

Forest Service, USDA *Cherokee National Forest*

NEWS

News Contact:
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National Forest Resource Advisory Committee

CLEVELAND, TN – May 15, 2009... The Forest Service, USDA continues to seek applicants for a National Forest Resource Advisory in east Tennessee.

The Forest Service, in conjunction with Cocke and Monroe counties is seeking individuals to serve on a Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Cherokee National Forest under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2008. This committee is chartered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and will be comprised of 15 members representing a wide array of interests. Cocke and Monroe counties will be contributing to projects on federal land in their areas under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act.

The reauthorized Secure Rural Schools Act encourages counties to collaborate with National Forests on projects to benefit public lands. Examples of the types of projects that can be implemented include improving the maintenance of existing infrastructure, implementing stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems, and restoring and improving land health and water quality.

Committee members serve four-year terms. While there is **no** compensation for committee members, reimbursement for travel expenses to meetings may be available. The committee will develop and recommend projects that benefit national forest land in Cocke and Monroe counties, monitor the projects, and provides advice to the Forest Service. All project proposals must be approved by Cherokee National Forest managers and forwarded to the Secretary of Agriculture for final approval.

The Secure Rural Schools Act gives states and counties payments for the next four years, tied to the amount of national forest land in the county and other factors. Counties may designate a portion of the funds to projects reviewed by the RAC. Currently, Cocke County and Monroe County will be contributing funds to projects on federal land that the RAC will be involved with.

The SRS Act instructs that RAC Members *shall reside within the State in which the RAC has jurisdiction*. Any **Tennessee resident** interested in serving on the committee must complete an application form that will be used for a required background check.

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1st add – Resource Advisory Committee Members Sought

Applications for RAC membership are available online at www.fs.fed.us/r8/cherokee/. Applications may also be obtained by calling 423-476-9700.

Please mail signed applications to Forest Service, USDA 2800 Ocoee Street North, Cleveland, TN 37312, **Attn:** PAO–RAC.

Applicants should indicate which category and interest they are interested in representing. The committee will be comprised of five members (and alternates) from each of the three categories below:

Category A

- Organized labor or non-timber forest product harvester groups
- Developed outdoor recreation, off highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation activities;
- Energy and mineral development interests; or commercial or recreational fishing interests
- Commercial timber industry
- Hold Federal grazing or other land use permits, or represent nonindustrial private forest land owners, within the area for which the committee is organized

Category B

- Nationally recognized environmental organizations
- Regionally or locally recognized environmental organizations
- Dispersed recreational activities
- Archaeological and historical interests
- Nationally or regionally recognized wild horse and burro interest groups, wildlife or hunting organizations, or watershed associations

Category C

- Hold State elected office or their designee
- Hold county or local elected office
- American Indian tribes within or adjacent to committee area
- School officials or teachers
- Represent the affected public at large.

For more information, call Terry Bowerman at (423) 638-4109 or Terry McDonald at (423) 476-9729. Information regarding the Secure Rural Schools Act is available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/>.