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Subject: Membership in Professional Societies

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs
and WO Staff

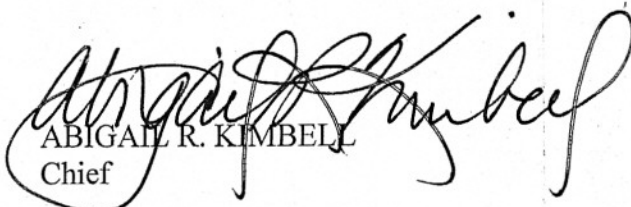
As stewards of forests and rangelands, we must respond to the many challenges of managing a wide variety of resources and values. To meet these various challenges, a diverse and highly qualified cadre of natural resource and other professionals is critical to assure that management approaches are based on the best science. More than ever, it is important for each of us to continue to learn, enhance our resource knowledge, and develop innovative approaches to cooperatively conserve this Nation's natural resources.

Membership, involvement, and participation in professional societies is important for keeping abreast of the emerging science, policy debates and changing societal demands. Professional societies provide an excellent opportunity for us to come together with professionals from other agencies, organizations, and interests. All of us are looking for ways to work more in a collaborative spirit. Professional societies can offer a challenging and supportive environment to explore new ways of accomplishing work.

There are as many choices of societies as there are disciplines and interests in the Forest Service. I support your involvement in professional societies and encourage you not only to belong, but also to participate. Forest Service employees are often leaders within our professions. Through participation and involvement with professionals from other agencies, tribes, academia, and the private sector, we will be more adept in continuing the essential resource leadership role in managing forests and rangelands.

I support Forest Service employees in their endeavors to assist local, State, and National activities of professional societies. In certain limited circumstances and with supervisor approval, official time or administrative leave may be granted to employees who assist these organizations. It is always important to distinguish between the broad scope of permissible actions an employee may take in their personal capacity and the very narrow scope of actions an employee may take officially. Detailed information is contained in Ethics Issuance 00-1, Participation in Non-Federal Organizations (available at www.usda.gov/ethics under "Rules of the Road). Contact your primary ethics advisor for further guidance.

If you are active in a professional society, I applaud your commitment and dedication. If you are not at this time, I hope you will consider the importance of society membership in your continued professional growth.


ABIGAIL R. KIMBELL
Chief

