



Forest photo by John Parrotta

A better understanding of forests is key for management and decision-making

Interview with two leaders from the Forest Service in the United States Department of Agriculture.

Angela Coleman serves as the Forest Service’s Associate Chief. During her 33-year career, Angela has served in numerous leadership roles, including Washington Office roles as associate deputy chief of Business Operations, and associate deputy chief of Research and Development. Before that, she served as deputy regional forester for the Pacific Southwest Region for national forests located in California and parts of Nevada, and as regional communications director for the Southern Region in Atlanta.

David Lytle is the Deputy Chief for Research and Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service. Dave directs, coordinates, and integrates the vast network of all research activities, working with regions, stations, and others on a variety of activities. Those include work related to scientific information and innovation of technologies that support management of the nation’s diverse forests and rangelands. Dave helps to ensure the agency’s data and information support forest and rangeland conservation and management.

Associate Chief Coleman, science and research are an integral part of the work of the USDA Forest Service. How is knowledge integrated into (land) management?

The broad range of functions and purposes vary, but forests provide clean air and water, are the source of food and warmth, are habitat for wildlife, improve our health, and expand our minds. To manage something that important and vital requires a deep understanding that what we do, or even what we do not do, will have lasting effects.

To be better land managers, policy makers, and citizens of this world, we must understand forests. This is where science comes in. Science must be shared effectively in order for land managers and policy makers to arrive at sound decisions that serve the greater good. At the Forest Service, we integrate science in many aspects of our management and decision-making, including in how forests are managed over time.

Dr. Lytle, the title of the IUFRO World Congress is Forests and Society towards 2050. With this future perspective, why is it important to invest in research now?

What a great question! I think it's relevant to all of us. The three key steps are:

Keep asking the questions: Science illuminates what we see now and helps us to more clearly see what we are facing and how we might address those issues.

Invest now for future results: Investing now in science is investing in our future and that of our descendants.

Cultivate the next generations of scientists: A younger, more diverse pool of scientists brings a renewed freshness and innovative thinking to our work. We need to embrace and consider different ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Associate Chief Coleman and Dr. Lytle, USDA Forest Service is a very strong and long-standing supporter of IUFRO. Why is international science cooperation important?

International scientific collaboration provides opportunities for researchers to exchange the best available science with their peers, as well with forest managers and other stakeholders. Cooperation enables researchers to bring what they have learned back home to accelerate the development of science-based practices and tools for improved forest management.

In many respects, no matter what country we're working in, we all face similar challenges related to forests and natural resources. Given the urgency of these challenges and resources necessary to tackle these issues, there is a clear benefit to taking opportunities to share our knowledge to find solutions to common problems.

IUFRO2024 Congress sessions

Angela Coleman is a speaker at:

S1.5 President's Discussion "Translating scientific research into effective forest management to meet multiple societal objectives: challenges and opportunities"

Monday, June 24, 02:30 - 03:30 PM (CEST), Victoria Hall

David Lytle is a speaker at:

S5.7 Leadership for Sustainability - Overcoming Challenges in Forest Research

Tuesday, June 25, 02:30 - 03:30 PM (CEST), Room A2+A3