

B. Your Aspirations

1. In one or two sentences, describe your career goal:

2. What are your professional aspirations? Indicate in which area(s) of the environment, Native American health care, or tribal public policy you are considering making your career and specify how your academic program and your overall educational plans will assist you in achieving this goal.

Building upon my experiences living and working in the national forests of the Pacific Northwest, I intend to further my personal growth and professional development through the pursuit of a joint Masters of Forestry and Juris Doctorate in Environmental Law. The programs offered by Yale University and Duke University are ideal preparation for a career in the conservation and management of our natural resources. These curricula offer a solid background in the scientific and political disciplines essential to understanding complex resource issues, synthesizing the social, economic and ecological considerations crucial to legislating effective management solutions. Their broad, interdisciplinary approach to forest management emphasizes the importance of considering the complex dynamism of natural systems, and the far-reaching implications of management decisions. These programs also provide an internship, granting an opportunity to actively participate in natural resource management or the creation of forest policy. In addition to the broad scientific curriculum necessary to understanding natural resource issues, the forestry programs at Duke and Yale offer a joint law degree option. While realizing a solid background in science is critical, these programs recognize that a thorough understanding of the legal system is essential to effectively working within the existing policy framework. A joint forestry-law program will emphasize the scientific issues surrounding environmental policy while providing the legal background necessary to effectively address these issues within the political system. Coupled with my firsthand experiences involving forest management, I believe that these degrees will better equip me to contribute to the development of effective resource management and conservation strategies. Ultimately, I would like to continue working for the USDA Forest Service at the national level, and become involved in the creation of natural resource legislation. With a background from the Pacific Northwest, I would like to devote my career to working with regional representatives to create more effective management directives for northwestern forests. Specializing in the forests with which I am most familiar, I hope to use my education and experience to promote the conservation and sustainable management of places like the one I call home.

B. Your Schooling

3. Describe non-course-related research experience, if applicable. Indicate which areas of the environment, tribal public policy or health care your research affects, and the ways in which the experience will assist you in achieving your goals as stated in section B, #2.

My work with the Forest Service has allowed me to directly participate in research contributing to the creation of forest policy. During the last five years, I have assisted in a cooperative Nature Conservancy and Forest Service study analyzing the effects of prescribed fire on cavity-nesting bird habitat. Cavity-nesting birds are an indicator of forest health in western conifer stands, and assist managers in assessing habitat quality and productivity. Our study collected nesting success and vegetation data prior to the thinning and prescribed burning of our experimental plots. Following treatment, any changes in habitat composition or productivity will be observed in an effort to determine the impacts of thinning and prescribed fire. Using these data, policymakers can make better informed decisions to promote stand rehabilitation. This research in conjunction with my experience in Washington has been invaluable to my understanding of the complexities surrounding forest policy, and will continue to assist me in addressing these concerns today and in the future.

4. Describe a leadership experience in which you made a difference on campus or in your community.

In 1999 and 2002, I had the privilege of serving as the Paisley High Student Body President. This leadership position came during an increasingly severe recession, necessitating drastic cuts in state spending. Many of these reductions were focused on the education budget, seriously threatening the curricula of many schools. These blanket cuts were amplified in our tiny, rural school, disproportionately severe due to our small size and reduced enrollment. While many larger schools faced the reduction of extra-curricular sports or drama programs, the budgetary constrictions at Paisley cut directly into our operating costs. In a rural, isolated area with little existing economic stimulation, the closure of our school would eliminate one of the last remaining incentives for community growth, forcing many families to leave. At the end of my freshman year, my peers and I left for the summer uncertain if we would ever return to walk the halls of ██████ High School. When the school finally opened again the next fall, we were faced with the firsthand effects of Oregon's budget crisis. Many faculty reductions had already been made, with additional cuts and possibly closure imminent. Resolving to do whatever I could to alleviate our predicament, I worked with our superintendent to explore ways the student body could help. Drafting a plan to reduce maintenance costs, we presented the school board with a proposal to lengthen the school day, and have the student body assume janitorial responsibilities. In just fifteen additional minutes each day, the students performed all custodial duties, freeing our district from costly cleaning contracts. Our student service program still exists today, and is an integral part to the continuing survival of our school. This legacy has been estimated to save the school up to \$20,000.00 annually, allowing Paisley to endure in the face of continuing fiscal reductions.

5. Describe a specific activity or experience that has been important in clarifying or strengthening your commitment to the environment, Native American health care, or tribal public policy.

The effects of our forest resource management policies could not have been more apparent than in the wake of the 2002 fire season. Unusually high summer temperatures, low relative humidity, and a drought cycle culminated in a fire season that devastated more than 7.2 million acres and consumed \$2.2 billion in suppression costs before its close. Nearly a century of fire suppression policies set the stage for the incendiary conditions witnessed that summer. As a wildland fire reserve with the Forest Service, I found myself amidst the struggle to contain the wildfires that raged throughout the West. While the Biscuit Complex engulfed southern Oregon, the eruption of wildfire near my own home in southeastern Oregon led to the evacuation of our community. Working in a neighboring district, I departed for work each morning uncertain of having a home to return to at the end of the day. As I battled on the fire lines of my district, my family helped fire crews desperately fight to save our community. In the midst of record temperatures, the conflagration exploded one dry afternoon, severing communication lines and overtaking fire crews. Attempting to return home late that evening, I was met by a state police blockade, and informed that the fire had overwhelmed firefighters and taken the highway. Only after much time and anxiety was I allowed to pass, and with great relief find my family and home safe. The fires of 2002 demonstrated how immediate the specter of catastrophic wildfire loomed. Generations of misguided forest management came to fruition in our tiny community that July, as wildfire threatened our families, our homes and our livelihoods. The beloved forests of my youth were destroyed, leaving behind what I believed were little more than charred remains. Overcome by a deep sense of loss, I began searching for answers. Working with the USFS and local watershed councils, I learned about the natural role fire had once played in maintaining healthy forest stands, and saw the firsthand effects of misguided fire suppression policies. I was surprised to discover that fire was actually a natural process, integral to the proper functioning of forest ecosystems, and that the unnaturally severe fires that had ravaged the forests near my home were actually the result of earlier mismanagement. The more I discovered the falsity of my prior attitudes toward fire, the more I realized how widely these misconceptions were held, and how obstructive they were to shifting management paradigms away from suppression. Using these personal experiences as a foundation upon which to build my education, I hope to contribute to affecting better management strategies to protect the forests, homes and livelihoods of those in communities like the one I cherish.

6. Describe briefly any public service or community activities associated with your interests in the environment, Native American health care, or tribal public policy in which you regularly participate. Explain the duration, degree, and significance of your involvement.

Having the privilege to serve in the office of Senator [REDACTED] has been a tremendously enlightening and challenging experience. It has provided an inside perspective into the world of policy making, revealing both the pleasant and unpleasant realities of creating legislation. Serving with The Nature Conservancy, Forest Service and local watershed councils, I have learned a great deal about the implementation of resource management, but I have never had the occasion to explore the legislation behind these policies. My service in Washington presented me with my first exposure to the politics behind these management directives, directly thrusting me into the tumultuous world of forest policy. While in session, our office sponsored a salvage rider pertaining to the 2002 Biscuit Fire in southern Oregon. It proposed the harvest of old growth reserves established by the Northwest Forest Plan, and suspended appeals of subsequent sales. As tensions ran high concerning this contentious issue, the bill received a great deal of public attention. It was my responsibility to discuss these concerns with constituents, and explain our proposed legislation. A great deal of research was necessary to become proficient with the issue, as well as eloquent and tactful communication skills. Adequately representing the Senator's position on such controversial legislation was challenging, especially when I found it often incongruent with my own beliefs. Initially, I found it difficult to work on material with which I was in opposition, but I soon realized it was an invaluable opportunity to truly see both sides of the issue. I was forced to put my personal biases aside, and consider the issue from all perspectives. I soon discovered that what I had initially considered an inhibition was actually my most valuable asset in discussing our controversial legislation with constituents. I quickly learned the necessity of compromise inherent to all legislation, and was forced to abandon my own preconceptions. While there were still items with which I personally disagreed, I realized that the issues surrounding forest policy were much more complex than initially apparent. Working on resource policy taught me a great deal about my own convictions, and helped me realize the difficulty of creating legislation, especially that pertaining to the management of complex natural ecosystems.

7. What additional information (not already addressed in the application) do you wish to share with the Udall Scholarship review committee?

I was raised in a small, rural community in southeastern Oregon. While our remoteness limited the availability of traditional social opportunities, it offered many possibilities for outdoor activity in a unique area. As I matured, my affinity for the forests surrounding my home gradually took on a deeper meaning, and began to define my identity. I started working for family friends on local cattle ranches, then became employed with The Nature Conservancy and finally the US Forest Service. I quickly discovered that the land that had captivated me as a child was much more than I had ever given it credit for: it was what sustained the survival of the community I called home. After working for employers that I assumed should traditionally be opposed on environmental views, I was astonished to discover that beyond superficial differences, the two ultimately shared a single dependence integral to their survival: an environment managed sustainably. I learned firsthand that the economic viability of our community relied on the effective management of our natural resources. Working with the USFS and local watershed councils, my research on fire regime restoration allowed for a firsthand opportunity to learn about and implement forest policy. My experience in Washington offered a perspective from the opposite end of the spectrum, permitting me to learn about the actual creation of natural resource legislation. With this background, I hope to work toward helping these stakeholders realize a common ground in sustainability.

8. If you are a former Udall Scholar reapplying this year, please attach a one-page statement describing your activities over this past year as a Udall Scholar and how an additional year of scholarship funding would benefit your studies and career goals.

E. Essay (please attach)

In 800 words or less, discuss a significant public speech, legislative act, or public policy statement by Congressman Udall and its impact on your field of study, interests, and career goals.

Your essay must be typed in 12 point font and should not exceed 800 words.

F. Letters or Recommendation (please submit with the rest of the application)

The nominee should secure letters of recommendation from a current or recent faculty member who can discuss the nominee's potential; a current or recent faculty member in the nominee's field of study; and another individual who can attest to the nominee's capabilities. One of these letters may be from the Udall faculty representative.