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## The Reader's View

# Women in trees

**By Linda Goodman**

*Special to The Times*

*Today, whittling the boys' club*

The treasures on our public national forests are spectacular, as the citizens of the great state of Washington well know. Your readers should be very interested in who will be in the leadership position when the current chief, Dale Bosworth, retires.

"[Bosworth says he's leaving forests job](#)" [Times, Local News, Jan. 13] included the comment by "executive director of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics" Andy Stahl, who characterizes the newly announced chief, Gail Kimbell, as "a strong proponent of turning the clock back in the Forest Service to the good old days of exploiting and extracting natural resources... "

We beg to differ.

The chief of the Forest Service oversees 192 million acres of National Forest System lands, approaching the net worth of the Fortune 500. Much of this wealth is less quantitative and represents the core values our country relishes of its clean water, clean air and recreation. National Forest System lands are the largest single source of water in the continental United States, providing more than 14 percent of available supply. These lands are the primary location source of renewable fresh water in the Western states.

The National Forest System has one of the largest intact anadromous fisheries in the world and is responsible for the habitat protection and improvement for diverse populations of terrestrial and aquatic species.

The National Forest System has 406 wildernesses totaling 35 million acres; 23 national recreation areas; and 4,367 miles of wild and scenic rivers. Several of the tallest waterfalls and the deepest gorge in North America are on our national forests, as is the largest expanse of mountain ranges in the continental United States.

Our careers have been devoted to stewarding America's national forests. As environmentally ethical employees of the Forest Service, we are enthused Kimbell will be the new chief.

Kimbell has vast experience in forest restoration and resource protection to lead this organization. She entered the Forest Service when women professionals were a rarity. Her stock in trade has been progressiveness, a straightforward willingness to reconcile difficult situations and an unwavering

commitment to stewardship. Kimbell is vastly respected inside the Forest Service, as well as among a broad spectrum of external constituents.

Thanks but no thanks for attempting to represent us, Andy Stahl. As professional women, we stand solidly with our new chief, Gail Kimbell.

*In addition to regional forester Linda Goodman, eight other women leaders in the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, signed this opinion.*

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