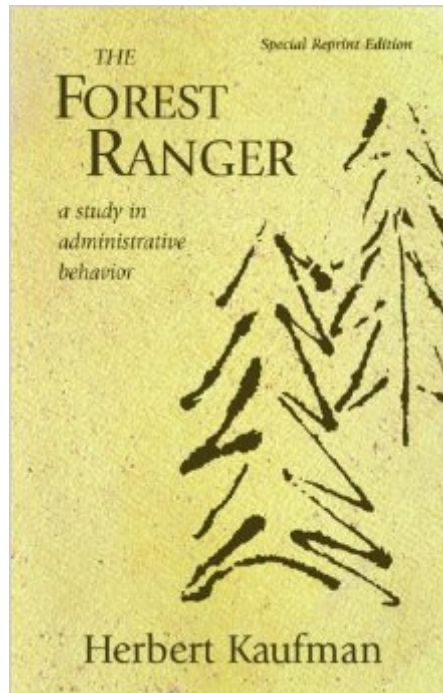


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# The Forest Ranger: A Study In Administrative Behavior (Rff Press)



## **Synopsis**

It is the rare book that remains in print for nearly fifty years, earning wide acclaim as a classic. The Forest Ranger has been essential reading for generations of professionals and scholars in forestry, public administration, and organizational behavior who are interested in the administration of public lands and how the top managers of a large, dispersed organization with multiple objectives like the Forest Service shape the behavior of its field officers into a coherent, unified program. Published as a special reprint in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Forest Service, The Forest Ranger is as relevant and timely today as when it was first issued in 1960. In addition to the original text, this special reprint of The Forest Ranger includes two new forewords and an afterword that highlight how much we have learned from Herbert Kaufman. The first foreword, by Harold K. (Pete) Steen, former president of the Forest History Society, considers the book's impact on the forestry community and explains its continued relevance in light of changes in the culture and mission of today's Forest Service. The second, by Richard P. Nathan, co-director of the Rockefeller Institute of Government, considers the book's contribution to our understanding of administrative and organizational behavior. A new afterword by author Herbert Kaufman describes how his landmark study came into being and offers a candid assessment of how his theories about the agency's operations and its future have held up over time. In 1960, the Forest Service had a well-deserved reputation for excellence, and The Forest Ranger was a seminal analysis of the how's and why's of its success. Kaufman also warned, however, that an organization so unified and well adapted to its environment would have difficulties navigating social change. He was right in his concerns: The environmental, civil rights, and women's movements have all presented challenges to the character and purpose of the Forest Service, ultimately changing the organization in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Now, as then, The Forest Ranger is a striking and prescient case study of how a complex organization operates and evolves over time.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

First published in 1960, *The Forest Ranger* is an impressive study of the United States Forest Service. In the book, Kaufman (1960/1967) case studies the behavior of district rangers in the Forest Service and endeavors for an answer to the question of how policies formulated by policy executives are realized into integrated action by a service whose field personnel operate under varied conditions. "Even in agencies with simple, routine responsibilities, welding the behavior of field personnel into integral patterns is often a trying experience" (p. 25). In an agency which is as much dispersed and heterogeneous as the Forest Service, is it possible to secure an integrated and coherent policy implementation across a great number of the districts? If you believe it is impossible, I strongly recommend you to have a look at *The Forest Ranger* by Herbert Kaufman. The readers who are familiar with Herbert Simon should remember his masterpiece "Administrative Behavior" in which the author at "theoretical level" demonstrated what takes for the leaders of administrative agencies to direct, manage, and run largely staffed and complex organizations. Simon (1947/1997) spent his intellectual energy for an inquiry into the decision-making process, and knitted his theory around it by developing an impressive understanding that helped the readers to sense that "integrated policy action" depends on the degree that the leaders can control the "environment" of decision-making so that every individual employee in the organization adjusts his/her decisions to common objectives fashioned by policy makers. Organization design, implicitly, stood out as prerequisite for integrated policy action, with "organization design" serving to bring decision premises and necessary data to the attention and use of decision-makers.

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