

USDA Calls for Nominations to the Forest Service Planning Rule Advisory Committee

WASHINGTON, March 13, 2014 – [Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack](#) today announced a call for nominations to serve on the Planning Rule Federal Advisory Committee that guides better management of our national forests.

This first-of-its-kind independent advisory committee, formed in January 2012, advises the Secretary of Agriculture through the Chief of the Forest Service by providing advice and recommendations on the new rule and its directives. The proposed planning directives guide implementation of the planning rule which was published in the Federal Register in April 2012, and became effective a month later.

“Input from the public is critical to successful land management planning,” said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “Having a diverse panel and the unique perspectives they bring will continue to be a tremendous asset as we move forward with the national planning rule.”

The committee presented its first set of recommendations for the implementation of the U.S. Forest Service’s 2012 Planning Rule to U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary Robert Bonnie and Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell in November 2013, recommending strengthened collaboration, improved planning efficiencies and more effective and informed decision making.

The committee also made recommendations that strengthen ecological, social, economic and cultural sustainability objectives of the rule. This includes recommendations intended to deepen the level of stakeholder collaboration in forest planning, as well as recommendations regarding outreach, adaptive management, monitoring, wilderness, climate change, intergovernmental relations, species protection and water resources.

The committee is comprised of 21 members with diverse backgrounds, who represent the full range of public interests in management of the National Forest System lands and who represent geographically diverse locations and communities. The current committee’s membership expires in June, 2014 and this current call for nominations seeks applicants for membership on the committee for the next two years through June, 2016. Up to seven members will be selected from each of the following three groupings:

1. Timber industry
 - Grazing or other land use permit holders or other private forest landowners
 - Energy and mineral development
 - Commercial or recreational hunting and fishing interests
 - Developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users or commercial recreation interests
2. National, regional or local environmental organizations
 - Conservation organizations or watershed associations
 - Dispersed recreation interests
 - Archaeological or historical interests
 - Scientific community

3. The public at-large
 - State-elected official (or designee)
 - County or local elected official
 - American Indian Tribes representation
 - Youth representation

The 45-day nomination period closes April 28, 2014. Details on the current Committee and further information such as the [application form](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5203568.pdf) (http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5203568.pdf) and the Federal Register notice are available at the [U.S. Forest Service](http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule) website (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>), or by calling Chalonda Jasper at 202-260-9400.

The mission of the U.S. 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. Recreational activities on our lands contribute \$14.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

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