

“I Have Stood on the Shoulders of Giants...”

It was the great scientist Isaac Newton who coined this memorable phrase: “If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants...”

The quote seems especially apropos in describing the history of Resources for the Future. For more than 50 years, scholars of legendary insight and creativity have made RFF their academic home. And during all that time, RFF has been blessed to have leaders at the helm that must surely be added to this pantheon of giants.

As RFF’s Chair for the past three years, it has been my privilege to watch an already solid organization emerge as the most robust and respected think tank on energy and environmental issues in the country. The visionaries who have led RFF have possessed skills and personal characteristics informed by discipline, deep analytic insight, policy understanding, competence, and civility.

Fortunately, at every point when new leadership has been needed, RFF has found the right person to extend and expand our mission. At a time when so much substantive discussion on important public policy issues is clouded by intense partisanship, RFF stands out as a source of independent and objective analysis—a source more needed than ever.

As RFF prepares to begin the transition to its next president, certain constants remain.

The articles in this edition of *Resources* themselves convey the strength and breadth that have been developed in RFF’s research enterprise over the past half-century—and these qualities will endure. Researchers are asking relevant questions about what’s missing from current policies, what is often ignored or overlooked, how natural resources—from terrestrial species to outer space—are managed, and how Americans value environmental resources they may never even visit. Such reflections constantly seek the real-world lessons to be gleaned from past practice.

And so, at this period of interregnum in RFF’s leadership, we certainly suffer no loss of momentum. In fact, I am confident that RFF’s best work still lies in its future. This research organization is at the center of debates on energy policy, wild forests, land use, traffic congestion, and many other areas—and they reflect RFF’s true legacy: the thoughtful leadership embodied in its continuing and vital work.

Robert E. Grady
Chair



RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE

1616 P Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-1400
202-328-5000

Fax: 202-939-3460

Editorial: day@rff.org

Address changes: hase@rff.org

Internet: www.rff.org

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To subscribe, contact Scott Hase at RFF (hase@rff.org) or 202-328-5006. The publication is also available on the RFF website, www.rff.org.

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