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The National Forest Management Act in a Changing Society, 1976-1996: How Well Has It Worked in the Past 20 Years?: Will It Work in the 21st Century? (September 16-18)

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Assessing the Need to Reform the Laws and Regulations

Perry R. Hagenstein

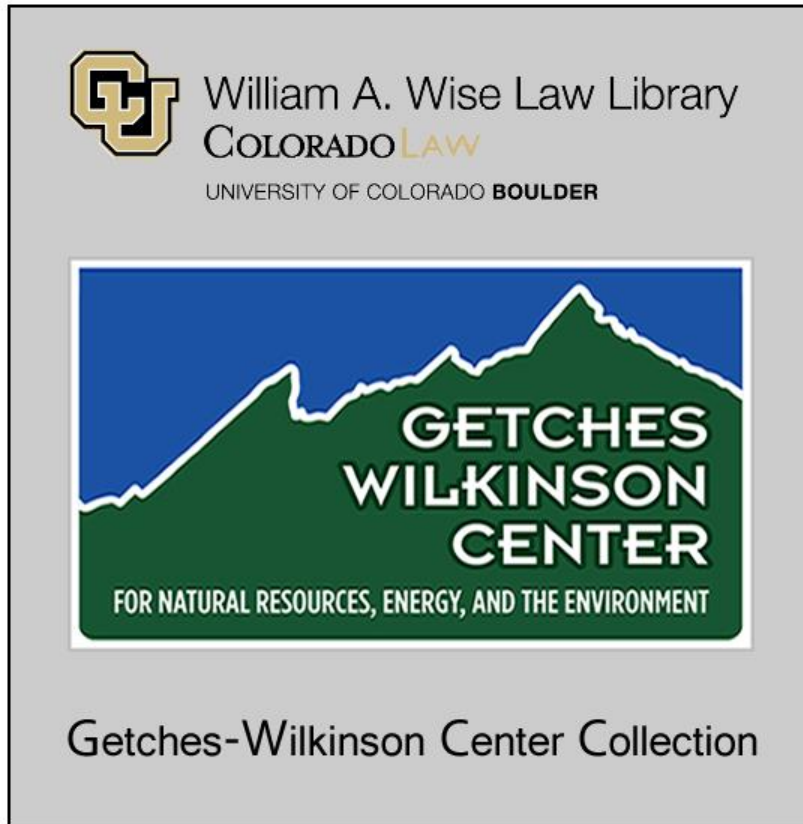
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**ASSESSING THE NEED TO REFORM
THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

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**THE NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT
IN A CHANGING SOCIETY: 1976 -- 1996**

September 16-18, 1996

**Natural Resources Law Center
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Boulder, Colorado**

August 27, 1996

ASSESSING THE NEED TO REFORM THE LAWS OR REGULATIONS

Perry R. Hagenstein

This conference has in various ways assessed the needs for reform in NFMA and more broadly in management of federal forests, particularly the National Forests. This panel has the assigned task of examining proposals that are in front of the Congress, the results of a public land law review last spring by the Western Governors' Association, and the Forest Service's proposed changes in NFMA regulations. I suggest that the panel keep in mind the following criteria for assessing the need for reform in NFMA and related matters.

1) Do the laws and regulations adequately reflect society's goals to the extent that they are relevant to the lands and resources under consideration?

2) Do the laws and regulations allow for flexibility in considering regional differences in the context within which decisions are made?

3) Do the laws and regulations allow for flexibility in management as changes in society's goals and the context of management decisions change over time?

4) Do the laws and regulations provide processes that give members of the public confidence that they are receiving equitable treatment?

5) Are the laws and regulations straightforward and simple enough to be understood by the interested public?