

USFS Planning Rule Federal Advisory Committee Operating Protocols Supplement to the Committee's Charter

I. Mission

The committee will provide recommendations to the U.S. Forest Service concerning implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule. The committee will:

- Review the content of and provide recommendations on directives related to implementation of the planning rule
- Offer recommendations on implementation of the planning rule, based on lessons learned and best practices
- Offer recommendations for consistent interpretation of the rule where ambiguities cause difficulty in implementation of the rule
- Offer recommendations for effective ongoing monitoring and evaluation, including broad-scale monitoring, for implementation of the planning rule
- Offer recommendations on how to foster an effective ongoing collaborative framework to ensure engagement of federal, state, local and Tribal governments; private organizations and affected interests; the scientific community; and other stakeholders
- Offer recommendations for integrating the land management planning process with landscape scale restoration activities through implementation of the planning rule

II. Committee Membership

The committee members are:

Mike Anderson	Pamela Motley
William Barquin	Peter Nelson
Susan Jane Brown	Candice Price
Robert Cope	Vickie Roberts
William Covington	Greg Schaefer
Adam Cramer	Rodney Stokes
Daniel Dessecker	Christopher Topik
Russ Ehnes	Thomas Troxel
Stephan Kandell	Lorenzo Valdez
James Magagna	Ray Vaughan
Joan May	

Members were appointed in their individual capacity to represent a diverse range of perspectives. Because each member was appointed as an individual, the participants will not send alternates to committee meetings.

III. Collaboration and Decision Making

In the spirit of collaborative problem-solving, the committee will seek to produce consensus recommendations and advice that address the needs and interests of all participants and help the U.S. Forest Service develop sideboards and advance successful implementation of the planning rule. To do this, participants will work to educate themselves and one another, build understanding regarding their values and interests, develop a baseline understanding of essential information, and work to build agreements.

Collaborative problem-solving is most successful when deliberation result in three conditions: (1) parties agree that their major interests have been considered meaningfully; (2) participants have made every effort to address all parties' interests in any final recommendations or advice, and (3) that the final recommendations or advice accurately characterize both areas of agreement and any remaining differences. Facilitators will use a non-binding straw poll to ascertain the level of support for a proposal. If a committee member has reservations about a specific recommendation, s/he should create and put forward an alternative that the whole committee can support. Consensus is achieved when, after careful deliberation, committee members unanimously agree to a make a recommendation.

If the committee doesn't reach consensus, the facilitators will use the deliberations to document points of, and reasons for, agreement and disagreement. Committee recommendations and advice will be built by those who are in attendance. The principle is "play or pass." All decisions made in committee sessions are considered final, unless significant new information surfaces requiring reconsideration.

IV. Participant Roles

A. Committee members

- Attend all full committee meetings (eight meetings over two years), and engage in working groups as appropriate
- Come prepared for each meeting (review materials in advance, respond to requests review the agenda, etc.)
- Adhere to the protocols adopted by the group
- Engage in collaborative problem-solving
- Select two co-chairs who represent a balance of interests
- Select working group chairs or co-chairs
- Serve as a conduit for information and support with their respective organization or interest group, including sharing meeting information and committee progress and building constituent support for the committee's recommendations

B. Committee co-chairs

The committee will ask for volunteers and select two co-chairs. The term for each co-chair is one year, with the opportunity to serve for the second year of the committee's work, upon approval of the committee at the annual evaluation.

A co-chair may also resign voluntarily at the end of the first year of committee work. The responsibility of the co-chairs will be shared and equal. The co-chairs will work closely with the facilitation team and the Forest Service DFO to:

- Develop agendas for committee meetings
- Identify and organize materials and information which support committee work and deliberations
- Review and edit meeting summaries or committee-produced reports
- Coordinate and integrate the work of any working group into with the committee's deliberation
- Be available to other committee members to collect questions and concerns about the committee's focus and procedures

C. Forest Service Designated Federal Official

- Serve as the committee's liaison to the U.S Forest Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture and advocate for committee recommendations,
- Attend all full committee meetings,
- Serve as the primary point of contact of the U.S. Forest Service and as a resource to the participants by explaining agency processes, agency sideboards and constraints such as funding issues, laws, and regulations,
- Share information with the participants, provide requested materials (maps, studies, etc.), and arrange for presentations by subject matter experts, and
- Answer questions or offer opinions as requested by the participants

D. Working group chairs or co-chairs:

The committee will establish working groups. Members will indicate their interest in serving on a particular working group. The facilitators and the co-chairs will help the participants populate each working group. The groups will forward their work to the full committee; only the full committee can advance recommendations to the Forest Service.

Working group chairs will be elected by consensus by the working group's members. If consensus is not possible, a majority of votes is required to serve.

Working group chairs will:

- Coordinate with the facilitators and co-chairs to define appropriate roles, establish agendas, schedule meetings, distribute notes, coordinate presentations, and solicit expert opinion
- Delegate assignments and hold participants accountable
- Maintain a list of the current membership of the working group

V. Ground Rules

A. Participants will:

- Assume good intent
- Operate in good faith
- Conduct themselves professionally and courteously
- Work to find ways to resolve differences as they occur

- Go directly to one another – not the press – to clarify concerns
- Explore, without committing, during the deliberation as a way of opening up the collaborative problem-solving process
- Neither initiate nor undertake any action outside of the committee process intended to undermine the process
- Not publicly represent the views of other participants

B. During discussions the participants will:

- Respect the range of views and perspectives represented at the table
- Disclose interests
- Approach discussions with a “beginner’s mind” to expand the conversation
- Listen fully to understand
- Ask for clarification
- Look for ways to address one’s own interests and the interests of others
- Participate, share the floor, be concise
- Look ahead—acknowledge the past but don’t rehash it
- Be explicit and factual

C. No Surprises

Members will make good-faith efforts to inform the full committee of any imminent legal action related to the purpose of the committee, or that may directly impact other members of the committee. Notification can occur via email or other method, but it is encouraged for members to disclose concerns and the potential for legal action during a meeting of the full committee. Where committee members are involved in requests for administrative review related to the purpose of the committee (i.e. appeals, protests, objections), they will notify the committee and make good-faith efforts to inform the committee of concerns or issues in advance of any formal request for administrative review.

VI. Meetings

A. Meeting Preparation, Facilitation and Follow-up

Kathleen Rutherford, Kolibri Consulting Group and Mike Hughes, Hughes Collaboration will facilitate committee and working group meetings. To make meetings productive, the facilitators will:

- Provide neutral facilitation to ensure all interests are represented throughout deliberations and the decision-making process
- Work with co-chairs and Forest Service staff to develop draft agendas, distribute them to, take feedback from the full group, and produce a final meeting agenda
- Ensure that the participants receive information in advance of each meeting
- Work with the Forest Service to prepare presentations in advance of the meetings
- Assist the committee in collaborative problem-solving during and between meetings
- Summarize each meeting (without attribution to any individual) in draft, provide opportunity for committee participants to finalize the summary and produce a final summary

- Draft written recommendations and other communication from the committee to the Forest Service
- Summarize agreements as they occur and at the end of each meeting
- Work with the DFO and co-chairs to establish the meeting dates, times, and locations for all meetings that will accommodate the committee members with as much advance notice as possible
- Help the participants meet their responsibilities, listed above
- Assist the Forest Service in record-keeping requirements

B. Observers and Public Participation

All meetings of the full committee will be open to the public. In consultation with chairs and DFO, the facilitators will make time available for oral comment at every meeting of the full committee. The most useful comments focus on agreement/disagreement with the issues at hand, basis for agreement or disagreement, and a recommendation for an alternative. Upon the request of a committee member, the co-chairs will provide public comment opportunities prior to critical decisions. Time limits will be determined by facilitators and co-chairs. The committee will also accept written comments from the public during the meetings. The facilitators will ensure comments are distributed to all members.

VII. Media Relations and Outreach

Co-chairs or selected spokesperson will serve as the committee's liaison to the media. For a specific topic, the committee may designate a spokesperson for the committee other than the co-chairs who will respond to or initiate contact with media outlets as appropriate and serve as the point of contact for the press.

If a member of the press contacts someone other than the designated spokesperson, they should limit their comments to final consensus recommendations, if any, but not provide any attribution. In communicating externally to the media, elected officials, agency employees, or other external outlets, committee members agree to represent themselves or their organizations only, making it clear they are not speaking on behalf of the committee.

VIII. Annual Process Review

The committee will set aside time at least once a year to evaluate the committee's progress and operating procedures. During this time the committee will also review the role of the co-chairs and open the option for new nominations to serve in this position. The US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution will lead the year-end review. The review will not include the charter or the committee membership.