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12/19/2002 05:58:44 PM

Record Type: Record

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Subject:

I would like to comment on the A-76 process.

First, I wish I knew more about what is going on but information is very limited and not filtering down to ground level employees. As I understand what is happening is a study to determine some government jobs that may be done cheaper through contracting. As a long term Forest Service employee(25 years). I have to question the feasibility of what appears to be a good idea if one does not understand the reality of current real life jobs in the forest service today.

One of the areas to be studied is facility maintenance. I have managed campgrounds and other developed recreation sites for a good part of my Forest Service Career. We have evolved to a very lean operation in order to have sites that are well maintained at a minimum of cost. We have tried in the past to attract concessionaires, only to find the operation not attractive to contractors because of the costs and limited incomes typical of smaller forest service camps.

The big oversight on the proposal seem to be the fact that there are very few jobs that are strictly one duty, most have collateral duties, some more than others. My position for example involves recreation planning and completing capitol investment projects for recreation as well as the ongoing maintenance. I also work in watershed projects, transportation issues, special uses and lands. In the summer I am on a Type II fire team managing the aviation aspect of the team. As the budgets shift from year to year. This allows me to work in the area as it is funded year to year. This flexible arrangement would not be possible under the A-76 proposal. It would be a nightmare to administer these duties under separate contractors.

I have one seasonal employee that assists in the summer, this person also helps with other work areas; fire, watershed, etc depending on the projects funded for that fiscal year. To contract this work out would require a steady budget in each of the areas involved. A level budget is not usual in each program area of the forest service. We usually do not know what we have available to work with until we are 6 months into the fiscal year.

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