

PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Advisory Council Purpose and Objectives

From the beginning of the National Trails System in 1968, Congress recognized that citizen involvement was critical to the development of long-distance trails and that it continues to be an important part of what makes these trails special. The National Trails System Act requires that each newly designated trail establish an Advisory Council comprised of a mix of citizens and government agency representatives.

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNNST) Advisory Council will:

- be comprised of about 20 – 35 members,
- represent points-of-view from along the entire 1,200-mile length of the trail, and
- meet about twice annually (typically spring/fall).

The Council's primary objective is to advise and make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture, through the Chief of the US Forest Service, on matters relating to the long-term vision for the PNNST and development of a PNNST Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is required under the National Trails System Act. The plan will be approved by the Chief of the US Forest Service and then submitted to Congress (tentatively planned for 2019).

Scope of Activities

The Advisory Council is part of a larger planning process coordinated by the US Forest Service. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Comprehensive Plan will be documented through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will be prepared by US Forest Service staff. The general public will also have opportunities to provide comments through the NEPA process.

The unique role of the Advisory Council is to serve as a venue where citizens and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies can talk together to develop recommendations and ensure that planning reflects the diverse public interests across the trail. These recommendations are expected to include:

- statement of the nature and purposes for the trail,
- trail uses,
- trail corridor and rights-of-way,
- standards for trail marking and signage, and
- priority future projects.

Advisory Council members should understand that this work will focus on broad, trail-wide issues. Site-specific concerns, like trail condition, facilities, or uses in a specific location, are best addressed through local land managers.



for the greatest good

Interests Represented

The Council will consist of no more than 35 members. Members provide a balanced and broad representation across the following interests:

Non-Federal Government

1. Native American Tribes;
2. One representative of the State of Montana, recommended by the Governor;
3. One representative of the State of Idaho, recommended by the Governor;
4. One representative of the State of Washington, recommended by the Governor;
5. Nationally recognized trails organizations;
6. Regionally recognized trails organizations;
7. Outdoor recreation with an emphasis on hiking;
8. Outdoor recreation with an emphasis on pack and saddle stock;
9. Gateway communities and local governments;
10. Nationally or regionally recognized environmental organizations;
11. Archaeological and historical preservation and/or interpretation;
12. Nationally or regionally recognized wildlife organizations;
13. Commercial timber and forest products;
14. Tourism and/or commercial outfitters and guides;
15. Environmental education;
16. Youth engagement and employment;
17. Private landowners;

Federal Government*

18. The Regional Forester of the US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region, or a designee;
19. The Regional Forester of the US Forest Service Northern Region, or a designee;
20. The Regional Director of the Pacific West or Intermountain Region of the National Park Service (NPS), or a designee; and
21. The State Director of the Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or a designee.

How Members Are Selected

Individuals interested in serving on the Council must complete an application package that includes: (1) brief résumé, (2) completed form [AD-755](#), and (3) if representing an organization, a letter of endorsement from that organization. Applications, including a scan of the *signed* AD-755, should be submitted to Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Matt McGrath at mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us; for options other than email, call Matt at 425-583-9304.

The US Forest Service reviews applications and recommends a slate of candidates that best achieves a balance of viewpoints and backgrounds relevant to the PNNST. For each position, the recommendation identifies a preferred candidate and a next-favored candidate. The agency submits its recommendation to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Forest Service's

recommendation is just a recommendation. Only the Secretary of Agriculture has authority to select members of the Council. This is a lengthy process (4 – 6 months) that involves background checks and vetting. Individuals appointed to the Council receive a mailed letter and certificate from the Secretary. USDA notifies the DFO of the appointments, and the DFO then calls or emails other applicants to let them know they were not appointed.

* = Federal Government employees are not eligible to serve as non-Federal Government representatives. Federal Government representative designees are selected by their agencies.

Length of Appointment & Time Commitment

Advisory Council members serve two-year terms. The appointment begins on the date of the appointment letter from the Secretary of Agriculture. Members may serve more than one term.

Meetings may be held twice yearly (spring/fall) for the four-year duration (2015-2019) of the planning process. Meetings typically span two or three days. Council meetings are generally held in communities on or near the PNNST. Additional travel days may be necessary.

There may also occasionally be brief administrative meetings of the full Council and working meetings of its subcommittees. No voting or Council decisions will take place in administrative or working meetings. To limit travel, most administrative or working meetings will be conducted by webinar or conference call.

Duties of Advisory Council Members

Advisory Council members play an active role in developing recommendations for the US Forest Service specific to the development of a Comprehensive Plan for the PNNST.

Council members are not expected to come to their first meeting with expertise in planning or trail issues. However, members should take an interest in the PNNST, including how the trail may impact other public values and resources. Members will make good-faith efforts to work with other Council members to contribute to the long-term vision for administration and management of the PNNST. Members will be expected to share their points-of-view, listen to and consider other perspectives, and ask for more information when it is needed.

To ensure this is an effective Advisory Council, members are expected to attend each meeting, participate in discussions, and complete any pre-work and follow-up tasks. To make the most of our brief opportunities to get together as a Council, members should arrive ready to focus on the work of the Council and do their best to minimize distractions.

Travel & Expenses

Council members do not receive pay, but they may be reimbursed for travel expenses to Council meetings. We aim to keep meeting costs low while providing a productive working environment for the Council.

Wendy Zoodsma serves as the Council’s travel arranger. Wendy works with each member before and after meetings to authorize travel plans, make reservations, and process receipts for reimbursement. If you have questions about travel, contact Wendy at 509-446-7500 or wendyzoodsma@fs.fed.us, or Matt McGrath at 425-583-9304 or mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us.

Meeting venues will be accessible for persons with disabilities. Members of the Council and the public may make reasonable accommodation requests for access to the facility or proceedings, such as sign language interpreting or assistive listening devices, by contacting Matt McGrath at 425-583-9304 or mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00am and 8:00pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Public Meetings & Records

Advisory Council meetings are open to the public. Meeting minutes and other records will be available to the public for inspection and copying. Advisory Council members’ names, the interest they represent on the Council, their organizational affiliation (if any), city/state, and email addresses are listed on a roster posted on the US Forest Service’s public website.

New Member Pre-Work

Prior to attending their first Advisory Council meeting, new members are expected to complete pre-work consisting of the following:

- Review the Advisory Council overview (this document)
- Submit a brief biographical sketch (no more than 250 words) to mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us. The biographical sketch will be available to the Council and on a public website.
- Complete training materials about the Federal Advisory Committee Act and Advisory Council member ethics (will be provided by the Council DFO).
- Visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/pnt> to preview the “PNT History & Background” slideshow and the report “PNT: Renewing Body and Spirit, Inspiring Passion for the Land” (you will find links in the “Planning & Background” box on the right side of the web page).
- Review minutes and documents for the most recent [meeting](#).

Advisory Council Support Staff

Matt McGrath, Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Program Manager, serves as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Council. If you have questions about the PNNST or the Council, please contact Matt at 425-583-9304 or mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us.

Other US Forest Service staff supporting the Advisory Council include Ben Johnson (facilitator) and Wendy Zoodsma (travel arranger).