

WHAT ARE NATIONAL FORESTS LOOKING FOR FROM PROFESSIONAL FORESTRY ORGANIZATIONS?

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Much has changed in the forestry profession since I received my Forest Management degree over 25 years ago. My perspective on the future role of professional organizations is shaped by my experience working almost exclusively on a number of national forests across the United States with all kinds of professional resource managers and/or advocates. My perspective is that professional organizations remain effective and relevant to the discussions and policies on the management of public land when they demonstrate leadership in a number of key areas. The Society of American Foresters has been very active in many of these leadership areas; however, some of the leadership venues appear to have a potential for greater consideration.

I would highlight six areas for additional discussion: development and retention of future professionals, ongoing assistance in the development of a land ethic, effective communication/education with policy makers at the local and national level, continuing education/workshops, ongoing relationships with the media on forestry issues, and effective partnering with other professional organizations.

National Forests continue to be a place where we should practice forestry to meet ecological, economic and social objectives but they also serve as a place where we can engage the larger population in discussions on the benefits and tradeoffs of sustainable forest practices. Members of professional forestry organizations should continue to be a key partner with the Forest Service and other public land management agencies in looking for more effective ways to accomplish this goal.