

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“The Greatest Good” explores history of the U.S. Forest Service

As the Forest Service enters its Centennial year, a new documentary brings the history of the agency to a broad audience. “The Greatest Good” uses rarely seen footage and photos, sweeping HD landscape aerial shots and dozens of interviews to tell a complex and compelling story of the American land.

Before “environmentalism”, before the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service was created in 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt and his Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot. They sought not only to conserve disappearing natural resources but also to maximize the social benefits from those resources.

Pinchot’s mission statement for his new agency stated “...where conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question shall always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run.”

The two-hour documentary “The Greatest Good” uses this maxim as its starting point and as an organizing theme. It traces the Forest Service efforts to deliver the most benefits to the most people, while remaining good stewards of the land. It is along this axis, the exploitation and protection of nature, that the story turns.

About the national forests, historian Char Miller says: “We own them! So of course we are going to disagree about how they should be managed.” Conflict, he argues, is inherent to the management of public lands in a democracy.

The film examines these conflicts in major natural resource issues: grazing, fire, wilderness, game/wildlife, watershed protection, recreation and, of course, timber. The film also profiles Forest Service employees, including Pinchot, Aldo Leopold, Arthur Carhart, and Bob Marshall, who invented new ways of addressing these conflicts.

The film features an original score and is narrated by Charles Osgood.

“The Greatest Good” will be shown at _____ in the _____. Admission is free.