

**National Advisory Committee
for Implementation of the
National Forest System Land
Management Planning Rule**

- Mike Anderson, *The Wilderness Society*
- William Barquin, *Kootenai Tribe of Idaho*
- Susan Jane Brown, *Blue Mountains Forest Partners*
- Robert Cope, *Lemhi County Commissioner (retired)*
- Adam Cramer, *Outdoor Alliance*
- Daniel Dessecker, *Ruffed Grouse Society*
- Russ Ehnes, *National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council*
- Angelou Ezeilo, *Greening Youth Foundation*
- Karen Hardigg, *Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition**
- Valerie Huerta, *New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau*
- James Magagna, *Wyoming Stock Growers Association*
- Joan May, *San Miguel County Commissioner*
- Peter Nelson, *Defenders of Wildlife*
- Martin Nie, *University of Montana*
- Michelle Nuttall, *Southern California Edison*
- Caitlyn Pollihan, *formerly with the Council of Western State Foresters**
- Candice Price, *Urban American Outdoors*
- Angela Sondenaa, *Nez Perce Tribe*
- Megan Sutton, *The Nature Conservancy*
- Thomas Troxel, *Intermountain Forest Association*
- Gabriel Vasquez, *Latino Outdoors*
- Ray Vaughan, *Polar Connections*
- Lindsay Warness, *Boise Cascade Company*

*Committee Substitutes

February 3, 2018

Sonny Perdue
Secretary, Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Tony Tooke
Chief, U.S. Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Tooke:

As the charter for the National Committee for Implementation of the National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule comes to an end, the Committee thanks you, and the Forest Service staff who have been active in the Committee's work, for the chance to be part of the groundbreaking process of helping to implement the Planning Rule.

The first Charter produced comprehensive recommendations for changes to the Planning Rule Handbook. The second Charter produced the Citizens Guide and Government Guide to Forest Planning. The third and final Charter produced final recommendations that we hope will be helpful in assisting the Forest Service in addressing some of the more pressing challenges to implementation of the Rule.

Many of our enclosed recommendations echo and enhance previous recommendations of the Committee. They reflect the Chief's priorities of 1) uplifting and empowering employees, 2) delivering remarkable customer service, 3) strengthening shared stewardship, 4) increasing forest and rangeland management, and 5) enhancing outdoor opportunities and improving access and infrastructure. Through these recommendations we intend to emphasize the need to fully incorporate these concepts into future planning processes. In these recommendations, the Committee has focused on five key topics: shared stewardship, youth engagement, species of conservation concern, adaptive management, and planning for success.

A key objective of the Planning Rule is to broaden and deepen the engagement of tribal, state and local governments and the American public in national forest land management planning. During our

discussion with regional planning directors this week, we heard clearly that limited staff capacity, especially given tight budgets, is a significant challenge in forest planning. We believe shared stewardship is a promising strategy to address capacity gaps and are pleased it is one of your priorities.

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Our recommendations on enhancing youth engagement seek to improve participation by youth and underserved communities in forest planning and site-specific management decisions. Youth and underserved community participation is critical to the future of forest planning especially in light of the changing demographics of our country.

Planning for conservation of at-risk species requires a team effort. Although significant effort has been made to advance policy direction for species of conservation concern (SCC), further clarification is still needed about the process for identifying SCC, when and how best to involve and leverage the expertise of public and agency partners, and how to consistently identify and apply the best available scientific information, while also allowing appropriate levels of regional discretion. Our recommendations regarding SCC seek to address these challenges.

Adaptive management can only be effectively practiced with the input and added capacity of forest planning stakeholders, who after investing time in the development of a plan, have a keen interest in evaluating whether it effectively delivers the multiple benefits it is designed to provide. Monitoring and evaluating plan effectiveness is critical, yet is often dropped in priority when resources are limited. The Committee, through these recommendations, hopes to ensure that the agency has the capacity to support successful monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management, while also building public engagement and trust.

During our final meeting we reflected on the role and success of this Advisory Committee over the past five years. After multiple new rules over a ten-year period, we commend the Forest Service for developing a resilient rule that will serve national forest management for years to come.

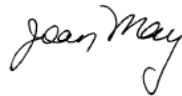
The Committee is invested in the success of future planning efforts. Therefore, we call your attention to the Rule's requirement to establish and administer a national oversight process for accountability and consistency of National Forest System land management planning. We believe continued engagement with members of this Committee and others can be helpful and so we recommend establishing a national oversight council.

Although this Advisory Committee's work is ending, we look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration. Please feel free to contact any individual member of the Committee as we all support the continued success of the Planning Rule.

Sincerely,



Jim Magagna
Committee, Co-Chair



Joan May
Committee, Co-Chair