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Dave Cleaves is the Director of Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS), one of six regional research units that make up the USDA Forest Service R&D organization – the most extensive natural resource organization in the world. The research of RMRS focuses on scientific knowledge creation and application for fire management, invasive species control, recreation and other human uses and impacts, water and air protection, fish and wildlife management, resource data and analysis, resource management and use. He guides the work of 12 field laboratories throughout a 14-state territory encompassing the Great Basin, Southwest, Rocky Mountains, and parts of the Great Plains . Dave also oversees research activities on 14 experimental forests, rangelands, and watersheds, and 260 Research Natural Areas. RMRS employs 500 permanent full-time employees, of which 100 are research scientists

Dave was formerly staff director for all national research programs in economics, forest products, social science, recreation and tourism, urban forestry, and science education. His directorate was responsible for leading the Resources Planning Act (RPA) assessment that provided information on the state of the nation's forests and their uses for use in strategic planning by the Forest Service and other organizations. Dave also led R&D programs in strategic management, science application (technology transfer) and market-based approaches to ecosystem services.

Dave was the National Program Leader for Fire Systems Research (USDA Forest Service) in Washington , DC , where he oversaw the agency's research and development programs in fire behavior and prediction, fuels management, planning and economics, and human dimensions.

Dave's specialty is decision science and risk analysis, about which he has authored numerous papers and done extensive consultation. He was the national decision science specialist in the Forest Service where he developed methods and tools for improving environmental analysis and decision processes.

Dave was formerly a Forest Service research project leader in fire economics and management in Riverside , California , and a professor of forest marketing and economics at Oregon State University . Dave has a B.S. and M.S. from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. in economics from Texas A&M University.