

## **I. Protocol for Obtaining Comments, Presentations or Interaction With Members of the Public Beyond the Standard Public Comment Periods and Procedures**

Every public meeting of the USFS Planning Rule Federal Advisory Committee will have opportunities for members of the public to submit written comments and provide oral comments, at appropriate predetermined points in each meeting agenda. Through its own initiative or through suggestion by other parties, the committee may wish to solicit additional information or receive additional comments and information from specific members of the public. This protocol has been adopted by the committee in order to (1) provide the committee with mechanisms for soliciting or obtaining additional input, presentations, discussion or communication with members of the public who may have expert or other specialized knowledge or information deemed pertinent and valuable to the committee's operations, and (2) provide members of the public a clear way of making known to the committee any desire to provide such information to the committee. This protocol is designed to be an additional method of gaining public input into the committee's work and is not meant to limit in any way the normal and standard public input methods required by FACA, NEPA, the APA or any other federal law or regulation.

### **Methods of Interaction with the Committee**

There are several ways in which members of the public can submit information and have interaction with the committee. These include, but are not limited to:

- Providing extensive written materials, either on paper or in electronic format, photographs, videos or other information the person wishes to bring to the committee's attention.
- Providing extensive written materials, either on paper or in electronic format, photographs, videos or other information the person wishes to bring to the attention of a specific working group of the committee. These working groups are made up of committee members, but they are not the committee in full and do not act on behalf of the committee. The working groups collect information and formulate suggestions that will later be reviewed by the full committee.
- Speaking to a working group of the committee on one of the working group's monthly telephone conference calls.
- Putting together a panel to discuss an issue before the full committee at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the committee.
- Providing information of a scientific or technical nature by an expert or experts in the field at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the committee.
- Providing a panel of persons involved with early adopter forests to give information to the full committee about that forest's planning efforts.
- Providing a panel of an established collaborative or collaboratives dealing with an early adopter forest to give information to the full committee about the collaborative work in that forest's planning efforts.

### **Members of the Public Wishing to Present to the Committee**

At any time, any member of the public may submit a written request (either by letter or email) to the Designated Federal Official (DFO) at the address below alerting the DFO and the committee that the person has information they wish to submit to the committee, the nature of that information and why it cannot be submitted effectively during the standard public comment methods for committee meetings. The DFO will review the request and then forward it, with any additional information the DFO deems appropriate, to the committee's facilitators and the committee's co-chairs. The DFO, facilitators and co-chairs will then make the decision to forward the request to all members of the committee or to ask the requester for more information or explanation.

Requests to provide information or to speak to just a working group of the committee, rather than the full committee, shall be submitted to the DFO, reviewed by the DFO, the facilitator and the co-chairs and then forwarded to that working group's members. At the next available, scheduled phone call of that working group, the working group will decide whether to review the information and/or schedule a time at a later call to speak with the requester. At the suggestion of either the DFO, the facilitators, the co-chairs, any staff person of the U.S. Forest Service assigned to the committee or the working group, or any working group member, the working group may extend invitations to other people to provide information or speak to the working group, if having the input of

those other people is needed or wanted by any working group member to provide balance and a different perspective to the information being submitted by the original requester.

If a requester wishes to have the working group give their information to the full committee, they may so request, and the working group will decide if it is appropriate or needed to do so. The working group may also decide on its own accord to forward the information to the full committee if it so desires. Even if the information is not forwarded on to the full committee, the working group will inform the full committee about the input and give a brief summary of it during the next meeting of the committee. Any member of the committee may request the full information from the working group at any time.

Requests to speak to the full committee will be entertained by the full committee at its next public meeting or during any scheduled administrative conference calls for the full committee. The requester will be informed by the DFO, the facilitators or the co-chairs of the committee's decision on any such requests.

### **Committee Requests to Invite Presentations**

The full committee may, in response to a request or on its own initiative, invite persons with expert or other specialized knowledge or information deemed pertinent and valuable to the committee's operations or deliberations to come speak to the committee individually or as part of a panel at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the committee. The committee may request information or panels of presenters from certain organizations, government agencies, tribes or other entities.

### **Balance and Fairness**

In dealing with all requests from the public or requests to members of the public originated by the committee's members, the committee will use its best efforts to make the requested presentation and information balanced and fair to all interests involved in the issues dealt with by the requested information. If any issue of fairness and balance raised by a committee member cannot be resolved, then the committee will default to not allowing the information or presentation rather than create a conflict within the committee. If a member of the public is denied the opportunity to make a special presentation to the committee, that person may still provide that information in written form to the committee through the standard public comment procedures provided to all members of the public.

Reviewing information or hearing a presentation by a member of the public, even if requested by the committee, does not indicate that the committee gives any deference or special treatment to that person or their input. This protocol is merely a method to give the committee the means to supplement the information it has with additional resources, if needed or desired, and to give the public an opportunity to provide more detailed information than the standard procedures provide.

### **DFO Contact Information**

By Mail:

USDA Forest Service, Ecosystem Management Coordination  
Tony Tooke, Director  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Mailstop Code 1104  
Washington, DC 20250-(1104)

By Fax:

703-235-0138

By Email:

[ttooke@fs.fed.us](mailto:ttooke@fs.fed.us)

[cfrench@fs.fed.us](mailto:cfrench@fs.fed.us)