

## **Summary of the 1960 MUSY Act**

Since 1960, land management on national forests has been governed by the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act (MUSY). MUSY mandates that national forests be "administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes." That sweeping and rather vague mandate was extended to the BLM in 1976 by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Cawley and Freemuth 1997).

The Multiple Use Sustained Yield (MUSY) Act of 1960 was a high point of the influence of the USFS. The Act codified what the USFS was doing anyway and named a set of multiple uses: recreation, range, timber watershed, wildlife, and fish. The Act stated that no specific use could predominate and that a high level of annual output should be maintained without impairment of the productivity of the land. This was very broad guidance, and it gave the Agency a considerable amount of freedom. The USFS could operate, more or less, as it wished under MUSY of 1960. This was so simple because there were substantial areas that were untouched by cutting. The last frontier had not been reached.

Though not in the Act, but very much in USFS literature, were the Agency objectives. One was community stability—thought to be jobs. Conveniently, this is coincident with no profits. Supply of fiber (i.e., wood) was another important objective. In recreation, big game and fish (both of which are hunted) were predominant. Scenic drives were also mentioned quite often. And hiking had not yet come into its own. These objectives were harmonious: More wood was more jobs and open forest, and more open forest was more game. There was very little conflict.

Political scientists R. McGregor Cawley and John Freemuth (1997) argue that multiple use has resulted in gridlock as single-interest groups have proliferated regarding the management of public lands. They believe MUSY has created a zero-sum game, where the attitude of "I must restrict or eliminate your use to protect my use" has dominated the debate. They go on to say, "Indeed, the logic of a zerosum game encourages the various participants to concentrate their energies on the task of blocking the moves of their opponents rather than on seeking to establish a common ground upon which compromises could be constructed. Moreover, a predictable outcome of a zero-sum game in which the players are relatively equal is stalemate" (Cawley and Freemuth 1997:35-36).