

Bankhead National Forest Liaison Panel

The following mission and ground rules of the Bankhead Liaison Panel were established during the time Bankhead worked with Natural Resources Leadership Institute.

Bankhead Forest Health and Restoration Initiative Liaison Panel Group Charter Developed February 4, 2003, Revised August 12, 2004

I. Mission of the Liaison Panel

1. The USDA Forest Service, National Forests in Alabama, Bankhead National Forest established the Bankhead Liaison Panel in 2000. The Bankhead Liaison Panel is made of individuals that represent a diverse cross section of public interests on the Bankhead National Forest. The goal of the panel is to:

- 1) Learn about forest service projects, plans, health and status of the Bankhead National Forest,
- 2) Communicate clearly with other Liaison Panel members about each others preferences and interests,
- 3) Consider, discuss, act as a sounding board and provide possible solutions to a variety of issues on the Bankhead National Forest".

The Liaison Panel aspires to develop solutions that are acceptable to all panel members or at least to a large majority of the members. The Panel meetings are open to the public and the meetings provide a forum for the public to come together to learn, discuss and help resolve difficult land management issues.

Liaison Panel Ground Rules

1. Only one person will speak at a time and no one will interrupt when another person is speaking.
2. Each person will express his or her own views rather than speaking for others at the table.
3. No one will make personal attacks or issue statements blaming others for specific actions or outcomes.
4. People will avoid extended comments and questions to allow everyone a fair chance to speak and to contribute.
5. Each person will try to stay on track with the agenda, to respect time limits, and to move the deliberations forward.
6. People should expect, respect, and try to accept different interests, perspectives, and opinions.

7. Everyone will limit sidebar conversations.

8. Members will engage actively – share information ideas and concerns.

9. To decide, the Liaison Panel will operate by a five finger scale of consensus. Granting “consent” means that each member can live with the decision and support its implementation. (Members hold up the number of fingers to represent his or her level of endorsement of the proposal or decision. "Live with it" means members endorse at a level 4 or higher; at level 3,2, or 1- the group needs to determine what concerns remain for the member and if the group can help member reach a decision they can live with).

5-unqualified yes to the decision. I am excited or enthusiastic about it.

4-I can live with the decision.

3-Concerned with the decision but will not block the group.

2-I think there is a major problem with the decision and choose to block the group's action.

1-It is too soon to make any decision. More work needs to be done before the question can be asked.

10. With the right to offer consent or express dissent as a Liaison Panel member, comes the responsibility of making clear the reasons for dissent and try to offer an alternative proposal satisfactory to other members.

11. Members should remain at the table during deliberations to hear the full discussions so their judgments are informed when decision-making occurs. Members may also choose not to consent on a decision, but to abstain without offering dissent.

12. Absence will be equivalent to abstaining.