

September 1, 2021

Dear Hiring Officials:

I am applying for the State Forester position. Throughout my career, I have been involved in natural resources management gaining experience in natural resources, administration, disaster management, and organizational transformation. I currently work for NOAA-Fisheries as the Oregon Coast Branch Chief and serve as the agency lead for forestry and fire issues. I am working with the State of Oregon on Habitat Conservation Plan development for the Western Oregon State Forests, the Elliott State Forest, and the Private Forest Accord. I am well-versed in the forestry issues in Oregon.

Over the past thirty years, I have held leadership positions in forestry, land management, and water resources. At the Bureau of Reclamation in Klamath Falls, I addressed deep-seeded problems regarding budget, administration, union grievances, construction loans and contracts, in addition to critical issues with water management and endangered species. As the Team Leader for the Southern California Conservation Strategy with the US Forest Service, I settled a lawsuit and led a team that addressed species issues, habitats, and corridors across 3.8 million acres and all activities on the Forests. At the US Army Corps of Engineers, I successfully integrated an existing habitat conservation plan with the Corps' Mitigation Rule to optimize conservation and funding. On both the Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests, I led efforts that supported a successful timber program driven by social, ecological, and economic factors. Throughout my career, I have worked in fire management, disaster assistance, and emerging land management issues infusing new ideas into organizations.

In addition to the skills list above, I have created diverse, supportive, and employee-of-choice workplaces. I have addressed tough personnel and budget issues and resolved them. I am skilled at budget and strategic planning and decision-making. I have developed and honed my skills in facilitation, mediation, and organizational transformation. I am interested in a position where I can build on the strengths of the current program and create a system that can address critical issues facing natural resource managers. I want to use my organizational and problem-solving skills coupled with my natural resources background to address and resolve challenges facing the State of Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Therese O'Rourke*

Therese Marie O'Rourke

# *Therese “Tere” O’Rourke*

## **EXPERIENCE**

### **Regulatory**

**Chief, Oregon Coast Branch, NOAA-Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service. Western Oregon.** Oversees Coast Branch office, supervises on- and off-site staff. Implements Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and other environmental laws and policies. Facilitates leadership team meetings. Serves as a technical expert for forest planning, habitat conservation planning, mitigation, and conservation banking. Facilitates cross-divisional team for federal lands issues. Creatively resolves issues. Works extensively with bodies such as watershed counsels, local, State and Federal legislators, Tribes and other governmental entities.

**Chief, South Coast Regulatory Branch, Los Angeles District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Carlsbad, CA.** Oversaw South Coast Branch office, supervised twenty on- and off-site staff. Implemented Clean Water Act, Rivers and Harbors Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and other environmental laws and policies. Collaborated with NMFS to create a Programmatic Agreement for all Essential Fish Habitat and associated species and resources. Served as a technical expert for watershed planning, hydrology, soils, and biology. Addressed controversial issues such as border wall, international water border issues, high speed rail, and energy projects. Served as national expert regarding conflict management and facilitation, threatened and endangered species, land management, and NEPA. Worked extensively with political bodies such as County Supervisors, local, State and Federal legislators, Associations of Governments, and other governmental entities. Facilitated project management and leadership team meetings.

**Assistant Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Carlsbad, CA.** Supervised ecological services staff implementing the Endangered Species Act and other State and Federal laws and Acts. Worked extensively with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments to develop and implement the multiple species habitat conservation plan for the Coachella Valley. Facilitated recovery teams. Led critical habitat reviews and 5-year species reviews. Was a primary negotiator for Transnet (a local tax) regarding environmental mitigation for infrastructure projects. Was the primary point person for public and congressional relations. Developed partnerships for conservation, created and implemented habitat conservation plans; assisted federal, state and local agencies (Border Patrol, Homeland Security, various military bases, BLM, Forest Service, and others). Addressed issues of agricultural community and Tribes through habitat restoration and alternative agricultural practices.

## **Land Management**

**Staff Officer, Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests, U.S. Forest Service, Corvallis, OR.** Facilitated and led resolution of issues related to land management, climate change, endangered species, mitigation, land use conflicts, budget, and personnel. Solved problems regarding land management, budget/work plan, conflict within publics, and trade-offs within programs across the Forests. On the Siuslaw: Oversaw the Forest terrestrial and aquatic restoration and stewardship program. Managed stewardship grantee, groups, and contractors. Developed and strengthened workforce and partnerships to expand and implement the Forest Program of Work. Oversaw and led operations of Forest-wide programs for Natural Resources including silviculture, stewardship, timber, wildlife, ecology, planning, hydrology, fisheries, minerals, geology, botany, aquatic and vegetation restoration, tripartite land acquisition and other resources. On the Willamette: Managed recreation program including developed and dispersed camping, ski areas, day use sites, special use permits, special events, etc. Managed and implemented Forest-wide Lands program including land adjustment, tripartite land acquisition, special uses, easements, and other realty issues. Created a model for Special Uses Modernization. Served as technical expert on National Mitigation Team creating training tools and technical guides for field units regarding mitigation banks, in-lieu fee programs and permittee responsible mitigation. Led and managed Wilderness program including all aspects of natural resources management, fire, and visitor use. Oversaw and led the Heritage program. Facilitated resolution of Union issues.

**Area Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Falls, OR.** Directed the delivery of water to irrigators and ranchers under the Klamath Basin Area Project. Coordinated with the Services to implement restoration activities located within the Klamath Basin and ensured operations compliance with biological opinion(s). Facilitated multi-agency science review for implementation of salmon management and recovery efforts in coordination with farmers, ranchers, Tribes, and agencies. Developed and implemented annual- and long-term strategic plans. Worked with Irrigation Districts, Farm Bureau, and local interests to modernize agricultural operations using solar energy, irrigation techniques, and soil modifications. Coordinated with representatives of federal, state and local agencies, state and federal legislators in California and Oregon, irrigation interests; Chairpersons and staff of the Klamath, Yurok, Karuk, and Hoopa Valley Tribes, and national representatives of environmental groups regarding tradeoffs between limited water supply, water rights, endangered fish species, and Tribal rights. Addressed conflicts relating to limited water supplies. Advised on water rights issues. Resolved Union issues.

**Team Leader, Southern California Conservation Strategy, U.S. Forest Service, San Diego, CA.** Led a team focused on compliance with the Endangered Species Act. Completed a complex, political environmental analysis combining collaborative decision-making, intergovernmental cooperation and coordination, and interpretation of new regulations. Implemented NEPA, ESA, and other federal laws. Activities analyzed included all recreation, trail management, engineering, roads, bridges and facilities management throughout Southern California National Forests on 3.8 million acres. Negotiated and implemented a lawsuit settlement between government agencies and special interest groups. Completed a precedent-setting, large-scale environmental

consultation (on time and under budget) involving several levels of government, individuals and groups. Nominated for Chief's Award for Teamwork.

***District Ranger, White River National Forest, U.S. Forest Service, Dillon, CO.*** Managed large recreation program. Coordinated and interfaced with city managers, city and county staff, and elected officials regarding issues with emphasis on recreationally based-community development, mining issues, timber harvesting and ecosystem management. Created one of the first Stewardship projects in the country. Promoted federal, state, and local community projects through collaborative efforts and relationship building. Developed partnerships and acquired grants for community projects. Created an intergovernmental working group from several federal agencies, state agencies and the county. Facilitated resolution of historic and current recreation and land issues.

## **International**

***International Coordinator, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, DC.*** Worked throughout Latin America as a liaison for the U.S. State Department, World Bank, and the U.S. Forest Service. Created NEPA training in Spanish and Portuguese and delivered training throughout Latin America. Crafted and saw to fruition the signing of a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and Brazilian governments. Worked with Federal, State and local Brazilian governments to coordinate and improve wildland fire fighting techniques, mining practices, and timber harvesting techniques. Worked with G-7 countries to coordinate projects in the Amazonian region for the United Nations conference. Worked in Indonesia, southern African countries (Malawi, Botswana, etc.) to stimulate intergovernmental relations and coordination.

***International Technical Expert.*** Served on numerous international assignments bringing creative ideas and technical experience to foreign governments.

- Introduced and advised regarding aspects of Forest planning and workforce management to Indonesian local and national governments. Indonesia Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Aceh and Jakarta, Indonesia. 2018.
- Worked with Peruvian government to develop National Park funding strategy, create volunteer program, and expand outreach and education program. Offered experience and ideas from municipal and national backgrounds to create framework for fund distribution and work planning for the Peruvian government. Paracas National Park, Peru. 2005.
- Worked with the Guatemalan government to create a community-based approach to promote cultural, recreational, and economic use of National Park resources. Mirador National Park, Peten, Guatemala. 2003. 2004.

## **Non-profit organizations**

***Senior Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy, San Diego, CA.*** Managed operations in Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties including land acquisition, land management (with a focus on wildlife corridors and land use), budget and personnel management. Responsible for TNC's land management, special use permits, tentative maps, subdivision maps, and parcel maps. Facilitated research for wildlife corridors and climate change. Negotiated major transaction with development corporation, transferred

property to the State, developed and implemented wildlife corridor program; organized and redesigned staffing and administration.

**Managing Editor**, *American Forestry Association, Washington, DC*. Served as managing editor for the *Urban Forest Forum*; contributing writer to *American Forests* magazine; database manager for urban foresters; Congressional liaison regarding forestry issues; wrote natural resource issues papers for the Board; lead organizer for annual conference.

### **EDUCATION**

**MS, Biology**, Environmental Science and Policy, 1993, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Thesis: *A socioeconomic and environmental analysis of non-timber forest products in southwestern VA*. Course work in biology, biogeochemistry, climate change, natural resources, law and policy, anthropology, economics.

**BS, Forestry**, 1984, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Emphasis in communications, watershed management, urban forestry, entomology and plant physiology, Asian studies, and public relations.

Additional course work and training in project management, habitat restoration, ground water management, bioengineering, wetland mitigation, facilitation, leadership, management, public administration, Portuguese, Spanish, legislative processes, GIS.

**Certifications:** Facilitator, Wings Seminars, 2017. Master Practitioner, Neuro-Linguistic Programming – Wings Seminars, 2015; Certified Professional Facilitator – Newton Learning Corporation, 2002. Certified Arborist – 1987.

**Trainings:** Extensive trainings in hydrology, soils, wetlands, botany, wildlife, Natural Resources policy – NEPA, ESA, EFH, CWA, and others.

**Teaching experience:** Clean Water Act regulations and permitting, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Mitigation Banking, In-lieu Fee programs for Mitigation for the Corps of Engineers and Environmental Law Institute, Integrated Pest Management (San Diego State University), Tropical Ecology (American University), Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Leadership, and Communication.

**Language skills:** Fluent Spanish and Portuguese; Some Bahasa, Cantonese, Quechua.

***Chronological Experience:***

2020-present **Branch Chief**, Oregon Coast. NOAA-Fisheries National Marine Fisheries Service, Roseburg, OR. Habitat Conservation Planning. Species Recovery. Coastal issues.

2016-2020 **Staff Officer**, Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests, US Forest Service, Corvallis, OR. Land Management. Climate Adaptation. Restoration. Recreation.

2015-2016 **Area Manager**, Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Falls, OR. Farming. Water Management. Tribal Relations. Endangered Species. Construction.

2008- 2015 **Regulatory Branch Chief**, Los Angeles District, Army Corps of Engineers, Carlsbad, CA. Waters and Wetland Regulatory Permitting and Mitigation.

2003-2008 **Assistant Field Supervisor**, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Carlsbad, CA. Endangered Species Recovery, Habitat Conservation, Bio-Monitoring/Science.

2001-2003 **Senior Program Manager**, The Nature Conservancy, San Diego, CA. Land Acquisition, Wildlife Corridors, Climate Change Science and Policy.

1999 - 2001 **Southern California Conservation Strategy. Program Manager**, US Forest Service, San Diego, CA. Forest Planning, Organizational Transformation.

1995-1999 **District Ranger**, White River National Forest. US Forest Service, Dillon, CO. Recreation. Stewardship. Community Involvement and Leadership.

1989-1995 **International Technical Assistance and Training Coordinator**, US Forest Service, International Programs; Fire & Aviation Management. Washington, DC.

1981 - 1989 **Arborist and Municipal Employee**, several municipalities and a non-profit.