

# PREFACE

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The Committee of Scientists (COS) was named by the Secretary of Agriculture on December 11, 1997, to provide technical and scientific advice on land and resource planning on the national forests and grasslands.

The COS was formed through a nomination process that began on August 15, 1997, with a notice in the *Federal Register* calling for the nominations of 12 scientists and a Committee Chair. The notice stated that “members should represent scientific specialties and academic disciplines including, but not limited to, the following fields: forest and range ecology, fish and wildlife biology, silviculture, hydrology, natural resource economics, sociology, public participation and conflict management, ecosystem management, land management planning, and natural resource law. Collectively, the members should represent a diversity of disciplines and perspectives and have a knowledge of the national forests. Officers and employees of the Forest Service may not serve as members of the Committee.”

In announcing the appointment of the COS, Secretary Glickman said, “I am looking forward to the Committee’s recommendations as a significant step toward developing a new and improved planning process, one that will be more consistent with the public’s expectations of how our national forests should be managed in the 21st century.” In commenting on the Committee’s selection, Chief Domback stated that, “The breadth of expertise and experience represented by this Committee will ensure that our new planning regulations are scientifically based. We cannot make management decisions that maintain healthy

ecosystems without a fundamentally sound planning structure in place.”

## Charter for the Committee of Scientists

The Charter for the Committee of Scientists states that the Committee’s purpose is to: “...provide scientific and technical advice to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service on improvements that can be made in the National Forest System Land and Resource Management Planning Process. The Charter calls for the Committee to “...address such topics as how to consider the following in land and resource management plans: biological diversity, use of ecosystem assessments in land and resource management planning, spatial and temporal scales for planning, public participation processes, sustainable forestry, interdisciplinary analysis, and any other issues that the Committee identifies that should be addressed in revised planning regulations.”

The Charter further states that, in its report, the Committee should:

“... make recommendations on how to best accomplish sound resource planning within the established framework of environmental laws and within the statutory mission of the Forest Service,”

“... provide technical advice on the land and resource management planning process, and provide material for the Forest Service to consider for incorporation into the revised planning regulations.”

“...recommend improvements in Forest Service coordination with other federal land management or resource protection agencies, state and local government agencies, and tribal governments while recognizing the unique roles and responsibilities of each agency in the planning process.”

See Appendix A for the complete charter.

This Committee falls under the Federal Advisory Committee Act that requires notice of meetings in the *Federal Register*, meetings open and accessible to the public, decisions made in a public forum, and a written summary of each meeting.

## Tasks for the Committee to Fulfill Its Charter

To meet the mandate in its charter, the Committee has undertaken four major tasks:

1) To learn about the problems and issues in land and resource planning of the National Forests along with innovative solutions to addressing these issues and problems. To complete this task, the Committee:

a) Held meetings around the United States in which the Forest Service and the public in each Forest Service region were invited to speak to the Committee and discuss problems, issues, and solutions with the Committee. The date and location of each meeting were as follows:

Meeting 1: Dec. 19, 1997; Chicago, Ill.

Meeting 2: Jan. 22–23, 1998; Denver, Colo. (Region 2)

Meeting 3: Feb. 12–13, 1998; Seattle, Wash. (Regions 6/10)

Meeting 4: Feb. 24–25, 1998; Atlanta, Ga. (Region 8)

Meeting 5: Mar. 3–5, 1998; Sacramento, Calif. (Region 5)

Meeting 6: Mar. 31–Apr. 1, 1998; Boston, Mass. (Region 9)

Meeting 7: Apr. 14–15, 1998; Albuquerque, N.M. (Region 3)

Meeting 8: Apr. 22–23, 1998; Missoula, Mont. (Regions 1/4)

At some of these meetings, panels were set up to address particular issues important to the Committee.

In addition, a meeting was held May 27–May 29 in Boulder, Colo., to work on this report, and the Committee held a number of conference calls from July 1998 through February 1999.

b) Reviewed relevant papers and articles that have been written on national-forest planning. A complete record of Committee Papers is on file at the Siuslaw National Forest.

c) Encouraged people to contact us at a post office box and Web site.

2) To understand the expectations of other agencies and governments for land and resource planning on the national forests and how these agencies and governments would like to be involved in planning on the national forests and grasslands. To accomplish this task, the Committee met with state, country, and regional governments; other federal agencies; tribal governments and tribal representatives; and members of the public.

In Denver, it met with a representative of the Western Governor’s Association.

In Seattle, it met with representatives of the State of Oregon, three county commissioners, and representatives of four Indian tribes. Also, it met there with representatives of the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries, and Environmental Protection Agency.

In Sacramento, it met with the Director of the Lake Tahoe Conservancy.

In Albuquerque, it met with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, tribal representatives, and representatives of Hispanic communities.

In Missoula, it met with the National Park Service, representatives of the Governor of Montana, and a state legislator.

At all of its meetings, the Committee set aside substantial blocks of time for comments by members of the public.

3) To develop a framework for land and resource planning on the national forests that supports the mission of the Forest Service. To accomplish this task, the Committee has written a report to

- a) Articulate an overall purpose, goals, and principles for land and resource planning and
- b) Develop a set of technical and scientific concepts for land and resource planning along with an explanation of these concepts and examples of their application

4) To suggest improvements in land and resource planning that are guided by the purposes, concepts, and principles that it develops. To accomplish this task, the Committee

- a) Outlined a planning process that uses these purposes, concepts, and principles;
- b) Identified problems in land and resource planning and barriers to effective planning, suggesting mechanisms for overcoming these problems and barriers; and
- c) Proposed language in some cases for inclusion in new regulations, such as language on the purpose, goals, and principles for land and resource planning.

## Acknowledgments

The Committee of Scientists has only been able to complete its tasks with the help of many people. We sincerely thank the Forest Service employees; other federal, state and

local government officials; tribal representatives; and members of the public who attended the Committee meetings or who provided comments on drafts of the report. The public-comment periods in our meetings and the open discussion that followed testified to the importance citizen's place on their public lands.

Our efforts to hold open meetings around the country would not have been possible without the work of numerous Forest Service staff. Robert Cunningham, our Designated Federal Official, went above and beyond duty to make our work flow smoothly and ensure that our efforts to engage Forest Service managers in helping us learn about their experiences with planning were successful. Jonathan Stephens from the Washington Office attended all of our meetings and worked with every region in preparing panels and background materials for us. Harriett Plumley, forest planner on the Siuslaw National Forest, helped us to understand some of the intricacies of planning and investigated several key questions for us. Two other staff from the Siuslaw National Forest assisted our efforts: Ann Carlson arranged the logistics and kept meeting records; Karen Neisess processed our travel expenses very efficiently. In addition, Joanne Hildreth from the Pacific Southwest Experiment Station helped make the meetings run smoothly and made more trips to copy stores than she can count. We also want to express our appreciation to the several members of the Washington Ecosystem Management Staff and members of the Office of General Council who attended many of our meetings around the country and engaged in informal discussions. In addition, staff from several nongovernment organizations attended many of our meetings and often provided useful written comments. We especially appreciate all of the Forest Service personnel who provided the local arrangements for our meetings and planned educational field trips, often with only a few weeks notice.

Our report could not have been prepared and published without a hard-working set of editors and graphic artists. Debbie Johnson, of Corvallis, Oregon, put the initial draft of the report into PageMaker and organized the sidebars, maps, and many other parts of the report. Caryn Davis, also in Corvallis, Oregon, edited initial drafts of the report. Support for the final production of the report was provided by Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which is managed by Lockheed Martin Energy Research Corporation for the U.S. Department of Energy. Sara Krainik did the initial layout for the cover

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