

**Confirmation Statement of
Lyle Laverty**

Nominee for the position of
**Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
United States Department of the Interior**

before the
**Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate**

July 17, 2007

Madam Chair, Ranking Member Inhofe, and Members of the Committee, I am truly honored to appear before you today as I seek your confirmation to become the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. As a career resource manager and public servant, the opportunity to be entrusted with the care and stewardship of the icons of America's heritage, is the ultimate experience. I want to thank both President Bush and Secretary Kempthorne for their confidence in me as shown through my nomination.

My personal connection with America's great outdoors begins in Montana nearly 60 years ago. Born and raised in California, I have vivid memories of our family adventures to Montana to visit my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in Missoula. I remember to this day catching my first trout in the crystal waters of Holland Lake. I remember waking up in Yellowstone as my grandmother chased bears out of our campsite banging on a big metal pot. I remember helping my dad set up our tent in the floor of Yosemite. I remember the ranger hikes. I remember watching the "firefall" during evening interpretative programs. Little did I realize how significant these personal connections would be in creating a lasting imprint on my being.

I began my professional journey in public service over four decades ago in Orleans, California, a small rural mountain community. It was to this remote ranger station on the Klamath River that I brought my bride Pam, who has shared this wonderful journey and

is with me here today. Our two children, Lori and Chad, experienced lives growing up on ranger stations as we moved throughout this great country.

I completed my undergraduate education with a Bachelor of Science in Forest Management from Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, and subsequently received a Masters degree in Public Administration from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. In 1997, I was selected to participate in the Executive Leadership Program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

I have worked across the country as a 35-year career employee with the US Forest Service and most recently as the Director of Colorado State Parks. I have gained a rich understanding of the values of America's natural resources and the importance of being a good steward of these resources. I have had the opportunity to participate in many assignments which have afforded my working with a broad range of stakeholders and government officials on a variety of natural resource management issues. Through a variety of line and leadership assignments, I clearly understand the importance of harmony of sound public resource policy with practical field operations.

In 1999, I was asked to lead a team to respond to the GAO Report which identified the need for an integrated strategy to address the hazardous fuel conditions on National Forest lands. The strategy became the foundation for the National Fire Plan, funded by the Congress after the catastrophic fire season in 2000. I was subsequently asked to lead the agency's implementation of the National Fire Plan and did so through 2001. I mention my experience with the National Fire Plan, because it models the importance and complexity of working with various organization, agencies and jurisdictions to implement natural resource policy issues on a consensus basis. To that end, I am committed to working with each of you and the States to protect and promote our nation's fish and wildlife conservation heritage.

Late in 2001, I accepted the position of Director of Colorado State Parks. The Colorado State Park system is different than most State park systems in America. More than 85

percent of the division's operating budget comes from revenue other than general fund. Sustaining a quality system of parks required the application of sound business principles as well as consistently providing quality guest services.

I have enjoyed a professional journey that has provided broad and extensive resource management challenges in. Through these varied experiences, I have a combination of qualifications, perspectives and insights that I believe will add value to an excellent team of professional resource managers. Over the course of my career, I have worked with individuals, volunteers, organizations, State agencies and numerous Federal agencies. Living and working in both rural and urban communities across this country, I have learned that solutions to challenges facing our natural resources are developed through conversations with all interested parties. The wonderful relationships I have developed over the course the years has resulted in the support of my nomination by a wide variety of organizations across the country.

My career has afforded me the opportunity to work in a variety of communities and ecosystems across the country, in the Douglas fir forests of northern California, the Cascades of Oregon and Washington, the southern portion of California's Coastal Range, the great Rocky Mountains of the intermountain west, as well as our nation's capital. I have found through these experiences that people care deeply about America's resources. For over three decades, I have been involved in the design, coordination and implementation of natural resource management activities, integrating protection of habitat, and working towards the recovery of species. As Regional Forester, I worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Division of Wildlife on the recovery of the lynx in Colorado. Last year, Bruce McCloskey, Director of Colorado's Division of Wildlife, proudly showed pictures of young lynx kittens, successful indicators that agencies working together can make a difference in the recovery of species. Ten years ago I served on the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, coordinating agency activities to support the recovery of the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Today, that grizzly bear population has been delisted, another

indicator that agencies working together, seamlessly, with public support, can make a difference in the successful recovery of a species.

As Forest Supervisor of the Mendocino National Forest, I worked extensively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff and the California Department of Fish and Game in managing the complex southern portion of the spotted owl habitat. As Associate Deputy Chief, I coordinated policy implications of hazardous fuel treatment projects with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leaders. The results, evidenced on the ground, demonstrate again that working together we can protect and enhance habitat *and* protect people and resources by reducing the risk of catastrophic wildland fire. Most recently, as the Director of Colorado State Parks, with the US Fish and Wildlife staff and Colorado Division of Wildlife staff, we designed and implemented wildland fire mitigation projects in lynx habitat in the urban interface of Colorado's Front Range, again working together to effectively manage habitats for species recovery, as well as satisfying multiple resource objectives.

Madam Chair, if confirmed, I will commit my energy to achieve the stated purposes of the Endangered Species Act, the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the laws and regulations under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I will work aggressively with other Federal land management agencies, States, tribes, private land owners and other nongovernmental organizations to further our country's conservation goals. I am aware of the many challenges and unique opportunities associated with this position. I am committed to work closely with each of you to provide the oversight and stewardship of the resources entrusted to me in this position.

Thank you again Madam Chair, Senator Inhofe, and Members of the Committee for considering my qualifications and for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

