



Metropolitan Group

the power of voice

LEADING WITH PURPOSE, VALUES & RELATIONSHIPS

A Tool for Professional Support and Partnership

Certified



Corporation

As a certified B-Corp, Metropolitan Group is a different kind of contract partner to the Forest Service. We are exclusively in service to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, socially responsible businesses and foundations, and work every day to create a more just and sustainable world. See Page 3 to learn more about the B-Corp movement's work to make business a force for good.

Introducing MG

Metropolitan Group (MG) crafts strategic and creative services to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world. We are a full-service social change agency that builds the capacity of change agents to leverage their power of voice. We work at the intersections of environmental and sustainability, public health and social justice.

We specialize in working with and communicating environmental science in ways that reshape public expectations, narratives, policies and practices. We harness the relationships and trust we have built over three decades in diverse communities nationally and globally to help organizations more deeply connect with principles of environmental justice and community-driven work.

From our offices in Chicago, Portland, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., and our sister company Impacto Social Metropolitan Group based in Mexico City, we work exclusively with mission-driven public agencies, nonprofit organizations, socially responsible businesses and foundations to advance science, social change and sustainability goals around the world.



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Creative Director / Founder
public will building innovator



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Senior Executive VP / Principal
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VP of Visual Communication
design lead



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Vice President
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About B-Corps: for the Greatest Good

As a certified B Corp and mission-driven company, MG is committed to using the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. MG meets the most rigorous international standards of social and environmental performance, workplace equity, good governance and transparency for social impact. Since 2014, MG has been honored as a Best for the World company by B Lab, earning an overall score in the top 10 percent of all Certified B Corporations on the B Impact Assessment, a comprehensive assessment of a company's impact on its workers, community and the environment.



Washington, D.C.



Chicago



Mexico City



Portland



San Francisco





Gifford Pinchot
Founder, in 1905, of
the Forest Service

Our Partnership Begins

“Taking the Forest Service into its second century of conservation requires bold, authentic and inspired leadership. This lives in the people of the Forest Service who are by far our greatest asset as an agency. Yet unleashing the heart and soul of our workforce required a different kind of partner, and we found that in Metropolitan Group. They helped cut through all the inevitable resistance to culture change, pushed us to let go of small differences in areas of the agency in order to grab ahold of what is big, true and shared at our core. They helped us build a leadership community strong enough to step up to the challenge of leading conservation in the 21st Century.”

– **BETH PENDLETON**

(Retired) Acting Associate Chief

GIFFORD PINCHOT created the USDA Forest Service to boldly conserve what this country most valued at the turn of the 20th century: abundant natural resources and a working democracy where citizens had a voice in the management of their public lands.

The environment in which the Forest Service operates has changed dramatically over the intervening years. Our population has shifted to the cities and become much more diverse, Earth's climate is fundamentally changing the landscape, and our country's politics have become far more divisive. Along with these changes has come a deterioration in the health of the nation's forests and grasslands, which now suffer from a backlog of management activities.

While our country and its lands are very different in 2019 than in 1905, the Forest Service continues to offer people a promise that diverse interests and needs can be successfully brought together to support nature in sustaining life.

To achieve this ultimate purpose, the Forest Service works every day to inspire many more people across the country to answer the call of conservation.

For more than 10 years – through two administrations and three chiefs – Metropolitan Group has had the honor of working with you to clarify the values that lie at the heart of your agency, build alignment around what these values mean in practice, and develop the systems, language and leadership capabilities needed to bring these values to life. Along the way, we've met and engaged with thousands of agency employees, hundreds of agency partners, and scores of people and organizations in the communities you serve.

This booklet shares a few stories we've collected in our work together over the years:

- **Leading with Courage**
- **Building Trust in Challenging Settings**
- **Learning to Create the Culture You Want**
- **Ensuring Relevance in the 21st Century**
- **Designing Built Environments to Convey Purpose & Values**
- **Accelerating Outcomes by Investing in Relationships**

Together, these stories highlight fresh approaches to leadership in the agency. They are written both to inspire and to offer ideas for solutions to the challenges of stewarding land and relationships across America in the 21st century. ☺



Leading With Courage

"A few of us were talking about the skills that we think are important in the next generation of leaders at the Forest Service. The work we have done with Metropolitan Group came up. We talked about positive changes, your unique way of looking at things, and the shift we see happening before our eyes. I have learned so much from you, and want you to know that I have been deeply impacted by this work. I truly appreciate working with you. Thank you."

– ERICKA LUNA

Southwestern Regional Government Relations Liaison

Growing the next generation of Forest Service leaders.

Every year the Forest Service onboards thousands of new employees, and most ask a version of the same question:

“What does it mean to be a leader in the Forest Service?”

Over the course of several years, with MG’s support, the Forest Service went on a journey to discover what specifically makes its leaders successful – inside and outside the agency – which became the Forest Service Leader’s Stance & Habits. For the first time since 1920 and “Pinchot’s Guide to the Behavior of Foresters in Public Office,” the attributes and expectations of contemporary leadership were written down for all to see. Today, Forest Service leaders are beginning to explore how well they hold the Leader’s Stance & Habits, where they need to build new skill and acumen, and how to create accountability systems for themselves and their staff to foster continuous improvement. Wherever there is a leader with courage and intentionality in holding the Leader’s Stance & Habits, a reservoir of trust and motivation is growing with their employees and communities served. ☐



Building Trust In Challenging Settings

“MG’s unique value comes from the versatility of their work with us. They help us deepen the public’s connection to all our agency is and does, support our efforts to strengthen our relationships in even the most challenging communities, facilitate our work to develop conservation strategies and plans, and support our continuing agency efforts to address harassment and strengthen our work environment. Because they understand the complexity and many dimensions of our work, you’d be very hard-pressed to find a stronger outside partner.”

– KARL MALCOLM

Southwestern Regional Wildlife Ecologist

Strengthening public will to improve forest conditions.

Hispanic land grant communities in the Southwest have called the region home for generations and have nurtured a deep and unique connection to nature. After decades of difficulty

People were genuinely inspired by what felt like a fundamentally different type of dialogue and a new way of engaging.

navigating land management decisions, the Forest Service Southwestern Region (R3) decided to take a fundamentally different approach to building trust and relationships. Instead of heavily structured engagement designed to propel an agenda, a lightly structured engagement was designed to rebuild connection and relationship. Using the simple Explore/

Interconnect/Express framework from the Forest Service Leader's Stance & Habits, land grant community members and the Forest Service explored deeper values motivating those present in the room, interconnected these values to land management concerns, and expressed hopes in terms of how land grant communities

and the Forest Service could work better together in community. Despite initial concerns among participants that the engagement would simply be a repeat of previous conversations, people were genuinely inspired by what felt like a fundamentally different type of dialogue and a new way of engaging. Congressional staffers present to listen and learn alongside the Forest Service heard the hunger for more of this type of dialogue and approached Forest Service leaders to ask how they could back the effort politically and financially. Additional engagement led to deepened understanding of values, and land grant community relationships began to improve for the first time in nearly 100 years. Today, the community engagement approaches that opened up new possibilities with land grant communities are being extended to other parts of the Southwest, and Forest Service leaders are seeing that progress is contingent on truly getting to know what motivates and inspires people. ☐



Learning to Create the Culture You Want

“MG helped us discover the values underpinning who the Forest Service is today, both from internal introspection that links to our Pinchot core, but more importantly, validated with the American people through focus groups that explored who they want their Forest Service to be in terms of both values and how we show up. I appreciate what you bring to every conversation, particularly the ability to lead from the side, and how you challenge us to be our best selves. There is so much more that I now know to be possible since we began working with you and your MG team. You are part of us.”

– CAL JOYNER

(Retired) Southwest Regional Forester

Living the Forest Service Code and Commitments.

Shifting a workforce to be more purpose driven, values based and relationship focused is a major shift for any organization. For the Forest Service, the ambition aligns well with USDA's commitment

What behaviors exemplify the agency's clarified values and voice, and merit modeling by leadership and reinforcing agencywide?

to "do right" – including doing right in how employees engage as colleagues and with the people and communities they serve. But what does this really mean? What behaviors exemplify the agency's clarified values and voice, and merit modeling by leadership and reinforcing agencywide? For example, how does the agency shift paradigms so all employees see respect as something everyone deserves, as

opposed to something that must be earned? How can the agency's deep commitment to physical safety be expanded to encompass emotional and psychological safety? How can space be created for more people to learn from their mistakes and to share their learning moments with others? These and many other questions called out for an answer as part of improving the work environment.

With the agency's clarified values in hand, MG helped the Forest Service map the values-based expectations for how all employees will treat one another. The result is the Forest Service's Code and Commitments. This first-of-its-kind endeavor now serves as an essential agreement that each member of the Forest Service community can use to navigate difficult conversations, assess behavior at the individual and unit levels, and design organizational systems to incent creation of the culture you want. ☐



Ensuring Relevance in the 21st Century

"This Forest Service employee ... has used (the story of conservation) concepts in challenging audiences and found them to resonate with a lot of the public. Simple phrases tie what we are doing to what they believe and want. I could have sat in a room for years and never have come up with those concepts to tell our story. Wait, I did sit in rooms for years and didn't come up with those concepts."

– JOHN LAURENCE

(Retired) Forest Supervisor and Special Assistant to the Regional Forester for
Landscape Restoration, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region

Finding the words to inspire more conservation heroes.

When Gifford Pinchot first described the agency's pursuit of "the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run," most people had a very real connection to the land. A century later his words continue to echo through the Forest Service but are less resonant with the current U.S. population who care about nature but often do not understand their role in conservation. Recognizing the need for more contemporary and engaging messages to inspire and deepen commitment to conservation, agency leaders and MG journeyed to big cities and small rural towns all across the country, exploring how to tell the story of conservation and the Forest Service's place in it today. Drawing on the insights of thousands of Forest Service employees at all levels, and many more people and partners in the communities served by the agency, a new story of conservation emerged with four pillars on which to focus dialogue:



Employees being introduced to the story are finding power in its simplicity and its universality, seeing their own personal passion – and the passion of the people and communities they serve – reflected in it. They are also experiencing how one or more of the pillars seems to always resonate with their audience, creating a start point for discussion and connection. Over time, the Forest Service will become known for using this story to engage and inspire people and communities, creating many more conservation heroes who join the agency in pursuit of mission success.



for the greatest good



Designing Built Environments to Convey Purpose & Values

"I want all of you to know the reaction we've been getting to the identity installations here at the Regional Office building. It is exactly as we hoped ... people are delighted, sort of awestruck, happy! We had an all-employee meeting today and not one question came up about why we did it. They simply love all of it. I heard comments like, 'What is the theme of our conference room?' 'This makes me feel proud to work here,' and 'This is what we do!'"

– LISA FREEDMAN

(Retired) Chief of Staff to the Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region

Creating places and spaces that feel like home.

When the Pacific Northwest Regional Office (R6) and the Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNW) had the opportunity to construct a new Portland, Oregon, home from which to steward the forests and grasslands of the Pacific Northwest, they wanted

Design the building to tell stories, connect employees and inspire visitors.

to create an interconnected work environment infused with their shared mission, values and sense of place. The architects and builders had plans to ensure state-of-the-art construction for the new office tower, but no plan was in place to ensure a work environment that reflected the agency's identity and culture. Forest Service

leaders in the region teamed with MG to design the building interior to tell stories, connect employees to one another and to mission, and inspire visitors with deeper appreciation for the agency's mission and purpose. Working with Forest Service

landscape designers, engineers and scientists, the theme of "True Northwest" came to life throughout all six floors of the building, in conference room design and nomenclature, signage and art created from regional wood products, and stories that inspire people to examine life in the Northwest. As a result of this work, R6 and PNW Research discovered what makes them so interdependent, and inspired them to work more closely together to steward the whole. ☺



Accelerating Outcomes by Investing in Relationships

“We value being one of the premier research organizations in the world. However, our limiting factor – more often than knowledge, authority or even funding – is the social capacity to act. MG has helped us see this and find pathways to strengthen relationships internally and externally that will help sustain communities and conserve the land. MG is clearly invested in achievement of our aspirations, not so much by directing or doing, but by coaching and building our capacity. They have shown willingness to share hard-to-hear messages with agency leaders and selflessly encouraged accountability for addressing issues. I respect MG’s integrity and am grateful for all I’ve learned from them.”

– HARV FORSGREN

(Retired) Intermountain West Regional Forester

Making shared stewardship meaningful.

With new authorities and budget, there is great hope and high expectation that the Forest Service can restore whole ecosystems at scale. But throughout the agency, employees cite concerns about insufficient forest product markets, inadequate social license for active land management, and degraded institutional capacity. So how can the Forest Service make the shifts needed to overcome these limiting factors?

Forward-thinking leaders saw this as an opportunity to explore how to fundamentally change the way the agency does business. These leaders partnered with MG to create a very different kind of learning journey to explore a key question:

What do we most want from and for our forests in the future, and what would we need to do differently together to make this happen?

Framing the opportunity of shared stewardship in this way opened up possibilities that were hard to see in a business-as-usual mindset. For example, rather than streamlining process in a way that cuts back on the public's involvement in conservation,

how could the agency create different processes that increase the public's interest and view of themselves as shared stewards? Similarly, instead of trying to simplify partners' understanding of forest health by holding onto the science, what if the agency invited partners to jointly explore the science of trade-offs under different land management scenarios to set priorities together?

For such fundamentally different approaches to succeed, the Forest Service engaged MG to design a pilot convening for the line leadership of Region 6 and state leaders in Washington and Oregon to explore interests in shared stewardship, find common language to express alignment, and begin to map out an implementation strategy. As a result, the Oregon Department of Forestry got so inspired that it committed to extending the design of the convening to all of its leaders statewide. While the future is hard to predict, energy is growing to work cooperatively across land management boundaries at the true scale of the forest health challenge to set priorities and make trade-off decisions in fundamentally new ways. ☐

A pathway for further impact, together.

Forest Service employees can easily partner with Metropolitan Group through our Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) with the Forest Service.

SERVICES UNDER THE BPA

CULTURE CHANGE

- Assess, re-engineer and develop new organizational systems, policies and rewards to fuel organizational change objectives.
- Create and execute new messaging, communication and outreach plans, and campaigns to change behavior, mindset and policy.
- Develop and execute agency-values promotion efforts.

STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct community engagement and stakeholder mapping.
- Conduct original stakeholder research and landscape analysis to inform change efforts.
- Design and deliver listening sessions, focus groups, workshops and consensus-building engagements to create energy and conviction around change.
- Advance agency-community engagement.
- Prepare/distribute/compile and analyze surveys.

COACHING AND TRAINING

- Provide executive coaching services that build the skills and acumen of government leaders to lead.
- Develop customized reporting, training and engagement programs.
- Mentor and coach for emotional intelligence-based leadership and function.

COMMUNICATIONS, BRANDING, MESSAGING AND INTERIOR DESIGN

- Develop communication and marketing plans and implementation roadmaps.
- Execute successful communications/marketing campaigns targeting new user communities.
- Provide media (traditional and social media) monitoring and analysis.
- Design branding, visual identity and graphic assets across channels.
- Develop and execute digital strategies.
- Create issue framing, narrative and messaging.

PROGRAM AND PROJECT PLANNING

- Develop strategy and visualization for work environments.
- Design and deliver leadership forums.
- Socialize and deploy agency programs and efforts.
- Identify and develop program brand, messages, audiences and channels.

FACILITATION AND MEETING DESIGN

- Facilitate meetings, from staff retreats to leadership team meetings to public meetings.
- Facilitate Town Halls (internal and external).
- Design and conduct virtually facilitated large group sessions agencywide.

Details about BPA:

Metropolitan Group holds a BPA contract with the USDA Forest Service.
This BPA also serves all the Service First agencies in the government including:



Contract Vehicle: USFS Blanket Purchase Award (BPA)

Contract #: 12344V19A 0003

Ordering Period: February 22, 2019 through January 11, 2031

Contact your Contracting Officer for details

Strategic Communication Intercultural Engagement Organizational Strategy and Innovation

Metropolitan Group crafts strategic and creative services to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world.

Metropolitan Group's GSA contract details:

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|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| GSA Contract #: | GS-07F-0224X | DUNS#: | 61-303-0659 |
| PSS Schedule: | 00 CORP | Qualified Small Business | |
| SINs: | 541-2 Public Relations Services 541-4A Market Research and Analysis 874-1 Integrated Consulting Services | NAICS Codes: | 541430, 541611, 541613, 541618, 541810 541820, 541830, 541840, 541910 |

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