

Working with Public Agencies
Forest Service
04/2008

Consider the Forest Service your friend, not an enemy. Remember, they're just doing a job as directed, with a limited budget, especially now that fire resources take up over 50 percent of their budget. With what's left over they have to deal with roads and trail maintenance, campgrounds, mining, timber, wild life, range lands, and weeds.

For instance, one local ranger district has only \$18,000 to deal with weed problems in their district. Not really a lot of money when you consider the problem. So what is their easiest way to control the spread of noxious weeds? Close the area!

WHEN DEALING WITH THE F.S

First, we need to build a relationship. One of the best ways we can do this is to ask: How can our club help you? This right off helps to start a good relationship. We want to be a solution...NOT a problem.

Look for a way or ways to "fix" something that we deem a problem.

As an example, When I worked as a fire fighter there were three shifts at the fire station that shared refrigerator space. Us A shift guys told the Chief that the B shift guys were eating our food while we were on our four days off. His reply was "what do you want me to do about it? Post a police guard in front of it?" We didn't have a solution. A week later

we saw an ad for a smaller refrigerator at a really good price. We went to the store, measured it, and found we had room for three refrigerators of this size and the store manager would give us an even better price if we bought three.

We went back to the chief and told him our present refrigerator was 15 years old and made noises like it was going to die any day and wouldn't really keep our ice cream frozen. Told him the deal on the three refrigerators and that because they were more efficient, the electricity used would be about the same as the single old one. We also told him that we could make up the money by keeping the present day room chairs another year instead of replacing them as planned.

Want to guess what happened? You're right, we got three refrigerators.

Let's say Fish Biologists want to close a particular trail because it gets muddy and the mud then flows into a fish producing stream. We look at the trail and yes it is a problem. But in the driest part of the year, say August, it actually is dry. So we should propose that the trail be closed for 11 months out of the year and open the month of August.

Be willing to go up the chain of command if necessary, but remember, you most likely will make an enemy

And dont get frustrated. Dont give up. Its the squeaky wheel that gets the oil. If we squeak long enough, we will get their attention. Yes it seems that we dont get anywhere but just think what would happen if we sat back and did nothing. All you four wheeling will be done on a hard packed graded road.