
Washington Office Engineering Helps Achieve USDA Forest Service's First Clean Audit

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On June 12, 2003, the Washington Office Engineering staff received a plaque “for outstanding support to the FY 2002 Financial Statement Audit leading to the Forest Service’s first unqualified opinion.”

History was made on December 17, 2002, when the USDA Forest Service received word that it had successfully achieved the “clean” audit opinion it had strived so hard to obtain. Auditors from the accounting firm KPMG and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Inspector General, verbally informed the USDA Forest Service that the Agency would receive an unqualified opinion for the fiscal year 2001 financial statements — the best possible opinion auditors can give.

Upon hearing the good news, Infra’s Program Manager Tah Yang was quick to share the praise and thank the Infra user community for the “...endless hours of work and tireless support. The hard work and perseverance of the Infra community and financial staff has [sic] paid off.”

For several years the USDA Forest Service had received disclaimed opinions; that is, the worst possible rating of its fiscal accountability. Thanks to the efforts of dedicated employees from across the USDA Forest Service and throughout the Department, the Agency made the unprecedented accomplishment of moving straight from a disclaimed audit opinion to an unqualified opinion, the best possible rating!

According to Department personnel, no Federal agency ever went from a disclaimer to a clean opinion. The monumental accomplishment of the USDA Forest Service is a strong contrast to the much-publicized revelations of criminal accounting performance in the private sector. Those who have worked in personal and real property management are aware of the work and dedication that was necessary to help the USDA Forest Service and the Department establish this historic milestone.