



# **Toward a Natural Forest: The Forest Service in Transition (A Memoir)**

*Jim Furnish*

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## **Toward a Natural Forest: The Forest Service in Transition (A Memoir)** Jim Furnish

Jim Furnish joined the U.S. Forest Service in 1965, enthusiastic and naive, proud to be part of such a storied and accomplished agency. Nothing could have prepared him for the crisis that would soon rock the agency to its foundation, as a burgeoning environmental movement challenged the Forest Service's legacy and legitimacy.

The Forest Service stumbled in responding to a wave of lawsuits from environmental groups in the late 20th Century—a phenomenon best symbolized by the spotted owl controversy that shut down logging on public forests in the Pacific Northwest in the 1990s. The agency was brought to its knees, pitted between a powerful timber industry that had been having its way with the national forests for decades, and organized environmentalists who believed public lands had been abused and deserved better stewardship.

*Toward a Natural Forest* offers an insider's view of this tumultuous time in the history of the Forest Service, presenting twin tales of transformation, both within the agency and within the author's evolving environmental consciousness. While stewarding our national forests with the best of intentions, had the Forest Service diminished their natural essence and ecological values? How could one man confront the crisis while remaining loyal to his employer?

In this revealing memoir, Furnish addresses the fundamental human drive to gain sustenance from and protect the Earth, believing that we need not destroy it in the process. Drawing on the author's personal experience and his broad professional knowledge, *Toward a Natural Forest* illuminates the potential of the Forest Service to provide strong leadership in global conservation efforts. Those interested in our public lands—environmentalists, natural resource professionals, academics, and historians—will find Jim Furnish's story deeply informed, thought-provoking, and ultimately inspiring.

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