

RICHARD J. LASKO

RICHARD J. LASKO – retired, formally Deputy Director, Fire & Aviation Management, US Forest Service, National Headquarters, Washington, DC. Rich has held a variety of staff, management, and field assignments in wilderness, silviculture, fire ecology, and fire management, in five Regions of the National Forest System.

Rich began his fire management career in 1965 with the California Department of Forestry and the Orange County Fire Department. After serving in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, Rich received a Bachelor of Science in the Conservation of Natural Resources from the University of California at Berkeley and undertook graduate level instruction which led to certification as a Silviculturist.

Rich has served on National Incident Management Teams in a variety of functions (Incident Commander, Planning Section Chief, and Fire Behavior Analyst) on numerous emergency incidents throughout the United States. He has worked with one of 4 National Area Command teams as an Area Commander (Planning) since 2004 on large scale emergencies (wildfires, hurricanes). He has presented instruction in emergency management at the National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute, with the Fire Department in New York City, in Russia, India, South Africa, and most recently in Chernobyl, Ukraine.

Rich's foremost international assignments include a 15 month tour as an agricultural advisor for 3 provinces in eastern Afghanistan (2009-2011); long-term involvement in the Sustainable Forestry project in central Siberia (1995-2005); advisor for an ongoing project to mitigate wildfire effects in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, Ukraine (2007-present); and assistance to the Wildlife Conservation Society project for protection of Siberian Tiger in eastern Siberia. Rich also spent the 1994 fire season as a fire rappeller in Siberia with the Russian Aerial Fire Service and has worked on other forest and emergency management projects in Russia, Republic of Georgia, Macedonia, South Africa, and Ukraine.