

UNSWORN DECLARATION

I am (b) (6), at the USDA Forest Service working at the Supervisors Office for the Green Mountain National Forest in Rutland, Vermont. I have worked for the Forest Service for (b) (6) years. My supervisor is (b) (6). I do not directly supervise any employees.

I feel that there is low morale, the worst morale I have ever seen in my career, in Law Enforcement (LE) in Region 9.

The causes are a combination of things. It is a tie between the first and second. The first is a lack of interest in developing the program to make it work. I had worked for both (b) (6) and had a fair number of experience with both ((b) (6) years) before coming to the FS. I was shocked with what appeared to be no interest whatsoever by management on what was done in the field, the operation side, patrol and investigation. Lots of interest in getting things like Ag-learn done, but not the operations part. Because of that there was little focus on what was happening in the field. A big thing is evidence storage. I was covering a huge area and in that entire area that was not a secure evidence storage, which is a basic requirement of the program. It came to a head and I voiced it a number of times. I found out a case I was assigned to had evidence broken into. I brought this up to (b) (6) and (b) (6) said we don't have the money. I told (b) (6) we can't run the program without it. This was at a boondoggle meeting in Milwaukee. The money spent for that meeting could have been used for program issues instead of having us all come in for the meeting. Then the evidence room in Ohio got broken into, some of the money and drugs had been taken, not all, so the case could be salvaged. I then learned from (b) (6), who was (b)(6), (b)(7)(c), had directed an officer named (b) (6) to take evidence to the crime lab. (b) (6) refused to do it and contacted (b) (6) who undermined the supervisor's authority and told (b) (6) to back off (b) (6). My boss at the time, (b) (6), did get us some kind of evidence storage. That is the kind of lack of interest from the Regional Office that I see.

(b) (6)

We (LE) had been trying for six years to get the approval to get the National Guard do drug over flights. The RO had put up roadblocks to this continually. Fire and aviation folks would come up with different requirements, but the (b) (6) would not step forward and provide leadership to get it approved. It is ridiculous to not be able to use this free to us, valuable tool. Instead we had our employees out in the woods, possibly in danger, instead of using the National Guard. Finally (b) (6) signed off on this in the last month, but it took six years and it is just approved for part of our zone. It needs to be a national agreement, but every zone and region (b) (6) approach it differently.

I needed a state police portable radio when I got here. That process took close to three years. I have a file 1/2 inch thick on my requests. No one would provide assistance, or they would send me back and forth to different people, then they finally sent the wrong radio and it had to be reconfigured.

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

We have had turnover at the RO level in the (b) (6) position. The employees in that position get dejected and promote out or leave. I have only seen my boss ((b) (6)) twice in the six years. (b) (6) is reasonable and supportive and tries to assist us. For awhile (b) (6) seemed very dejected because (b) (6) works with crazy people there at the RO. (b) (6) seems better in the last couple of weeks, maybe because (b) (6) is leaving.

It seems as though (b) (6) would assign jobs to people that really didn't need to be done, and that (b) (6) got satisfaction from overloading people. It was like (b) (6) enjoyed them and (b) (6) lack of ability to triage or prioritize the work. A constant barrage of stuff that wasn't that important to do that kept us from our the important parts of our jobs. We were given unreasonable amount of work, but (b) (6) would not check with our supervisors to see if we could handle more.

Another example is when I got here I would work with the LE officers and normally my previous supervisors at the other agencies were interested in what was going on in the field. But in Region 9, other than (b) (6), we would get no contact back from the RO when we provided information to them. An example is one of our labs was bombed. We kept trying to set up a briefing with the FBI supervisor, state police and (b) (6) but we had to do the meetings on our own. The other agencies were quite interested and wanted to know what was going on, but the RO would not reply to emails or phone calls. (b) (6) came out one time with the (b) (6) finally, at the end. There was no interest in the progress of a very important case.

The second big problem that undermines morale is a pattern of (b) (6) investigations of employees based on interpretation of policies and the RO said they told us policies and procedures that we were never told. It seemed there were people who could do anything and nothing happened to them and others that were constantly intimidated. Some were told "The RO is watching you" or you better be careful about what you do. I became a union steward because of the constant intimidation of employees. One example was a hiring panel I was on in Milwaukee and (b) (6) passed out an example to the panel members that had actual names on it and included information on it that was very disparaging. One of the employees listed on the example that had disparaging information was a friend of mine. I told (b) (6) I thought that was very unprofessional to pass out this to all the people on the panel. The very next day (b) (6) offered a job to that person who was on the list. (b) (6)

Right after that the RO started doing disciplinary actions that were uncalled for and not even looked into. An example was (b) (6) put a higher grade gas in a vehicle (in one case the higher grade gas was cheaper) and (b) (6) got written up for it and a letter placed in his file. In another (b) (6) was ordered to be in (b) (6) office in five minutes, but (b) (6) didn't have a key, so (b) (6) got into the office and was disciplined for getting into the office when (b) (6) had been ordered to do so. Very nasty items and targeting employees. Another time they were trying to take an employee's (b) (6) away due to what they said was a complaint, but as it turned out the allegations were almost completely false. It seems like the slightest bit of due diligence would have avoided these issues. But they waste months trying to get people, when in the majority of cases it is unfounded. In the meantime the employees are on administrative leave or waiting to see what will happen to them, not being able to do their jobs and under extreme stress over petty things, often proved wrong. We have a lot of work to do, but it seems the RO spent so much time on this type of thing.

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

I used to have to go to (b) (6) for work and they told me to use travel comp, then I was told to use a different type of code. Then (b) (6) would send me emails about petty admin things, like the codes, which I wanted to get right, but (b) (6) at his level to be looking at my timesheet, what was with that? Then (b) (6) was going through some medical issues and (b) (6) called me and complained to me about my timesheet, such as having worked 12 ½ hours and other parts of my timesheet. I kept trying to tell (b) (6) there was an armed robbery in the mountains (an emergency) but (b) (6) kept giving me a bad time and making me redo my timesheet. (b) (6) was rude, condescending and demeaning to me. I had to change my timesheet multiple times for (b) (6). So I had to leave (b) (6) at least four times to make these changes. (b) (6) was rude and very unprofessional. Later I was (b) (6) Fire Patrol Captain job and I refused it because (b) (6) would have been my boss. (b) (6) is a bully and I wouldn't work directly for (b) (6).

I had made complaints to the (b) (6) and to (b) (6) about their operational deficiencies (like the evidence storage). I was vocal but in a respectable way. Then (b) (6) made the pretense of flying out here to do a firearms qualification (which is nuts because (b) (6) could do it in Wisconsin) and supposedly to do my performance rating (when (b) (6) wasn't my direct supervisor). (b) (6) met with me and told me that (b) (6) had heard from (b) (6) (b) (6) had asked (b) (6) why (b) (6) had hired "someone like me". The intent of what (b) (6) was saying was that (b) (6) wasn't happy with me, but (b) (6) said that (b) (6) tried to defend me. The feeling I got was (b) (6) was telling me to watch myself. After that I sent an email to (b) (6) asking to meet with the (b) (6) so I could find out what was wrong and how I could correct whatever (b) (6) felt I wasn't doing right. Then (b) (6) told me (in emails) that the (b) (6) was happy with what I was doing and I had misunderstood what (b) (6) said. That was foolishness and not what (b) (6) had said to my face. I wrote (b) (6) back and said, no that wasn't what you said. I also filed a complaint directly to (b) (6). Nothing happened for awhile, then finally I was contacted and told the Washington Office (WO) had talked to (b) (6) and counseled (b) (6).

Another time, with the bombing, (b) (6) caused some issues that jeopardized the operation and (b) (6) was very unprofessional. I had included that issue in my above complaint to the (b) (6) (b) (6) and I ended up going to mediation. I was just trying to do my job, but these things with (b) (6) turned out to be sideshows that wasted my time. (I have lots of documentation and emails on these issues, if needed).

We were starting to get a problem with meth on the forests so I found a good training at no cost. We had three employees who wanted to go to this. The (b) (6) said no to one of them because of cost. A safety officer said (b) (6) would pay for the room, we offered to share rooms, etc. to go. Then the (b) (6) said one of the employees couldn't go because it was (b) (6) day off. (b) (6) offered to go anyway, work around the training time, etc, but (b) (6) called the employee and I heard here tell (b) (6) in a very rude, unprofessional manner "You will not go to the training and that is final!" This employee was one of the ones they always picked on. (b) (6) asked for (b) (6) to say that in writing and (b) (6) flat refused to give it to (b) (6) in writing.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) got (b) (6) job in Ohio and after getting it (b) (6) got despondent. (b) (6) talked to me often and told me that (b) (6) talked to (b) (6) like a dog. (b) (6) said that (b) (6) was directed to send information to the crime lab and in dealing with (b) (6) was trying to hold (b) (6) accountable.

(b) (6)

But (b) (6) was constantly on (b) (6) case and after (b) (6) for everything and told (b) (6) to back off on (b) (6). Finally (b) (6) gave up the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) job, paid for (b) (6) own move and took a change to lower grade just to get out from working for (b) (6). Another case of them favoring certain people, like (b) (6) who ended up in prison and put a black eye on the agency. But (b) (6) was an excellent employee, good officer and (b) (6) was totally demoralized.

(b) (6)

I've been on several panels and follow the directions given to us and as directed from Human Resources. Very rarely does the RO select the employees we refer forward as best candidates. It seems like why do we bother with a panel when they don't use the information we provide to them. It seems like every decision is made by (b) (6) or (b) (6) without them looking at the information we provide on the best candidates.

From the time I arrived here there has been an attitude of the RO not having concerns about funds. The (b) (6) were frugal and saved money, but got us the training and items we needed for our jobs. The RO had a meeting a couple of weeks ago with the Patrol Captains and RO folks, wasting a lot of money on a meeting that could have been done over the phone. That money could have been spent in the field, getting our jobs done. We lack needed items in the field to do our jobs and are told we don't have the money to buy what we need.

For communication I have been told by (b) (6) that (b) (6) has an open door policy, but then I was told that we weren't supposed to call (b) (6) directly. As a (b) (6) I still contact (b) (6) but have heard from others they have been told to not contact (b) (6) directly.

There have been some issues with AUO in this Region and how they think it should be operated. An LEO can use it without getting prior permission but some of them have been told they have to get permission first and been told that what they were working on wasn't appropriate for AUO, when it actually was appropriate.

I have lots of other examples, but this gives an idea of what has caused low morale within the region.

I have read the above statement, consisting of four pages, each of which I have initialed. Any corrections I have made have my initials next to the correction. I understand this statement is made of my free will without any threat, promise of immunity, or inducement. I understand that the information I have given is not to be considered confidential and that it may be shown to the interested parties. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, executed on (b) (6);

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Personnel Misconduct Investigator

(b) (6)

UNSWORN DECLARATION

I am (b) (6) [redacted], at the USDA Forest Service working at the Supervisors Office for the Superior National Forest in Duluth, Minnesota and I cover the state of Minnesota. I have worked for the Forest Service since (b) (6). I worked for (b) (6) previous agencies for a total of (b) (6) years. My supervisor is (b) (6). I do not directly supervise any employees.

I feel there is extremely low morale within the Law Enforcement group in Region 9. I feel it is caused by poor management beginning at the Regional Office (RO) level. They are disengaged and not held accountable. Starting with (b) (6), and also from the (b) (6) and (b) (6) (b) (6) (because (b) (6) works for (b) (6)). The primary problem is (b) (6). Their actions are not accountable for the actions they do in this Region. At some level, because of the length this has been going on, it is also up the chain that (b) (6) is not being held accountable. This is not the first time this issue has been brought up.

There is limited to no goals and objectives or direction given to field personnel by the RO. We get regurgitated policies and procedures that come from the Washington Office (WO) but they do not give further direction so the field is left to figure it out on their own. The RO does not follow up. When we get limited information it is fragmented, inconsistent, and incomplete and lacks any guiding documentation or direction. I can call directly to (b) (6) (b) (6) but I get very little back from (b) (6). I cannot call or email (b) (6) anymore as of this last summer. We (Special Agents) were directed by our (b) (6) to not contact (b) (6) anymore directly, either via email or phone. This was not the case when I got to the Region in March, 2004. At that time I worked in the RO until October, 2005. I saw irresponsible management which contributed to low morale. The RO will tell you they are on the Regional bulletin board and they are, but that is the same as me making a dictionary available to you. They don't give clarification, engagement, or interaction with their field units on a regular basis. It has gotten worse in the last six to seven months with almost no communication. When anything is brought up by an employee that person is immediately ostracized and made to be a scapegoat. On a number of occasions and a number of ways I have faced this.

(b) (6) will say it is someone else's problem. (b) (6) is a victim too. Clearly it is the (b) (6) and (b) (6) who have caused the problems and are the central part of the problem. I personally have brought this morale issue and poor management issue to the attention of the (b) (6) (b) (6) verbally in the spring of 2006 and via email in the fall of 2006. Last March I notified (b) (6) in person of this situation. I know that another Special Agent, (b) (6), has also notified them of the situation.

During my (b) (6) month in the Region it was brought to my attention by multiple employees the low morale and their horror stories dealing with the (b) (6), (b) (6). This was surprising to me as a new employee to hear so many people say such negative things. (b) (6) has been in that office for over twelve years and (b) (6) for at least ten years. There have been at least nine different ASACs that have cycled through there. The poor morale became apparent very quickly and this was told to me with no prior knowledge of the Forest Service (FS) or the

employees who approached me. I was seeing it and living it myself, working right there with (b) (6) and (b) (6) (b) (6) would assert (b) (6) as the one in power. When I would try to talk to (b) (6) or (b) (6) I was dismissed and told to talk to someone else or that they had it under control. My personal assessment is that it was clear to me that neither (b) (6) nor (b) (6) had an understanding of running a Regional LEO program. They would reprimand anyone who would question them.

(b) (6) has exhibited vindictive, hostile behavior. (b) (6) is a master of it, almost sinister. (b) (6) knows how to leverage (b) (6) power and do it effectively. In the Spring of 2006 I had been attempting to push a program forward and it was readily available that (b) (6) was uncomfortable with it. (b) (6) response, out of the blue, was to send me to New Employee Training in Florida, after I had worked for over two years. This was almost immediately after I had commented on the issue at hand and was forcing (b) (6) to make a decision. It was completely useless to me to go to the training. (b) (6) told me everyone else would be going, but it never happened. I took it as vindictive in nature of (b) (6). There are numerous examples. It is (b) (6) way of doing business. One day there is an open door policy, the next day there isn't. I wrote a very benign email on the status of funding, but (b) (6) responded to (b) (6) (b) (6) forwarded the email to me. (b) (6) told (b) (6) to not have me contact (b) (6) directly anymore. I still have the email but it was encrypted so I can't even print it. (b) (6) is a master of divide and conquer. (b) (6) always says it is someone else's fault, so (b) (6) takes the fall. (b) (6) never accepts responsibility for anything.

On three separate occasions (b) (6) grossly interfered with ongoing criminal investigations. I have reported these up the chain and also to the Inspector General. One involved eco-terrorism, another an arson investigation, and the third involved an internal investigation of an employee on the Superior N.F. I have specific knowledge of (b) (6) interfering and reported it to my (b) (6) and to the Inspector General.

This is as dysfunctional an environment as I've ever worked in. This Region has been so beat up and demoralized that it needs significant rebuilding. There needs to be answers to why this has been allowed to go on. So the current (b) (6) has been informed and made aware of it for awhile and the previous ones as well.

We are beginning to get DTO operations in Minnesota. Anytime we make progress, from a field perspective, it is from us pleading, prodding, etc. It is malfeasance on (b) (6) part -- basically failure to do their job. DTO continues not to be addressed by the RO. They can't even order basic necessary items for the field.

I still haven't received an end of the year (2010) performance evaluation or standard checks on investigative workload. Four or five years ago it was a hot topic, but now it is no longer a priority? There has been zero leadership from the RO. So it shows no accountability from the WO as well. But they hold us accountable. I'm sure after this report goes in we will be held accountable. I am on my own and handle my own workload with no insight, guidance or directives from the Regional Office. I have always received Superior performance appraisals and more cash awards in this agency than in my prior years. It's almost like they pay you off, but I work hard for them.

Three or four years ago my (b) (6) said (b) (6) was going to put me in for the Special Agent award in the Region. (b) (6) asked me to write up something. (b) (6) got the award instead. My supervisor, (b) (6), thought I would get it but told me that (b) (6) picked (b) (6) instead. (b) (6) had been bringing up many issues, even to the (b) (6). So it was like it was a buyoff to give (b) (6) the award. This was at the same time that (b) (6) was going through mediation with Fors.

It is disgusting that this has been allowed to go on in the Region for many, many years. It is not one person complaining, this is Region-wide.

Lack of supporting of field troops continues to this day. Last week in the State of Wisconsin there is Fond d'Lac city where a city officer got killed. It is common and a courtesy to send our officers to the funeral. The request to attend was denied. So we look like fools to other agencies and cooperators for no reason. (b) (6) and (b) (6) will claim they weren't informed about it. They pay attention to what they want but ignore the field.

I came to Duluth in (b) (6), (b) (7)(c). There had been no agent there. (b) (6) State of Minnesota. A letter from the RO should have gone to the US Attorney's Office, but they never did that. They don't even do the most basic tools they should do for the field.

I have volumes more, I could talk all day. I have no respect or trust for (b) (6) and (b) (6) and above (WO) since they have known about this for years. They have been allowed to continue in spite of all the reporting done by many employees. I think at least 60 of the 65 employees in the Region could tell you this.

(b) (6) who is over the Patrols and has been for at least ten years and I have been here over five years. Until last month (b) (6) had never been to Duluth. That reflects on (b) (6) and (b) (6). There have been numerous meetings where it was necessary to have the Uniformed Captain there ((b) (6)) but (b) (6) wouldn't come.

A lot of us are putting ourselves out there to talk via this statement and just want some moderate, decent leadership. Everyone has been DEMORALIZED in this region. The employees don't think this report will go anywhere or anything happen. We need some good superstars in the RO to replace (b) (6) and (b) (6).

I anticipate some form of retaliation from giving this statement. What I'd like to see and contribute to are some changes in the Region.

I have read the above statement, consisting of four pages, each of which I have initialed. Any corrections I have made have my initials next to the correction. I understand this statement is made of my free will without any threat, promise of immunity, or inducement. I understand that the information I have given is not to be considered confidential and that it may be shown to the interested parties. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, executed on (b) (6).

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Personnel Misconduct Investigator