



## **Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee**

### *Questions and Answers*

#### **What is the Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee?**

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), signed into law in December 2004, requires the establishment of Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (Recreation RAC) by state or region, to provide recommendations concerning recreation fee proposals on public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

As an advisory committee established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the Southern Region Recreation RAC has certain requirements to ensure that federal agencies receive broad and balanced input into their decision-making process.

#### **What does a Recreation RAC do?**

The Recreation RAC is an advisory body that provides recommendations on recreation fee proposals on federal lands managed by the Forest Service. RAC recommendations are considered by the Forest Service; the agency ultimately is responsible for making decisions about recreation fees.

#### **What states are covered by the Southern Region Recreation RAC?**

The Southern Region Recreation RAC provides recommendations to the Forest Service on recreation fee matters on National Forests in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Puerto Rico.

#### **What kinds of fees do Recreation RACs consider?**

The Recreation RACs provide recommendations on implementing or eliminating standard amenity, expanded amenity and non-commercial individual special recreation permit fees; expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and fee level changes (increases or decreases).

Recreation RACs do not make recommendations on recreation fee sites operated by a concessionaire or contractor, commercial permits such as outfitting and guiding, or Forest Service special use permits issued for group events such as bike races.

#### **Who serves on a Recreation RAC?**

A total of 11 members will serve on each Recreation RAC from the following categories:

- Category One — Five people who represent recreation users and include as appropriate: camping, summer motorized, summer non-motorized, wildlife and nature viewing/viewing interpretive sites, and hunting and fishing.
- Category Two — Three people who represent interest groups that include, as appropriate: outfitter and guides and local environmental groups.





- Category Three —Three people, one in each position: State tourism official, a person who represents affected local government interests, and a person who represents affected Indian tribes' issues.

### **What are the responsibilities of individual committee members?**

Through bylaws, each Recreation RAC may identify unique responsibilities for members such as:

1. Represent interests of appropriate groups by receiving pertinent information from and sharing discussions with interest groups.
2. Consider whether or not general public support exists for a recommendation.
3. Understand and agree to meeting commitments.
4. Work in a team setting and be open to discussing and understanding differing viewpoints.

### **When and where do the Recreation RACs meet?**

Each Recreation RAC meets at least once annually or as often as is determined necessary. The location and length of meetings will be determined by the DFO who serves as a liaison to the Forest Service and the Committee Chairperson.

Typically, 1-2 meetings are held annually. Meeting lengths depend upon the matters to be discussed but are typically 2 working days. Meetings may be held in person, by telephone or electronic means.

### **How are meetings conducted?**

Each Recreation RAC may identify the specific methods or requirements by which meetings are run and majority or consensus decisions are reached. REA does, however, state that:

- A quorum, 8 members, must exist for the Recreation RAC to hold an official meeting;
- A majority of members from each of three member groups (at least 7 members) must be present to make recommendations; and
- A majority of total members (at least 6 members) must be present to make decisions such as nominating a chairperson or forming a subcommittee.

### **Are Recreation RAC meetings open to the public?**

Yes. Recreation RACs are chartered committees and therefore will include a public comment period. However, non-committee members will not be able to participate directly in committee discussions or exercises unless invited.

### **How will the public know about Recreation RAC meetings?**

All meetings must be published in the Federal Register 15 days before the meeting as well as announced through local media. These announcements include a tentative agenda for the meeting and public comment time, so people can determine whether they would like to attend. In addition, links to all meeting announcements, agendas and notes will be available at the following website <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r8/recreation/racs>.

### **Are Recreation RAC members paid?**

Recreation RAC members do not receive compensation; however, they are reimbursed for transportation, lodging and meal expenses.





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### **How long do members serve?**

Members will serve either two or three year terms.

### **Can members be reappointed to the Recreation RAC or are they limited to one term?**

The Secretary of Agriculture may choose to reappoint members to additional terms.

### **What is the Recreation RAC Charter?**

The charter is the document that officially identifies the membership, duties, costs, meeting requirements and any special instructions for the Recreation RACs. This document is renewed every two years.

### **Can members give input on items other than recreation fees?**

Recreation RAC members are members of the public and can give comments and opinions, on an individual basis, on any aspect of Forest Service management; however, in terms of the formal recommendation process as described in the REA, Recreation RACs are limited to the roles and duties outlined in their charter.

### **Who can nominate?**

You may nominate yourself, someone from your organization or anyone else you believe would serve the needs of the Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee.

### **Who should I contact for additional information?**

Contact the Regional Recreation RAC Coordinator, Caroline Mitchell, at [r8\\_rrac@fs.fed.us](mailto:r8_rrac@fs.fed.us).

### **Is there a web address to obtain additional information?**

Yes, for more information about Recreation RACs and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/passespermits/about-rec-fees.shtml>.

If you are interested in being considered as a nominee or would like to recommend other potential nominees, nomination packets can be obtained at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r8/recreation/racs>.



Forest Service

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