



LESLIE WELDON

In November 2011, Leslie Weldon was named Deputy Chief for National Forest System with the USDA Forest Service. In this role, Leslie is the lead executive responsible for policy, oversight and direction for the natural resource programs for managing the 193 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands so they best demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management, using an ecological approach, to provide benefits to citizens.

From 2009 – 2011, Leslie served as Regional Forester for the Northern Region of the Forest Service. In this position she provides oversight for management of 28 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands as well as State & Private Forestry programs in Northern Idaho, Montana, and North Dakota.

Leslie's 30-year career with the Forest Service began in 1981 as a summer hire monitoring seedlings, fighting forest fires, and surveying spotted owls on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in Washington. During this time she began training in fisheries through the coop-education program. After receiving her Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from Virginia Tech (1983), she was hired as a fisheries biologist for three districts on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest where she worked restoring habitat for salmon and steelhead.

Between 1987 and 1991, Leslie served as Assistant National Fisheries Program Manager and as a staff biologist for the Northern Region. She was Assistant Ranger and District Ranger on the Stevensville Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest from 1992 – 1996 where she led extensive local public involvement efforts to implement collaborative, ecosystem-based management of forestlands. This included launching the long-term Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project in partnership with the Forest Service Inter-mountain Joint Fire Sciences Lab and University of Montana.

From mid-1996 through 1998, Leslie served with the Northeastern Area, State & Private Forestry, as Forest Service Liaison to the U.S. Army Environmental Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. In this role, she pioneered an interagency partnership for technical assistance in natural and cultural resource management on U.S. Army bases and other military installations state-side and overseas.

From 1998 through 2000, Leslie served as Executive Policy Assistant to Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck. As executive policy assistant, Leslie was assisted in managing operational priorities for the Chief, across programs for National Forest Systems, Legislative Affairs, Research and Development, State & Private Forestry, International Programs, Business Operations, Civil Rights, and Financial Management.

From June 2000 through June 2007, Leslie served as Forest Supervisor for the Deschutes National Forest in Bend, Oregon. Leslie led management of natural resources, business operations and customer service for the 1.6 million acre Deschutes National Forest in the rapidly growing community of Bend. The Deschutes National Forest is defined by robust programs including premiere year-round outdoor recreation, watershed and aquatic restoration, forest health restoration and fire management on complex fire-adapted ecosystems and commercial forest products. Programs also include heritage resources, transportation and facilities management, geology and minerals, fish and wildlife, and extensive outreach and partnership programs. Leslie worked closely with people and organizations interested in the stewardship of the forest for various uses including strong interagency programs with the Bureau of Land Management.

Leslie held the position of External Affairs Officer in the Office of the Chief from June 2007 - October 2009. During this time she was responsible for several national programs including Legislative Affairs, Office of Communication, Press Office, and the National Partnership Office.

She has participated on numerous national and international technical and policy review activities. Her work has involved identifying shared goals and working closely with partners from academia, conservation, as well as environmental and community groups, local government, and natural resource related businesses. She is committed to workforce diversity, leadership development, and civil rights.

Leslie has served on several boards and organizations including: The High Desert Museum, past president of Bend High Desert Rotary, Deschutes United Way, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and liaison to the Pinchot Institute for Conservation. Leslie is currently a member of the National Forest Leadership Council of the National Forest Foundation.

An Air Force kid, Leslie was born in Pullman, Wash, lived with her family overseas and in several states, but raised primarily in Oxon Hill, Maryland, outside of Washington, D.C. Her choice of natural resources as a career was greatly influenced by two high school summers with the Youth Conservation Corps working on the Blue Ridge Parkway in southwest Virginia.

Leslie is married to Michael Weldon. They have adult twin sons - Joseph and Kevin.