The Ethics of Partnerships: toward clearer guidance

U.S. Forest Service
National Partnership Office

February 6, 2014
2:30pm Eastern
Virtual Partnership Conference
• What we will cover today:
  – Structure of Ethics at USDA & USFS
  – Current Guidance
  – Facilitated Discussion on:
    • Building a better system
    • Key ethics issues
    • Partnership ethics questions
  – Follow-up (April 10th)
The Structure of Ethics at USDA & USFS

• USDA → OGC → Office of Ethics → Forestry Ethics Branch

• The USDA Forestry Ethics Branch manages ethics issues for USFS.
  – USDA Science Ethics Branch handles inquiries from the Research Stations.
The Structure of Ethics at USDA & USFS

• Forestry Ethics Advisor: Jack Fisher, acting branch chief

• All ethics inquiries should be submitted in writing to FSEthics@oe.usda.gov.
Current Guidance

• Federal Employee Ethics
  – 5 C.F.R. Part 2635: Standards of ethical conduct for employees of the executive branch
    • Gifts
    • Conflicting Financial Interests
    • Impartiality
    • Misuse of Position
    • Outside Activities

Current Guidance

- Resources maintained by USDA Office of Ethics.
  - Website: [http://www.usda-ethics.net/](http://www.usda-ethics.net/)
  - Ethics FAQs: [http://www.usda-ethics.net/faq/index.htm](http://www.usda-ethics.net/faq/index.htm)
  - Ethics training modules: [http://www.usda-ethics.net/training/index.htm](http://www.usda-ethics.net/training/index.htm)
Current Guidance

• USDA Guidance
  – Gift Acceptance Policy (DR 5200-003)
  – Recognition (DR 5160-002)
  – Endorsement (DR 1410/DR 1440)

• USFS Guidance
  – Recognition: Insignia, signs, and logos (EM 7100/BEIG/Controlled Correspondence Letter – August 8, 2013/ FSM & FSH)
  – Grants & Agreements (FSM 1580/FSH1509.11)
  – Gifts & Donations (FSH 6509.11)
Discussion

• Please share your thoughts on:
  – Building a better system
  – Key ethics issues
  – Partnership ethics questions
Building a Better System

• How do you receive ethics guidance now?
• How would you like to receive ethics guidance?
• Would you like to be involved in shaping a more comprehensive system for ethics guidance?
Guidance Needs

• Key Issues:
  – Gifts and Donations
  – Partner Fundraising
  – Avoiding Endorsement
  – Working with For-Profit Entities
  – Working with Non-Profit Entities
  – Partner Recognition
  – Using Insignia, Signs, and Logos
  – Others, in your experience?
• Share your specific questions:
  – We will follow up on these questions, and answer all that we can by the April 10\textsuperscript{th} session.
April 10th, 2014
Ethics Peer Learning Session
2-3:30pm Eastern
Thank you