

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THOMAS J. VILSACK, SECRETARY

THROUGH: Harris D. Sherman
Under Secretary, NRE

HS 5-13-12

MAY 25 2012

FROM: *FDR* Thomas L. Tidwell
Chief

Mary Wagner

SUBJECT: Re-establishment of the Secure Rural Schools Resource Advisory
Committees Charters

FILE CODE: 1350

ISSUE:

The charters for the Secure Rural Schools Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) need to be reestablished and authorized to allow existing RACS to continue carrying out the requirements of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (the Act). Title II of the Act calls for local resource advisory committees to review, recommend, and monitor special projects on national forests.

BACKGROUND:

On October 23, 2009, the Secretary re-established 118 Secure Rural School RACs in accordance with Title II of the Act. Initially, the RACS were chartered under nine Departmental Regulations, one for each Forest Service region, with each having identical language. In the interest of streamlining the process, reducing paperwork, and enhancing USDA advisory committee guidelines, the charters are being proposed for re-establishment as a single MOU, with an addendum listing each RAC. Each RAC is grouped by the Forest Service region in which they are located.

The purpose of each committee is to improve collaborative relationships among the people that use and care for the national forests and to provide advice and recommendations to the Forest Service concerning projects and funding consistent with Title II of the Act. The duties of the committee include monitoring projects, advising the Secretary on the progress and results of the monitoring efforts, and making recommendations to the Forest Service for any appropriate changes or adjustments to the projects being monitored by the resource advisory committee.

The RACs are expected to complete review and recommendation of projects in fiscal year 2011. The monitoring duties are expected to continue to September 30, 2012, or longer depending on the terms of the contracts, grants or agreements used to implement the projects. The current charters expired on October 23, 2011. Re-establishment of the charter will allow for uninterrupted performance of the committees in accomplishing the work envisioned in the Act.

