

NEWS RELEASE

Federal Advisory Committee Congratulates USDA and Forest Service on Issuance of Final 2012 Planning Rule Directives

Directives reflect Committee advice, public comment, and stakeholder involvement

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Washington, DC – Today the Federal Advisory Committee assisting the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Forest Service with implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule congratulated Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell in the issuance of the final Directives implementing the Planning Rule.

“I am impressed with the Forest Service’s willingness to listen and make changes in the Directives based not only on input from the Federal Advisory Committee, but also based on the more than 16,000 comments they received from people across America,” said Committee Co-Chair Rodney Stokes, who represents the Public-At-Large from East Lansing, Michigan.

The Federal Advisory Committee is a [21-member Committee](#) comprised of a diverse range of stakeholders including state and local elected officials, American Indian Tribes, youth, conservation organizations, motorized and human-powered outdoor recreation interests, the timber, energy and mineral, and grazing industries, scientific community, private landowners, commercial and recreational hunting and fishing interests, and the public at large. The Committee’s [charter](#) includes giving advice on implementation of the Planning Rule based on lessons learned and best practices.

“I would like to congratulate the Forest Service on the release of the final Directives for the implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule,” said Committee Co-Chair, Susan Jane Brown, who represents the Blue Mountain Forest Partners, a collaborative watershed restoration organization from Portland, Oregon. “The agency worked in close collaboration with our diverse 21-member Committee, the public, and other stakeholders in developing the Directives, which provide a roadmap for the development of forest plans that will meet the needs of all Americans. I look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Forest Service.”

Other members of the Committee offered their appreciation for the 2012 Planning Rule and the working relationship between the Committee and the Forest Service in the development of the Directives.

“This Planning Rule puts a great deal of emphasis on public involvement and active forest management,” explained Robert Cope, Lemhi County Commissioner from Salmon, Idaho. “Hopefully, this will result in a closer relationship between the Forest Service and forest communities.”

Candice Price of Urban American Outdoors TV of Kansas City, Missouri, Youth Representative, stated, “I am thankful for how the Forest Service’s final Directives really reflected the views of the American people. It provided a place for all to be included in forest planning and from this the future looks a lot brighter.”

Lindsay Warness, Timber Industry Representative with Boise Cascade Company, in La Grande, Oregon explained, “it is heartening to see how the Forest Service listened very carefully to the Federal Advisory Committee and the general public when formulating the Directives associated with the 2012 planning rule. I look forward to engaging with the Forest Service in further discussions on implementation of the both the Planning Rule and the Directives.”

“The final planning Directives clearly demonstrate that thoughtful collaboration can sometimes resolve very tough forest policy issues, even at a national level,” explained Mike Anderson, Conservation Organization Representative with the Wilderness Society in Seattle, Washington. “The end product is a well-balanced planning guidebook that gives the public a comfortable seat at the table to help shape the future of our national forests.”

Russ Ehnes, Developed Outdoor or Commercial Recreation Interest Representative with the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council in Great Falls, Montana noted that “I’m convinced the Forest Service did their best to listen to public comments and finalize Directives that provide the opportunity for a fair, open, and transparent forest planning processes. I think the 2012 Planning Rule and final Directives give every American the chance to be involved in forest planning in a way that hasn’t been possible with past Rules. Now it’s up to us to get involved.”

In their letter to the Secretary and Chief, the Committee noted that the Forest Service’s willingness to listen to the public and other stakeholders and to change the Directives accordingly reflected an unprecedented investment in shared learning, and modeled the iterative approach to planning and decisionmaking envisioned by the 2012 Planning Rule.

“We look forward to continuing to work in close collaboration with the Forest Service and Department to continue to help improve the forest planning process, which will result in forest plans that are more durable and have better results for the land and its communities, explained Co-Chair Brown.

Co-Chair Stokes agreed. “The Committee views itself as a problem-solving body. It is clear to us that the Forest Service and Department are similarly dedicated to making forest planning a

robust, transparent, inclusive, and productive process that reflects the views of all Americans, and provides for the sustainable management of our national forests.”

The Committee’s letter is available [here](#).

Background on the Committee is available [here](#).

Background on the 2012 Planning Rule is available [here](#).

The final Directives are available [here](#).

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