



Existing Vegetation Technical Guide Revision Charter

Date: June 16, 2010
To: Existing Vegetation Technical Guide Revision Steering Team
From: Sustainable Landscape Management Board of Directors
Cc:

Executive Sponsor	Resource Staff Area
Sustainable Landscape Management Board of Directors (SLMBOD)	FM, RGE, WFWARP, FHP, FAM-Fuels, R&D-FMS

Team Name	Project Name/Ref. No./Job code	Scheduled Completion Date
Vegetation Classification, Mapping and Inventory Technical Guide Revision Team	IT1159 1324	September 30, 2012

Charter to the Team

This team is chartered to update, revise, and add to the current Existing Vegetation Classification and Mapping Technical Guide, GTR WO-67. A workshop held in 2007 to critique the effectiveness of the technical guide, identified more than 10 substantial recommendations formulated by a series of expert panels. The guide should be updated to address those recommendations using a two – phased or tiered process:

Phase 1 focuses on conformance with revised Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Vegetation Classification Standards, removal of policy language more appropriately addressed in Forest Service manuals or handbooks, and removal of background information not relevant to the application of the methods described in the technical guide.

Phase 2 focuses on the addition of an inventory section and key linkages with vegetation classification and mapping. Other updates identified in the 2007 workshop will be reviewed and the Steering Team will identify those recommendations that will be addressed during this update to the technical guide. Map accuracy standards and methods will be modified as needed to address current business needs.

Remaining recommendations will be addressed in future updates to the technical guide.

Desired Characteristics of Protocols

This project updates the Existing Vegetation Classification and Mapping Technical Guide, Version 1.0, GTR-WO-67, published in April 2005.

Any revised or added protocols and related standards should be managerially relevant, financially feasible, and scientifically valid. For the purposes of this project, these characteristics are understood to mean the following:

- The protocols must be revised to be compliant with the updated FGDC Vegetation Classification Standards.
- The protocols should address business needs at all map levels (national, broad, mid, base).
- The protocols should be cost effective and reduce duplication.
- The protocols should have relevance to management, analysis, and monitoring needs.
- The protocols should conform to standard professional practice and be scientifically valid.

Purpose

Classification and mapping of existing vegetation is fundamental to the stewardship, conservation, and appropriate use of National Forest System resources. Accurate and high quality classification and mapping of existing vegetation is critical for meeting agency business requirements for planning, assessments, inventory, and monitoring at the national level (i.e., GPRA Strategic Plan, RPA Assessment and Sustainability Report), broad and mid levels (i.e., inventories and monitoring in support of land management planning, ecosystem assessments), and base level (project planning and project implementation). Both have historically lacked consistent vegetation standards and descriptions. Maps of existing vegetation have not been shareable across administrative unit boundaries or with conservation partners.

The Existing Vegetation Classification and Mapping Technical Guide addressed this need by providing standards and procedures for these activities while adhering to direction in the Forest Service Manual (1940) and Handbook (1909.14). Recent changes in FGDC Vegetation Classification Standards have resulted in the need to make revisions in the Technical Guide. Substantial additions (Inventory) and other key revisions (accuracy assessment, removal of policy language) have been recommended by a series of expert panels.

IRB Expectations

The protocol development (core) team will:

- Develop a project plan for Phase 1 and Phase 2 updates.
- Generate reports from meetings.
- Identify policy language in the Technical Guide to be moved to the appropriate FSM or Handbook.
- Complete a Phase 1 revision of the Technical Guide document for implementation of the latest FGDC Vegetation Classification Standards.
- Complete a Phase 2 revision of the Technical Guide document for integration of statistically valid vegetation inventory protocols and identified linkages with classification and mapping.
- Work with EMC to implement any changed protocols in NRM-NRIS and NRM-INFRA.

Scope Statement

The scope of this charter covers project management, protocol documentation, and revision of the existing technical guide. Identifying changes in data repository requirements and the current change management system is within the scope of this charter. Development of those program support elements is outside the scope of the current effort.

Project Team Organization

Within the Forest Service there are a number of technical experts in the field of vegetation classification, mapping, and inventory. To assure business needs are adequately addressed, representatives from other disciplines, such as wildlife biology, range management, fire/fuels management, and agency partners must be engaged in the revision and additions to the Technical Guide.

Membership in various teams or groups is designed to foster representation of the breadth of expertise and perspectives in the agency and partner organizations and to encourage efficient operations by managing time commitments required of participants.

The **Steering Team** provides management oversight and policy review of products being developed, monitors project progress, and resolves issues identified by the Core Team. The Steering Team will identify when external reviews are appropriate and provide a list of associated organizations and contacts that should be consulted. Representatives on the Steering Team will provide updates on progress and issue resolution to their respective communities of interest/practice.

The steering team should include representatives from WO NFS Forest Management, NFS Ecosystem Management Coordination, R&D Quantitative Sciences (FIA), FS Lead for the FGDC subcommittee for Vegetation Classification, S&PF Fire and Aviation Management (LANDFIRE), S&PF Forest Health Protection, the Remote Sensing Applications Center (RSAC), a Regional Resource Information Officer, and a Regional Natural Resources representative.

The **Steering Team Leader** will be a National Program Manager, will serve as the Project Manager, and will keep the Washington Office Executive Sponsors informed of overall progress, policy issues, and coordination needs. The Steering Team Leader will work with the Core Team Leader to establish the membership of the Core Team, provide logistical support to the project schedule, meeting planning and execution, and provide technical expertise as necessary to ensure the project is successful.

The **Core Team** will draft changes and additions to the technical guide, review interim work products, and address both internal and external review comments. The Core Team will ensure internal reviews are obtained from Regional and Station level staffs, and other organizational levels as appropriate.

The Core Team will be comprised of members of FS field and WO staffs and is designed to represent the expertise and perspectives in the agency and partner organizations, and to encourage efficient operations by managing time commitments required of participants.

The **Core Team Leader** is responsible for accomplishment of the project objectives. Additional responsibilities include: meeting management, facilitating agreements with core team members on task assignments, project scheduling, and monitoring. The Core Team Leader will participate in Steering Team meetings to provide updates on progress and bring forward issues and recommendations identified by the Core Team.

The Core Team may charter **Technical Working Groups** to address specific issues, develop recommendations, and draft technical guide materials. Members of these Working Groups will be drawn from various sources, including Regions and WO Technical Centers. Technical specialists from conservation partners will participate on technical working groups, as appropriate. Technical Working Groups should have at least one member from the Core Team. The Technical Working Groups will coordinate through, as well as provide updates and reports to, the Core Team.

Core Team and Working Group members' participation will be approved in writing by their supervisors prior to working on this project.

EMC staff will provide project support for web services, contract administration, financial management, and administrative support.

Consultation with attorney advisors from the Office of the General Counsel will occur throughout the course of this effort and will be coordinated with the EMC staff.

Delegation of Responsibility and Authority

Greg Kujawa and Dave Cleland are designated as the Steering Team Co-Leaders for the Existing Vegetation Technical Guide Revision project and are authorized to ensure the National Protocol meets expectations described here. They are responsible for internal communication among project team members and for cooperation with responsible resource staff and other Forest Service business areas.

Responsibility

The steering team co-leaders will—

- Be the primary point of contact for the NFS Resource Information Portfolio Manager and resource staff areas.
- Ensure that team members know their responsibilities.
- Identify key stakeholders and plan an appropriate communication strategy.
- Track team member performance.
- Track overall project performance.
- Prepare a detailed project plan, and get agreement to that plan from the Executive Sponsor.
- Maintain a project record with all project correspondence.
- Report project status to Executive Sponsor and Executive Sponsor's representatives quarterly.

Authority

The steering team leader authority includes—

- Authority to direct the project team.
- Access to Executive Sponsor on all matters related to this effort.
- Access to the Executive Sponsor's representatives on all matters related to this effort.
- Control of the project budget.
- Access to financial reports related to project expenditures, including time and attendance.
- Renegotiation with the supervisors of core team and working group members to delegate responsibility and authority of core team and working group members.

Team Budget / Resources

The project team's budget and resources (pending annual review and approval) include—

\$ 68,000 for FY 10

\$125,000 for FY 11

\$92,000 for FY 12

Authorizing Signature

Name: /s/ William E. Timko Date: 6/16/2010
Title: for: Director, Forest Management

Name: /s/ Ralph Giffen Date: 6/17/2010
Title: for: Director, Rangeland Management

Name: /s/ Anne J. Zimmermann Date: 6/16/2010
Title: Director, Watershed/Fish/Wildlife/Air/Rare Plants

Name: /s/ Anne P. Hoover Date: 6/16/2010
Title: for: Director, Forest Health Protection

Name: /s/ Peter A. Lahm Date: 6/16/2010
Title: for: Deputy Director, Fire and Aviation Management

Name: /s/ Carlos Rodriguez-Franco Date: 6/16/2010
Title: Director, Forest Management Sciences

Prepared By (print)	Date Prepared	Preparer's Initials
Greg Kujawa	6/15/2010	gmk