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Forest Service Manual 1600 – Information Services
Chapter 1680 - History Program

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Superseded Directive: 1680, Amendment 1600-2000-1, November 30, 2000

Approved by: Thomas J. Mills, Acting Chief

Date approved: May 14, 2002

Responsible Staff:

Posting Instructions: Amendments are numbered consecutively by title and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this title was 1600-2000-1 to FSM 1600.

Explanation of changes: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

This amendment updates staff names and position titles; changes the term "Cultural Resources" to "Heritage Management Program"; makes editorial changes for clarity; and reformats, reorganizes, updates, and recodes direction throughout FSM chapter 1680. Major changes are as follows:

1680.2: Expands the objectives to include all employees as well as managers in the audience for information on Forest Service history; adds the Grey Towers National Historic Landmark and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation to the list of cooperators; and broadens the purview of the History Program to include policies and people as well as activities.

1680.3: Expands the policy direction to support sharing results of historical research and analyses of past management decisions.

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1680.4: Updates the definitions of “administrative history” and “historian,” and adds the term “historical analyst.”

1681.1: Revises direction on the Administrative History File to allow organization of historical materials in the administrative history record into logical schemes (such as years and subjects) in addition to the organization according to the agency’s file structure, and provides for administrative histories to be written by professional historians under contract to the Forest Service.

1683: Adds a code for direction on History Publications.

1683.1: Identifies the "History Line" and defines the purposes of this magazine.

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1680.1 - Authority

Authorities for the History Program are the Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 U.S.C. 431, 432, 433), the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467), the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470), Executive Order 11593, and the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR part 800). For detailed descriptions of the provisions of these and related authorities, see FSM 2360.1 and 2361.01.

1680.2 - Objectives

The objectives to be achieved in managing the Forest Service History Program are to:

1. Provide Forest Service employees at all levels of the agency with historical data so they will have a broader base of information and understanding on which to make management decisions or proposals.

2. Provide for the preservation of Forest Service documents and other materials, including oral histories and artifacts, of importance to the history of the National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, International Programs, and Research and Development mission areas.

3. Achieve cooperation with heritage resource specialists, both inside and outside the agency, in preserving, managing, and interpreting historic sites, structures, and objects administered by the Forest Service; examples of cooperators include the Grey Towers National Historic Landmark and the Forest History Society (a nonprofit history organization located in Durham, North Carolina).

4. Produce, publish or disseminate histories of Forest Service Programs, activities, policies, and employees.

5. Maintain liaison with historians and historical organizations outside the Forest Service (including academic historians, Forest History Society, Society for History in the Federal Government, and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation), as well as other Federal agencies (including, but not limited to, the National Archives and Records Administration, USDA National Agricultural Library, U.S. Department of the Interior agencies, and the Smithsonian Institution).

1680.3 - Policy

1. Support historical research that provides information about and analyses of past agency management policies and decisions, promotes a sense of pride among employees, aids in the management of heritage resources, or otherwise provides historical information useful to the Forest Service.

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2. When appropriate, disseminate the results of historical research to agency employees, scholars outside the Forest Service, other agencies and organizations, and the general public.

3. Maintain historical records of Forest Service activities and ensure that important records are preserved through the cooperation of Forest Service Historians, History Coordinators, Heritage Specialists, and Records Managers (FSM 6230 and FSH 6209.11).

1680.4 - Responsibility

1680.41 - Washington Office

1680.41a - Director, Office of Communication

The Director, Office of Communication, Washington Office has overall responsibility for the History Program, which includes supporting and guiding the History Program to provide timely and relevant historical information and analyses necessary for Forest Service leadership, employees, and the public.

1680.41b - Chief Historian, Office of Communication

The head of the History Section in the Office of Communication is the Chief Historian of the Forest Service. The Chief Historian has the responsibility for day-to-day management of the History Section and for:

1. Advising the agency's Washington Office and field units about the History Program.

2. Cooperating with Heritage Resource Specialists in preserving, managing, and interpreting historic resources and coordinating, as appropriate, with the Heritage Management Program of the Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Management Staff (FSM 2360).

3. Directing a multidisciplinary program encompassing administrative history (organizational histories of units), contextual history (histories of programs and policies), and oral history.

4. Reviewing all projects involving historical research that are proposed by other Washington Office units, and reviewing for completeness and adequacy the contract specifications for historical research proposed by any unit that does not have a professional historian on staff.

5. Publishing the agency's national history magazine, "History Line."

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1680.41c - Director, Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources Management Staff

The Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources Management, Washington Office has overall responsibility for the Heritage Management Program and, as appropriate, for coordination with the History Program in the Office of Communication. See FSM 2360 for further direction on the Heritage Management Program.

1680.42 - Field Units

1680.42a - Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Institute Director, and Forest Supervisors

Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, the Institute Director, and Forest Supervisors have the responsibility to appoint unit History Coordinators, if there is no professional historian (FSM 1680.42b) assigned to the unit. The line managers are responsible for ensuring that the History Coordinators' duties are included in their job descriptions and that an element of their performance standards is devoted to historical work (FSM 1680.42c).

1680.42b - Unit Historian

Unit Historians have duties, at the unit level, commensurate with those of the Chief Historian. Where a full-time Unit Historian is designated, the incumbent is responsible for gathering and interpreting (and in some cases writing) unit history; coordinating with the records management staff to ensure that historical records are not lost or destroyed; and reviewing contract specifications prior to advertisement or award of a contract by any unit that has an employee who performs, as a collateral duty, the responsibilities of a unit History Coordinator. Additionally, the Unit Historian also has the additional responsibilities of the unit History Coordinator (FSM 1680.42c).

1680.42c - History Coordinators

Line officers at field units, with the general exception of Ranger Districts, Research Work Units, and other small Forest Service units, have the responsibility to appoint a History Coordinator to oversee the unit's Forest Service History Program (FSM 1680.42a). History Coordinators are responsible for:

1. Arranging through contracts or other appropriate means for historical research to be done by qualified professionals (FSM 1680.42b).

2. Serving as the overall History Coordinator for their geographic or work areas and advising the History Coordinators of other units within their jurisdictions.

3. Maintaining their offices' administrative history files in accordance with FSM 1681 and 6230, and FSH 6209.11.

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4. Reviewing proposals for contract research made by units within their jurisdiction and forwarding the proposals with any comments to the Chief Historian for review (FSM 1680.41b).

5. Caring for historical objects and papers, in addition to active research, oral history, and documentation to support an administrative history program, National Register nominations, and historical facilities for interpretive programs.

1680.5 - Definitions

Administrative History. The critical examination of past agency programs and policies, which serves as the basic reference and documentation for the past and present programs, activities, and personnel of the Forest Service organization.

Heritage Specialists. Archaeologists, cultural anthropologists, historic preservation specialists, and historians, most of whom work in the agency's Heritage Management Program (FSM 2360).

Historian. An employee working in the GS-170 (historian) job classification series.

Historical Analyst. An employee working in the GS-101 (social science) job classification series.

Oral History. The recording and preserving of personal insights and reminiscences of people on events and agency programs, policies, and practices, which can include gathering folklore and examples of traditional life.

Social History. An examination of an organization's relationship to communities, legislatures, courts, and other outside groups (in some cases, the administrative and social aspects are given equal treatment).

1681 - Administrative History

1681.1 - Administrative History Collection

The administrative history collection provides the national office, field offices, and the public with copies of historical reference materials, gathered at one place for ease of use.

1. Content of Administrative History Collection. The administrative history collection contains reference material on the history of the unit and related matters.

2. Records Management for Administrative History Collection. Materials for an administrative history collection should be identified and filed under the appropriate 1680 file code as soon as possible (FSH 6209.11; FSM 1681.2). Important memos, reports, and other documents should be routinely duplicated for the file. All material in the administrative history collection should be organized following the records management file code structure, while

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History Program working files may be organized by other generally recognized historical categories such as years or subjects.

An administrative history collection should contain copies of reference materials (originals maintained in the official program files and retained/disposed of in accordance with appropriate program file codes) on the history of the agency and related matters, such as various books by and about the Forest Service, internal reports, photographs (including prints, negatives, slides, digital images, oral histories (on tape or transcribed), typed or handwritten manuscripts, letters, journal articles, historical reference journals, maps, speeches, and other materials. The originals of important memos and other documents should be routinely duplicated for the collection.

1681.2 - Disposition of Historical Records

History Coordinators and Historians shall work with Records Managers to retrieve and review documents of historical value that are scheduled for destruction by the Federal Records Centers.

1. History Coordinators and Historians should request that unit Records Managers inform them when the Records Managers receive notice that records are to be destroyed. In some cases, an inspection of the list of documents involved may reveal that some may be of permanent value.

2. History Coordinators and Historians should ask the Records Managers to recall records of potential permanent value from the Federal Records Center for review.

   a. Documents determined to have permanent historical value should be transferred to the National Archives, in accordance with the appropriate subcodes of file code 1680 as specified in FSH 6209.11, and copies of these documents should be placed in the administrative history collection (FSH 6209.11).

   b. Disposition of electronic records, files, and e-mail is covered by agency records management policy and procedures and by the regulations and procedures of the National Archives and Records Administration (FSM 6230; FSH 6209.11).

1681.3 - Unit Administrative Histories

Historians and History Coordinators should establish priorities for the completion of unit administrative histories by considering their potential usefulness to ongoing programs. These history projects should then be scheduled as part of regular program planning and budgeting. The Chief Historian in the Washington Office, Office of Communication, History Section must review all proposals for contract histories made by Washington Office Staff Units, as well as all proposals made by field units that do not have historians. Administrative histories of Regions, Stations, the Area, and the Institute should usually be written by historians under contract to the agency and filed in accordance with the 1680 file code structure (FSH 6209.11).

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1682 - Social History

Social histories must be undertaken by professionally qualified historians, either employed by the Forest Service or on contract. A Forest Service unit historian shall review the contract specifications. The histories should be filed in accordance with the 1680 file code structure (FSH 6209.11).

1683 - History Publications

1683.1 - History Line

The "History Line" is the title of the agency's national history magazine. Its purpose is to share information about Forest Service history and the history of the National Forests, Grasslands, and Prairies. Forest Service employees in the Washington Office and field units contribute articles, book reviews, and notices of upcoming events. The "History Line" is a publication of the History Section, Office of Communication, Washington Office.

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