THIS IS WHO WE ARE

Values based.

Purpose driven.

Relationship focused.
OUR MISSION:
To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

For more than 100 years, the Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation.

Grounded in world-class science and technology—and rooted in communities—the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. As a Federal agency in service to the American people, the Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality. In doing this, the agency supports nature in sustaining life.
As the workforce of the Forest Service, we are the living embodiment of the agency and everything it stands for. When our agency’s **PURPOSE** serves as our North Star, when we focus on building strong **RELATIONSHIPS** with people and communities, and when we base everything we do on our agency’s shared **VALUES**, we bring our agency’s mission to life.

This guide is designed to help us to be **values based**, **purpose driven**, and **relationship focused**. It has been built with significant input from thousands of people across our agency’s workforce and from hundreds of partners and people representing diverse communities across the country. Their insight underscored what has always made us unique in the contributions we make to the people, the communities—including State, Tribal and local partners, and the country we serve.

Our agency’s purpose and values are at the heart of this guide, along with guidance on how we can build relationships that are essential to being a good neighbor and advancing our mission. It can help each of us “show up”—both with our colleagues and out in the communities we serve—in ways that authentically and effectively reflect who we are.

In short, this guide is about **WHO WE ARE**. Who we have **ALWAYS** been.
OUR PURPOSE AND VALUE
Why we do what we do

Our agency was created on the principle of managing the Nation’s natural resources “for the greatest good, for the greatest number, for the longest time.”

In the decades leading up to the 1905 founding of the Forest Service, rapid expansion in a Nation rich in natural resources was putting the sustainability of those resources at risk. The job of Forest Service employees in those days was clear—to provide quality water and timber for the Nation and protect local residents’ access to forest resources.

Today, our job as employees is still to provide resources and protect access to them, but our country and our world have changed since 1905. America’s population and the demand placed on its natural resources have grown. Forest and environmental science has evolved and become more robust and specific. Threats to natural resources—and our expertise in addressing them—have increased.
Yet, while much has changed, our AGENCY’S MISSION remains relevant.

MISSION
Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

MOTTO
Caring for the Land and Serving People

At the heart of our agency’s mission is OUR PURPOSE—the ultimate answer to why we do what we do. Everything we do—across our broad and diverse agency—is intended to help sustain forests and grasslands for present and future generations. Why? Because our stewardship work SUPPORTS NATURE IN SUSTAINING LIFE. This is the purpose that drives our agency’s mission and motivates our work across the agency. It’s been there from our agency’s very beginning, and it still drives us.

To advance our mission and serve our purpose, WE BALANCE THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM NEEDS OF PEOPLE AND NATURE by—

» Working in COLLABORATION with communities and our partners;
» Delivering world-class SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND LAND MANAGEMENT;
» Providing access to resources and experiences that promote ECONOMIC, ECOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL VITALITY; and
» CONNECTING PEOPLE to the land and one another.

This is our VALUE: what the Forest Service uniquely has to offer.
As employees of the Forest Service, each of us has a set of personal values that defines who we are and how we act. We also have shared core values that define our agency.

Our agency's values reflect the proud heritage of the Forest Service, expressed in the language of today's workforce.

These values are not just “ours;” they are often shared by the people and communities we serve. They connect us to what people outside the agency also care about and can be powerful starting points for spurring dialogue, finding common ground, and building enduring relationships.

Our Forest Service values are (and should be) evident in everything we do and how we do it. By themselves, they don’t tell us the solution to a problem. They guide us, telling us what to consider. In so doing, we advance our agency's mission in ways that allow us to stay true to who we are and what we believe.
AS EMPLOYEES OF THE FOREST SERVICE, WE BELIEVE IN

SERVICE.
To each other. To the American people. To the planet.

INTERDEPENDENCE.
Of all things. People and nature. Communities and colleagues. The past, present, and future.

CONSERVATION.
Protection when necessary. Preservation when appropriate. Restoration, when needed, and wise management for multiple use and enjoyment always.

DIVERSITY.
People and cultures. Perspectives and ideas. Experiences and ecosystems.

SAFETY.
In every way: physical, psychological, and social.
OUR UNIFORM
Wearing it well

When we put on the Forest Service uniform as agency employees, we represent something bigger than ourselves.

By wearing the uniform, we represent the agency's rich heritage of conservation and the USDA's legacy of—and commitment to—service. And while many of the reasons we wear the uniform are deeply personal—and inspire both pride and confidence—we also wear the uniform to advance the agency's mission.
WHEN TO WEAR THE UNIFORM

The Forest Service uniform is a symbol of our agency’s core values:

» Wearing the uniform is a reminder to others—and to ourselves—of the proud tradition of public SERVICE of which we are part.
» When we wear the uniform, we invite others to engage and learn with us, reflecting our recognition of the INTERDEPENDENCE at the heart of our collaborative efforts to steward the whole.
» The Forest Service uniform has always been—and always will be—a symbol, inviting people to join us in answering the call of CONSERVATION.
» When others see the diversity of people who wear the same Forest Service uniform, they see a reflection of our respect for DIVERSITY in all things.
» Our uniform can be a trusted beacon to help ensure the SAFETY of those who engage with and rely on our national forests and grasslands.

BECOMING MORE VISIBLE IS THE FIRST STEP IN ENGAGING PEOPLE AS PARTNERS IN STEWARDING THE WHOLE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF US ALL.
Trust is central to the Forest Service mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

As employees of the Forest Service, we must be trusted to “do right” in how we treat each other as colleagues and how we engage with the people and communities we serve. When we do, we increase trust and inspire others to engage with us in caring for the land and serving people.
OUR CODE is grounded in OUR CORE VALUES and we live them by:

TREATING EVERYONE WITH RESPECT.
EMPOWERING ONE ANOTHER.
INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIPS.
MODELING INTEGRITY.
PROTECTING ONE ANOTHER.
LEARNING FROM MISTAKES.
THIS IS WHO WE ARE
USDA FOREST SERVICE

EXPANDED CONTENT COMING SOON!
Check fs.fed.us/about-agency/this-is-who-we-are frequently for updates and information.

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