires of key personnel in the Service, including Regional Foresters, Forest Supervisors, and district rangers. Because of the tradition of decentralization in the Service, one of the basic administrative problems has been to develop uniform implementation of basic policy across the country while maintaining the discretionary authority and autonomy of line officers. As
Kaufman describes the Service (as of 1961), conformity of district rangers was encouraged and deviation was discouraged by several tactics including the frequent rotation of field officers, the requirement of detailed reporting of activities of rangers and supervisors, the in-service training of personnel in new legislation, and the building of identification with the Service as an organization and the sanctioning of behavior which departs from official policy.

**Changing Directives on Decision-Making**

Prior to 1964, various publics who did not utilize the land for economic exploitation were severely restricted in their formal input to Forest Service decision-making. The people who had input, prior to 1964, were the representatives of timber companies, ranchers, claims holders, foresters outside the Service, and a few recreation groups in local areas such as the Sierra Club in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. There was no legislative requirement to hold public hearings on proposed Forest Service policy. No person who could not show direct and personal harm from Forest Service action had standing to sue the Service in federal courts. There were no national directives which required regional foresters or forest supervisors to seek out on a regular and systematic basis the opinions of clients and constituents on proposed Forest Service policy. Kaufman describes how the Service encouraged district rangers to seek out and listen to the views of leaders of local communities and clients of the Service and he indicates that local client groups and individual landowners, ranchers, and timbermen may have attempted to influence decisions. But Kaufman's primary emphasis is the ways in which the Service attempted to keep its district rangers from being "captured" by local client groups. If a district ranger "took the point of view" of local clients, the Service feared he would be more responsive to local groups than to the directives from the Chief Forester.

Beginning with the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Congress has required that the Forest Service hold formal public hearings on certain proposed policies at specified stages in the decision-making process. Under the Wilderness Act a formal public hearing is required on each Forest Service proposal to the Congress concerning the reclassification of "primitive areas" (an administrative zoning of roadless wilderness) to "wilderness areas" (each of which must be approved by the Congress).
Also, the Forest Service, in the late 1960's, began to change its administrative requirements for public participation. These were codified in a 1971 directive from the Chief Forester. Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors were directed to increase the formal and informal input from interested people. In that directive the Chief Forester wrote:

The Forest Service is committed to seeking greater public involvement in its decision-making process, indeed, we welcome it. Our statements of objectives and policy guides as embodied in "Framework for the Future," issued in February, are major objectives of the Forest Service. One of the policy guides listed as in support of this objective is "to seek out and obtain local and national views in the process of policy and program formulation. . . . This we shall do."

Broad discretion is given Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors in implementing this directive. Besides the few formal public hearings required by statute, the guidelines state, "... the decisions as to which proposals or projects will require public involvement and its extent will rest with the Forest Service officer." Forest Supervisors are admonished to use a variety of techniques, including informal "listening sessions" to receive opinion. The directive goes on to say that "awareness"

means a lot more than listening to individuals and groups that come to you. It means keeping fully informed as to the attitudes, interests and desires of local, regional, and national publics. It means seeking out and listening to individuals and groups which may have traditionally opposed certain aspects of Forest Service management. It means spending as much time and effort at listening as we do at informing. It means that every technique and medium that we use to inform and involve the public should have built into it a procedure for eliciting public response.

A number of techniques for soliciting opinion from the public are suggested in the directive including formal public hearings, public meetings, informal small group meetings, advisory committees, ad hoc committees, seeking visits from people on the "key-men" list, press releases inviting comments, "show-me trips," etc.

There are several bases of conflict over Forest Service policy. First there may be conflict over "expert" versus "political" bases of making decisions. In the Forest Service the conflict between "experts" (professional foresters, hydrologists, landscape architects, etc.) and laymen frequently revolves around the question of "com-
petency to judge” the operations of the agency. Leaders of some groups, such as the Sierra Club, complain that the Service is willing to listen only to professionally trained foresters who share a similar ideology with Forest Service personnel.

Other conflicts occur over the interpretation of concepts like “wilderness” and “multiple use.” The concept of “multiple use” emerged as a slogan and doctrine of the Forest Service over several decades. Under the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the Forest Service is expected to administer federal lands to maximize several goals for the greatest benefit of the most people in the long run. Specifically mentioned uses include timber harvesting and regeneration, mineral exploration, watershed protection, wildlife, fisheries, recreation, and wilderness preservation.

Conflict may occur over the priority of these uses by different client groups. One example of conflict between recreation groups concerns wilderness. The Wilderness Act prohibits motorized vehicles in wilderness areas. Because of this, the American Motorcycle Association and the 4-Wheel Drive Associations have strongly opposed the expansion of the wilderness system. Conversely, many backpacking and mountain-climbing groups have strongly supported the establishment of more wilderness areas.

Six Rivers National Forest

The research reported here was conducted in Humboldt and Del Norte counties in northwestern California. Six Rivers National Forest is one of nineteen national forests in Region 5, which encompasses the state of California. The headquarters for Six Rivers National Forest is located in Eureka, a major city on the north coast of California. Although the resource base, including amount of timber, grasslands, mining claims, etc., varies greatly from one national forest to another, and although Six Rivers National Forest was not randomly selected from national forests in California, many of the basic conflicts, including the establishment of wilderness areas and the meaning of multiple use, are illustrated in this national forest.

There are billions of board feet of timber in this national forest, although how many billions of feet of “marketable” timber is a subject of considerable controversy between experts and between the timber industry and the Sierra Club. The “old-growth” (never cut) timber in this national forest is appreciating in value and is in great demand by the lumber industry. Six Rivers also includes
a large amount of wilderness (much of it in old-growth timber), and provides wildlife habitat and watershed protections. There are many rivers running through the national forest with good runs of steelhead and salmon.

Humboldt County has a population of approximately 100,000 people, while Del Norte County has less than 14,000. A branch of the state university is located near Eureka and the faculty, faculty wives, students, and personnel connected with government-sponsored research programs attached to the university act as resource consultants to the Forest Service and as political activists. All of the environmental groups plus the local chapters of the Society of American Foresters, and naturalist groups (such as the Wildlife Society) had professors serving on their executive committees during the time of the field study. Both counties are heavily dependent, economically, on the timber industry. Withdrawals of timber lands for wilderness areas and parks such as the Redwood National Park, which lies entirely within Humboldt and Del Norte counties, have been bitterly fought by the local county Boards of Supervisors, labor unions, chambers of commerce, and the timber industry, and have been supported by the Sierra Club and other preservation and environmental groups. The Forest Service itself opposed the Redwood Park Act because some timber lands in Six Rivers National Forest were exchanged for private timber lands to form part of the park.

From 1968 through 1972, the Forest Service held public meetings and “listening sessions” on several wilderness proposals (Siskiyou, Trinity Alps) along with “listening session” concerning the Forest Service Roadless Areas Inventory. Conflict also occurred over the “multiple use” plan of the Forest, a proposed doe hunt, routing of highways, timber sales, and regulation of predators.

Besides reading the files of the Forest Supervisor concerning written statements submitted to him concerning proposed wilderness areas, attending “listening sessions” and formal public hearings, and interviewing the Forest Supervisor and Regional Forester, the research design called for interviews with leaders of client groups and individuals on the “key man” list maintained by Six Rivers Forest Supervisor.

A “key man” list is maintained by some but not all national forests. Additions and deletions are made at the discretion of the Forest Supervisor, deputy supervisor, or key staff members. It consists of industry groups, recreation, conservation, civic action and chamber of commerce groups, local government officials, state
and federal agencies with offices in the Eureka area, and a few “influential” persons not identified with any specific organization. These “influentials” in Six Rivers National Forest include the president of a large local construction firm who has frequently supported more timber harvesting in the national forests, large ranchers in the county, and editors of local newspapers. Forest Service press releases, notices of public hearings, timber sales prospectuses, etc., are regularly sent to contacts on the “key man” list. Forty-five separate organizations were included on this list at the time of the field study along with the names of two individuals and the news editors of nineteen radio and television stations or newspapers.

Leaders of groups ranging from the local chapter of the Sierra Club and Audubon Society (both national organizations) to timbermen’s associations and ranchers’ associations were interviewed. The president or some other member of the executive committee of each group was contacted and interviews were scheduled with two leaders from each group.

HEURISTIC MODEL

All of the organizations on the “key man” list were considered part of the organization-set of Six Rivers National Forest. An organization-set is a matrix of groups which interact with the focal organization. In our case, the focal organization is the Forest Service. The focal organization (Forest Service) is “... embedded in an environment of other organizations as well as in a complex of norms, values, and collectivities of society at large.”

Table 1 is a list of client groups which are directly affected by

| TABLE 1 |
| Partial List of Types of Users and Organizations Potentially Affected by Decisions of Six Rivers National Forest, California |

1. Individual landowners of private inholdings surrounded by Forest Service lands.
3. Native Americans (organized in Hoopa Tribal Council).
4. Small claims holders, mining and mineral.
5. Counter culture (“hippies,” etc., living on mining claims or cabins in Forest Service lands).
6. Ranchers (sheep and cattle) who hold permits to graze on Forest Service lands. (Organized in the National Wool Grower’s Association, Western Cattlemen’s Association, etc.) Pomona Grange, Ferndale, Humboldt County Cattlemen’s Association.
TABLE 1 (Continued)

7. Other government agencies:
   California Department of Water Resources
   California Division of Fish and Game
   California State Division of Forestry
   California Division of Beaches and Parks
   California Division of Highways
   California Highway Patrol
   County Boards of Supervisors
   Bureau of Indian Affairs
   U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
   Bureau of Land Management
   National Park Service
   Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

8. Professional Associations:
   Society of American Foresters (Jedediah Smith Chapter)
   Humboldt State University Forestry Club.

9. Lumber Companies:
   Georgia-Pacific Corporation
   Simpson Timber Corporation
   Many small lumber mills
   Timber industry associations
   American Forest Products Association
   Redwood Region Logging Conference
   Sierra-Cascade Logging Conference
   Western Wood Products Association.

10. Recreational groups and environmental organizations:
    North Coast 4-Wheel Drive Association
    American Skiing Association
    Boot 'n' Blister Club
    Trout Unlimited
    Sierra Club
    Audubon Society
    Boy Scouts
    Wildlife Society
    Native Plant Society
    Northcoast Fly Fisherman's Association
    American Motorcycle Association.

11. Commercial Fishermen
    Humboldt Fisherman's Wives Association
    Humboldt Bay Fisheries Association.

12. Hunters
    Humboldt Wildlife Conservation Club.


14. Other users:
    Car campers
    Commercial packers (wilderness campers and hunters)
    Snowmobile users
    Motorcyclists.

15. Mining Industry
    Western Mining Council, Lower Trinity Chapter.

16. Labor:
    AFL-CIO, Central Labor Council, Humboldt County.
decisions made by the Six Rivers National Forest Supervisor and by line officers. The diversity of this list indicates the extensiveness and diversity of the Forest Service's organization-set and its heterogeneity.\textsuperscript{28}

Informative interaction, supportive interaction, and \textit{ad hoc} coalitions occur between several groups. \textit{Informative interaction} means there is contact and exchange of information about pending Forest Service policy decisions. \textit{Supportive interaction} is defined as coordinated efforts to present testimony at public hearings, joint efforts to analyze Forest Service proposals, etc. \textit{Coalitions} can be defined as continuous interaction between leaders of groups sometimes leading to the formation of new groups, \textit{ad hoc} committees to coordinate specific projects, or "front organizations" which take on a new name but involve the leaders of established groups who don't wish for tactical reasons to use their club name on a specific issue.

There are several examples of coalitions. Five environmental groups, for instance, formed an Environmental Center in Humboldt County. Along with information on many other issues, pending Forest Service decisions are discussed and information disseminated through the Center (the organizations were Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Zero Population Growth, Phoenix Society, and People's Lobby). In another example, timber companies buying from the Forest Service formed a trade association, the Western Timber Association. Seventy-five percent of the allowable cut in California is bought by member corporations. A professional staff of the association prepares and delivers testimony at Forest Service hearings, reviews pending policy in each national forest in California, and suggests policy to the Board of Directors.

Chart I shows, in schematic form, a partial organization-set. Interaction between organizations to coordinate input to the Forest Service and between the organizations and the Forest Service are indicated. Each organization in the set has its own membership and constituency of interested peoples. Organizations such as the Sierra Club are national organizations and the local chapter of the Club must respond to national as well as local exigencies of their own organization. Other organizations, such as the Humboldt Wildlife Conservation Club, have no national affiliation and respond to their members and to the Forest Service without recourse to a national hierarchy.

Table 2 is an interaction matrix showing the flow of information between organizations in the organization-set.\textsuperscript{29} Between 1969 and 1973 the Forest Supervisor requested input on six issues concerning
CHART 1
PARTIAL ORGANIZATION-SET:
SIX RIVERS NATIONAL FOREST
**TABLE 2**

**INTERACTION MATRIX: SOME ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION-SET OF SIX RIVERS NATIONAL FOREST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Given By</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>Aud.</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>WTA</th>
<th>HWCC</th>
<th>SAF</th>
<th>AFL</th>
<th>ACF</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>NPS</th>
<th>AMA</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>FG</th>
<th>NPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Society</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boot 'n' Blister</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Timber Assoc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humboldt Wildlife Conservation Club</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of American Foresters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFL-CIO Assoc. of Consulting Foresters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humboldt Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Plant Society</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Motorcycle Association</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Div. of Highways</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Div. of Forestry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Dept. Fish/Game</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the management of Six Rivers National Forest. Four of these involved wilderness (Siskiyou Study Area, Trinity Alps listening session conducted by the Supervisors of Six Rivers, Shasta, and Klamath National Forests, and the public hearing on the Forest Service proposal for the Trinity Alps and the Roadless Areas Inventory). These wilderness studies involved adjacent national forests and the decisions concerning these topics were made by the Regional or Chief Forester and by the Congress. The other two were local issues involving a proposal for a doe hunt in Six Rivers National Forest and review of the "Multiple Use Plan" of Six Rivers National Forest.

The matrix shows on how many of these issues leaders of an organization initiated interaction—asking for cooperation, giving information, or requesting a joint presentation to the Forest Service—and who received these requests. The matrix does not show the intensity of interaction between organizations in the organization-set or the relative power of each group in their attempts to influence Forest Service policy. From our analysis three organizations emerged as having sustained input at the local and regional offices of the Forest Service on a wide scope of issues—the Sierra Club, Western Timber Association, and Chambers of Commerce. These associations represent major divisions in the organization-set and are powerful for different reasons. The Sierra Club has a paid staff at the national level, does continuous lobbying in Washington, and has established coalitions with other national environmental organizations like the Wilderness Society and the Audubon Society. The Western Timber Association represents the timber companies which buy timber from the Forest Service. As a major industrial group they attempt to influence the labor unions whose members work for the lumber corporations. The Chambers of Commerce represent the business community in the county.

Because much of the input to the Forest Service is highly technical (including estimates of timber volume, effects of timber harvesting on soils, etc.) and because some battles, such as those over the establishment of wilderness areas, are fought across the state (or nation) by the same organizations, the moves between the Forest Service and various client groups such as the Sierra Club and Western Timber Association resemble a ballet. All parties know that the Forest Supervisor in Six Rivers National Forest is not going to make the final decision on the issue, but each organization wants to make input in ways which receive favorable press coverage,
which will have impact on the Congressional delegation, or which provide the bases for negotiations between the organization leaders and the Regional Forester or Chief Forester.

Although many writers indicate that having a paid staff allows the organization to be more effective in its presentations to the Forest Service, this was not true in Humboldt County. The labor unions and Chamber of Commerce, both with paid executive directors, were less consistent and thorough in their input to the Forest Supervisor than organizations relying entirely on volunteers.

Although the Sierra Club and Audubon Society have paid staff at the national (and in some cases, regional) level, the work at the local level is done entirely by volunteers. A few interested and involved volunteers were “sparkplugs” for input to the Forest Service. In our interviews, we uncovered two people who were mentioned by interviewees at least five times as “experts” on the Forest Service. One of these was a private forester who owned a consulting forester firm in Eureka. He was active in the Chamber of Commerce and the Society of American Foresters. The executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce told us, “We refer all questions about the Forest Service to George. He’s head of our natural resources committee and they review proposed policy and bring it back to the Board (of Directors of the Chamber). We usually go along with what he does.”

The other “sparkplug” was a person who worked as a volunteer with the Sierra Club and spent innumerable hours working on wilderness projects. He wrote the statement which was presented in the name of the Club on the Trinity Alps wilderness proposal of the Forest Service, and performed many other tasks in relations between the Club and the Service. He also mobilized other environmental groups to write testimony for certain issues, including the Audubon Society and Boot ‘n’ Blister, a local outing group.

Our purpose was not to survey the relations between leaders and followers in voluntary organizations or specifically to study the politics of voluntary associations in this study. However, we should note the ways in which leaders of different types of groups relate to their members in terms of input to the Forest Service. Several groups in the organization-set, including Audubon, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Humboldt Wildlife Conservation Club, AFL-CIO, and Boot ‘n’ Blister, used their newsletters and meetings of the group to mobilize members to participate in public hearings and “listening sessions” held by the Forest Service. Leaders spent
much time educating the members to the decision-making process in the Forest Service and the importance of up-coming decisions. Members were educated in the concepts used by the Forest Service (such as the meaning of wilderness in the Wilderness Act), and in the ways they could make inputs to the Forest Service. Leaders of the Sierra Club even offered to help members write testimony to be delivered at public meetings. As one leader of the Sierra Club said, "We are trying to get the troops out to these meetings to show the Forest Service the interests of local citizens." "Getting out the troops" was done more for the impact this might have on the Congress or Regional Forester, however, than on the local forestry official, for those higher authorities have the final authority on major land-use decisions.

Although this article does not discuss factionalism in voluntary organizations, it should be pointed out that associations are frequently beset with conflict. Leaders battle each other for political, philosophical, and personal reasons. In the local group (Redwood Chapter-North) of the Sierra Club for example, during the period from 1969 through 1972, three men contested for the right to be the official Study Coordinator for the Trinity Alps Wilderness Proposal.

Conflict between leaders or factions within an organization or lack of effective leadership inhibits input from an organization to the Forest Service. In voluntary organizations concerned with outdoor recreation (backpacking, hiking, fishing, etc.) or environmental groups (Audubon, Sierra Club, etc.), particularly in Humboldt County where a large percentage of their members are college students, college faculty members, employees of government agencies and exurbanites from the San Francisco area, there is a high turnover in membership. A small cadre of volunteers who had been in these clubs over four years provided liaison over the whole decision-making period with members of the clubs and with the Forest Service. In the Sierra Club, for example, which in 1970 and 1971 had over twenty percent turnover in membership nationwide, the local membership and regional constituency had to be re-educated each time the Forest Service proceeded another step in making decisions concerning the Trinity Alps wilderness.

Professional (Society of American Foresters) and business organizations, particularly lumber industry organizations, had greater continuity in membership and input to the Forest Service in northwestern California.

Not all client groups of the Forest Service in northwestern Cali-
For example, campers in developed Forest Service campgrounds who are not members of any recreational organization but who use Forest Service facilities with some frequency have little discernible input. People squatting on Forest Service lands or at least living for a season in the wilderness and who avoid organizational membership are not represented although they are clients of the Service. It is difficult to estimate the population of these clients, much less their attitudes and opinions toward the Forest Service. However, in connection with another study which the author completed of wilderness users in the Marble Mountains Wilderness Area (which lies in Klamath National Forest adjacent to Six Rivers National Forest) backcountry users were asked their impressions of the Forest Service. Six of the thirty-five parties interviewed had no members who were members of any recreational group or environmental group. None had ever given testimony or written a letter to the Forest Service. All six of these wanted the wilderness preserved but they had no intention of “playing the Forest Service game” as one said.

Besides the voluntary associations, lumber companies, etc., other government agencies—federal, state, and local—are part of the organization-set of the Forest Service. The Service is mandated under various federal laws to coordinate some of its programs with other agencies. Rivalry and conflict between government agencies is as much a part of the way of life of government bureaucracy as cooperation, however. The long-term rivalry between the National Park Service and the Forest Service, for example, is widely known. In Six Rivers National Forest, the Forest Service, as noted earlier, opposed the establishment of the Redwood National Park because the Act required transfer of Forest Service lands to private owners in exchange for prime old-growth redwood groves included in the park. The Superintendent of the Redwood National Park told our interviewers that he maintained routine communications with the Forest Service on issues which might affect the national park, but not on any other topics.

Besides the superintendent of the Redwood National Park, we interviewed the supervisor or deputy supervisor of the State Division of Highways, State Department of Fish and Game, and the State Division of Forestry. All of these supervisors said their relations with the Forest Service were limited to technical and routine discussions. In some cases a specific agency coordinated actions with
the Forest Service in drafting staff proposals for submission to higher authorities in their own agency, such as environmental impact statements on proposed highways across Forest Service lands filed by the Division of Highways.

There was a "sense of territory" in the answers of district supervisors of state agencies. They all said, in similar terms, "we do not intrude on their field of operation and they don't tell us how to run our show." Local officers of state agencies have little autonomy to commit their agency to specific action with a federal agency. Any changes in policy are negotiated between the Sacramento office of the state agency and the Regional Forester for California.

Among the state agencies, only the supervisor of the Department of Fish and Game said he had discussed wilderness, timber management, the roadless areas inventory or other controversial issues with Six Rivers National Forest personnel during the last two years. The Department of Fish and Game is required to file statements concerning these matters with its Sacramento headquarters.

Where there are differences of opinion between the personnel of state agencies and the Forest Service, the pros and cons of each alternative are compiled and forwarded to higher authorities in both agencies. District supervisors of state agencies said their Sacramento office must authorize a district supervisor to speak at a public hearing. In one instance, the Department of Fish and Game at the local level wrote an impact statement on a Forest Service wilderness proposal but was not authorized to present this at the public hearing called by the Service on the wilderness proposal. A copy of the report was given, however, by a staff member of the Department to a Sierra Club leader and parts of the suppressed report were used in the Sierra Club statement on the Forest Service wilderness proposal.

Before summarizing our findings and discussing the Forest Service reaction to input from clients one other type of input should be mentioned—the use of the federal courts by client groups attempting to influence Forest Service actions. After exhausting administrative appeals, one client group during the study period (1969–1973) sought court action to force a decision on the supervisor of Six Rivers National Forest. The Sierra Club sued to stop timber cutting in certain areas of Six Rivers National Forest until the Trinity Alps reclassification was completed. The judge granted the injunction sought by the Club, but a local timber company, using the attorneys of the Western Timber Association, filed a
counterclaim against local leaders of the Sierra Club for punitive damages for seeking to void contracts between the company and the Forest Service. The judge dismissed this suit stating that the Sierra Club was only seeking to exercise its rights under the First Amendment.34

THE FOREST SERVICE REACTION TO CLIENT GROUPS

The Forest Supervisor in Six Rivers National Forest received an increasing quantity of input from clients between 1969 and 1973. Not all clients of the Forest Service were organized into interest groups, however. Among those client groups who did have input there was a wide range in the extensiveness of input. We have seen that although the Six Rivers National Forest staff did not have to face the intensity of conflict in northern New Mexico described by Knowlton35 and Friesema,36 there were conflicts over wilderness areas, doe hunts, and a wide variety of other issues.

The Forest Supervisor realized that some client groups accused the Forest Service of bias. The Sierra Club leaders accused the Forest Service of partiality toward "timber beasts" as one leader put it. Leaders of the Sierra Club feel that the Service "listened to" timber companies more than to environmentalists.37

On the other hand, the Western Wood Products Association accused the Forest Supervisor of Six Rivers National Forest, in one case, of being partial to the Sierra Club. In a letter to the Forest Supervisor in Six Rivers National Forest in February, 1971, a leader of the Western Wood Products Association asked, rhetorically,

Is there something going on between the Forest Service and the Sierra Club which we are not aware of? Is this user group privy to Forest Service plans that have not been shown to our people or to the general public? . . .

We would like to believe the Forest Service sincerely does want to receive and give weight to the legitimate concerns of various publics, including your timber sales customers and neighboring private forest owners in planning for land management. We would not like to believe that the Forest Service is playing off the various concerned publics to align the most votes behind some predetermined course of land use allocations.

It is important that we know how the Forest Service can provide reassurance which would bolster our lagging faith that reason tempered with professional judgment will prevail in national forest man-
agement. If the applause meter is now a necessary piece of equipment, we need to know how it is calibrated and who is doing the clapping.

We could find no record of a formal response from the Forest Service to this letter.

This was only an extreme statement of distrust of the intentions of the Forest Service. The theme that “the Forest Service doesn’t really want to hear from me” or “they only listen to the timber industry” ran through our discussions with wilderness users in the Marble Mountains and with five of our interviews with environmental leaders.

In its public statements and in the public meetings with client groups, the Forest Service during the period of our study carefully attempted to maintain an even-handed approach, although some individual staff members expressed strong personnel preferences and provided information to conservation groups such as the Sierra Club.

Formal public meetings on proposed Forest Service policy is a recent innovation in Six Rivers National Forest. Prior to the meetings on the Siskiyou Wilderness Proposal in 1969, the only meetings where the Forest Service and clients discussed proposed policy were at timber operators information meetings called by the Service. The Siskiyou Wilderness Proposal produced statements from 149 organizations including school districts, lumber companies, professional organizations, local governments, and service and recreation organizations along with statements from 231 individuals. All of these organizations except eight service clubs plus the Sierra Club opposed the establishment of a wilderness area.

With increasing input from diverse publics the Forest Service had to face the problem of how to use this input. The question was asked repeatedly by those offering testimony at the Roadless Area Inventory Meetings (May, 1972), “what is the Service going to do with my testimony?” The 1971 Directive from the Chief Forester provided some examples of how to categorize letters and oral testimony, but no orders on how to use the data in making a decision were specifically given by the Chief Forester.

In a “Summary and Evaluation of Public Comments of the Roadless Area Review, California Region” the Regional Forester provided a brief description of some kinds of testimony offered by different types of groups (Chambers of Commerce, Environmental
and Outing organizations, Timber Industry, etc.). He went on to say, "While there was no area that had overwhelming or even general uniform support, some areas had, except for general opposition to any more wilderness in the State, little specific opposition. Following are examples of these areas. These do not necessarily indicate the recommendations made by the Regional Forester to the Chief Forester."

Thus the Regional Forester refused to say specifically whether or not the Forest Service was counting votes (pros and cons in testimony).  

In another instance, after a public meeting on the Trinity Alps wilderness, this researcher asked the multiple-use officer of Six Rivers National Forest if he was satisfied with the testimony. He said no, he was very disappointed because he wanted more specific data on biological communities, soils, wildlife, detailed descriptions of specific areas and why they should or should not be included in the wilderness. All the Forest Service got, he went on to say, were very general "pro" or "con" wilderness statements. However, nothing in the leaflets or press releases of the Forest Service indicated what type of testimony was requested or would be most useful in making a decision.

Conclusions

We must conclude that Six Rivers National Forest was successful in increasing the quantity of input on major decisions from 1969 to 1973. A broad spectrum of client groups are making input at public meetings. At the same time the Forest Supervisor had maintained a public stance of impartiality between client groups.

During this period, 1969–1973, the Forest Service nationally had lost some autonomy in making decisions and faces more reviews of its decisions by the mass media, interested and diverse client groups, the courts, and the Congress.

The staff of Six Rivers National Forest has had problems maintaining credibility with some client groups and both clients and the staff of Six Rivers National Forest have been uncertain as to what kind of input the Forest Service was seeking from clients and how the Forest Service would use this input.

The complexity of decision-making, the multiplicity of clients, and the strong organizations among different types of clients means that no one client group can dominate a decision of Six Rivers National Forest. However, the Sierra Club more than any other client
group precipitated major decisions in Six Rivers National Forest, such as requesting the Siskiyou Wilderness Study, appealing the multiple-use plan of Six Rivers National Forest, making wilderness recommendations on the Trinity Alps, etc. Transcripts of testimony at public hearings include more comments about the Sierra Club, its goals, specific proposals and ideology by other client groups of the Forest Service than about all other client groups combined.

The Forest Supervisor of Six Rivers National Forest continues to say that he will use input “as appropriate” consistent with “professional decision-making.” He refuses to act as a formal mediator between different client groups. Meanwhile certain client groups such as the Sierra Club continue to seek through the courts, the Congress, and through generating public pressure, to further restrict the autonomy of decision-making of the Forest Service at the local and national level.42

Footnotes

* Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, California State University at Humboldt.

1 As of this writing the increased public concern with environmental quality which occurred in the late 1960’s in the United States may have peaked and declined. See, A. Downs, Up and Down With Ecology—The ‘Issue—Attention Cycle,’ THE PUBLIC INTEREST 28 (Summer, 1972), for a discussion of the life cycle of ecology as a social issue.


5 These are questions which involve not only the Forest Service, but any federal agency which deals with complex decisions involving diverse interest groups. For an analysis of public input to decision-making in the Corps of Engineers, see, R. D. Wolff, INVOLVING THE PUBLIC AND THE HIERARCHY IN CORPS OF ENGINEERS’ SURVEY INVESTIGATIONS (Stanford, California: Stanford University Report EEP-45, 1971). Although the
Corps operates under a national directive to increase public involvement, there is much variation among different districts and few formal sources of information available to the general public.


9 M. Frome, *supra* n.9, at 36.


13 See, Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, *Clear-cutting on the Federal Timberlands*, 92d Cong., 2d Sess. (1972). The committee report noted the difficulty the Forest Service has in communicating with interested and involved citizens: “Recent Forest Service changes in policy (and they have been numerous) were perhaps somewhat defensive responses to pressures of environmental groups, rather than from energetic Forest Service initiative. As a consequence, the Service has had difficulty communicating effectively with its critics, and its image has suffered. Its numerous actions in the
right direction are either unknown, not understood, or brushed aside. They have made little impact.” The Forest Service responded to this statement by releasing a revised set of guidelines for clearcutting of Forest Service lands (directive of Chief Forester, June 22, 1972).


18 H. Kaufman, supra n.7, at 75–80.


20 Many authors since Max Weber have discussed the development of bureaucracy and the relations between “expert” and “political” authority and the relations between an organization and its environment. See, P. Selznick, TVA and the Grassroots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949). Selznick discusses the processes by which an agency may be coopted by the clients it serves so that the original goals of the agency are transformed. See also, P. Blau, and W. R. Scott, Formal Organizations: A Comparative Approach (San Francisco: Chandler, 1962) Ch. 2.


24 As defined in A Guide to Public Involvement in Decision-making, supra n.19.


26 See, W. Evan, The Inter-Organizational Field as a Focus for Inves-
tigation, in M. Brinkerhoff, and P. Kunz, eds., Complex Organizations and Their Environments (Dubuque, Iowa: William Brown Co., 1972) 326–340. See also, P. Blau, and W. R. Scott, supra n.20, Ch. 3.

27 W. Evan, supra n.26, at 327.

28 There has been a lack of sophisticated substructuring of the term environment into component dimensions. See, F. F. Emery, and E.L. Trist, The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments, in M. Brinkerhoff, and P. Kunz, eds., supra n.26, at 268–281.


31 See, Clawson, M. and B. Held, supra n.8, at 134–142, for a description of “public participation in federal land management.”

32 R. Lay, and W. B. Devall, Wilderness Campers and Car Campers, a Comparative Study (manuscript, 1975).

33 See, Frome, M., supra n.8, at Ch. 9.


36 H. P. Friesema, The Forest Service in Crisis in Northern New Mexico (Midwest Political Science Convention, 1971).

37 There is some evidence supporting this belief. See, G. J. Bultena, and J. C. Hendee, Foresters’ Views of Interest Group Positions on Forest Policy, Journal of Forestry (June 1972) 337–342. “The foresters included in this study almost unanimously aligned themselves with commercial interests on the issue of timber cutting and saw the Forest Service (their superiors) as favoring these interests.” Id. at 342.

38 A Guide to Public Involvement in Decision-making, supra n.19.


40 In six meetings around the state of California the Forest Service
received 859 oral and written comments. An additional 3,175 letters were received after the public meetings. No verbatim record was kept of the meetings. All letters were sent to the Regional Forester in San Francisco and were unavailable to this author for analysis.

Knowing that the FBI and other governmental agencies kept files of critical letters on the war in Vietnam and dossiers on dissenters, some residents of Humboldt County expressed the fear to this author that their name would end up in an FBI file if they criticized the Forest Service. There is no indication that this would happen, but as part of the federal government, the Forest Service carries the image of the governing regime.

None of this discussion, of course, resolves the philosophical and political question of who should have input and how much influence they should have with public agencies.