



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service, Southern Region  
4931 Broad River Road Columbia, SC 29212**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Forest Service Provides Unique Opportunity for Public Input into Forest Management Activities**

(Columbia, SC) March 11, 2009—The Forest Service, working with Berkeley, Union and Oconee counties, is seeking highly-motivated individuals who are interested in developing, monitoring and recommending projects to the Secretary of Agriculture that will shape and benefit management activities on South Carolina’s national forests. Specifically, the agency is looking to fill seats on a 15-person Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) that will oversee approximately \$150,000 in funding as reauthorized under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

“We’re very pleased that Berkeley, Union and Oconee counties have elected to collaborate with us on projects that benefit public lands,” said Jerome Thomas, forest supervisor for the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. “Other forests across the country have worked with their local counties and organizations to develop environmental awareness camps, pave roads in campgrounds, control non-native invasive plants and reduce hazardous fuel buildup. I look forward to working with the RAC members in South Carolina to develop equally beneficial projects right here in our own backyard.”

Funding can also be used to leverage grant dollars and collaboration with partners, such as federal and state agencies and non-profit organizations.

“We hope to receive applications from individuals across the state who represent a diverse set of interests,” said Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests Forest Planner and RAC Coordinator Mary Morrison. “We really need folks with a keen interest in the national forests, a strong desire to represent local communities and issues, and a ‘can do’ attitude—we want candidates who are ready to roll up their sleeves and help the agency move forward on prioritizing national forest management activities.”

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*The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.*

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Each RAC member serves a four-year term and the number of meetings depends on the type and number of projects and how active the RAC chooses to be. While RAC members will not receive any compensation, they are reimbursed for travel expenses and per diem. Organizing the RAC will take six to eight months due to the selection process and background check requirements.

Any South Carolina resident interested in serving on the RAC must complete an application form that will be used for a required background check. Applications and additional information are available on our web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms>, at local Forest Service offices in the Berkeley, Oconee, and Union counties or by contacting Mary Morrison at (803) 561-4058 or [mwmorrison@fs.fed.us](mailto:mwmorrison@fs.fed.us). Applications should be mailed to: USDA Forest Service, Attn: Mary Morrison, 4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212 no later than April 10, 2009.

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