

Forest Resource Coordinating Committee- Bylaws

Purpose:

The purpose of the Committee is to provide direction and coordination of actions within the Department of Agriculture, and coordination with State agencies and the private sector, to effectively address the national priorities for private forest conservation listed below, with specific focus on owners of non-industrial private forest land:

- a. Conserving and managing working forest landscapes for multiple values and uses;
- b. Protecting forests from threats, including catastrophic wildfires, hurricanes, tornados, windstorms, snow or ice storms, flooding, drought, invasive species, insect or disease outbreak, or development, and restoring appropriate forest types in response to such threats; and
- c. Enhancing public benefits from private forests, including air and water quality, soil conservation, biological diversity, carbon storage, forest products, forestry-related jobs, production of renewable energy, wildlife, wildlife corridors and wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Authority:

Section 8005 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Act) (Pub. L. No. 110-246) established the Forest Resource Coordinating Committee. The Forest Resource Coordinating Committee is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as outlined in its Charter, filed with the Library of Congress on June 24, 2013.

Role of Committee Officials:

Designated Federal Officer (DFO): The DFO serves as the government's agent for all matters related to the Committee's activities. By Law, the DFO must: approve or call the meeting of the Committee, approve agendas, attend all meetings, adjourn the meetings when an adjournment is in the public's interest, and Chair meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

Chairperson: The chairperson works with the DFO to establish priorities, identify issues that must be addressed, and determines the level and types of staff and financial support required. In addition, the chairperson is responsible for certifying the accuracy of minutes. The chairperson is designated in the authorizing statute as the Chief of the Forest Service. This responsibility has been delegated to the Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry or designee should the Deputy Chief be unable to participate.

Committee Coordinator: Provides staff support to the Committee, including: notifying members of the time and place for each meeting; maintaining records of all meetings, including working group activities, as required by law; maintain the roll; prepare the minutes of all Committee meetings, including working group activities; attend to official correspondence; maintain official Committee records and file all papers and submissions prepared for or by the Committee; act as

the Committee's agent to assist in accessing the travel reservations and payment process; and prepare and handle all reports, including the annual report required by FACA. The Committee Coordinator may not prepare any document, excluding deliberation notes, relating to the recommendations disseminated by the Committee to the Secretary; such documents must be prepared by a committee member.

Working groups: Working groups will be created at the discretion of the Committee Chair and Vice-chair to develop, research, and/or deliberate on projects or topics assigned to the working group. Working group meetings are open to the public and will be advertised in the same manner as full Committee meetings. All documents and deliberations of the working group must be documented and filed in the official Committee files and posted to the Committee website for public view. The decision or project developed in the working group must be presented to the full Committee for a final decision.

Vice-Chair: The Committee Vice-chair is responsible for preparing and disseminating Committee recommendations to the Secretary. The Vice-chair position will be filled by a non-federal Committee member and voted on by the full Committee. The Vice-chair will also serve as the Committee liaison between the following persons: USDA Secretary, USDA Undersecretary, Chief of the Forest Service, and other USDA agency heads. Additionally, the vice-chair will work with the Chairperson to create and assign sub-committees or working groups.

Meeting Procedures:

The Committee is required to meet annually, but may meet as often as is necessary to complete its business. The Committee shall not hold any meetings except at the call of, or with advance approval of, the DFO. Notice of each meeting shall be published in the Federal Register at least 15 days before each meeting. Committee members will be notified personally of the date, time, and place of each meeting at least 60 days in advance.

- a. **Agenda:** The DFO will approve the agenda for all meetings. The Forest Service will distribute the agenda to the members prior to each meeting and will publish an outline of the agenda with the notice of the meeting in the Federal Register. Items for the agenda may be submitted to the DFO or the Committee Coordinator by any member of the Committee. Items may also be suggested by non-members, including members of the public.
- b. **Minutes and Records:** The Committee Coordinator will prepare minutes of each meeting and will distribute copies to each Committee member. Minutes of open meetings will be available to the public via the Committee website or by request. Minutes of closed meeting will also be available to the public upon request, subject to the withholding of matters which public disclosure would be harmful to the interest of the Government, industry, or others, and which are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The minutes will include a record of the persons present (including names of Committee members, names of staff, and the names of members of the public from whom written or oral presentations were made) and a complete and accurate description of the matters

discussed and conclusions reached, and copies of all reports received, issued, or approved by the Committee.

- c. **Open Meeting:** Unless otherwise determined in advance, all meetings will be open to the public. Once an open meeting has begun, it will not be closed for any reason. All materials brought before, or presented to, the Committee during an opening meeting, will be included in the meeting minutes and made available for the public to review. Members of the public may attend any meeting or portion of a meeting that is not closed to the public and may, at the determination of the Chairman or DFO, offer oral comments at such meeting. Members of the public may submit written comments to the Committee at any time.
- d. **Closed Meetings:** Committee meetings will be closed in limited circumstances and in accordance with applicable law. Closed meetings must be approved by the USDA Secretary 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- e. **Member Attendance:** All members are expected to attend each meeting. A member may miss up to two meetings (including subcommittee/working group meetings) within a 12 month period, before being asked to step down.

Public Comment:

Comments from the public will be received throughout the process. Any public comments received will become a part of the committee's record, shared with the full Committee, and posted to the Committee website. If a Committee member receives a comment from the public, it must be sent to the Committee DFO and/or Committee Coordinator to be shared with the entire Committee.

Decision-making:

The Committee decision will be based on Committee consensus.

Quorum:

Twelve members of the advisory committee, consisting of at least eight non-federal committee members, shall constitute a quorum for a meeting that will provide consensus direction or recommendations.

Committee Communication:

Committee information will be disseminated by the Committee Coordinator, DFO, and/or the Committee Chair. Committee draft/working documents will be stored on a shared site until the documents are approved to be posted to the Committee website.

External Communications:

Committee members may have personal blogs, newsletters, webpages, Facebook and twitter accounts, etc. However, committee members must limit activity on their personal social media outlets that reference the Forest Resource Coordinating Committee. Committee members who use personal social media outlets shall not:

- Lobby via their blog, newsletter, webpages, etc.,
- Disseminate pre-decisional information,
- Hold “virtual meetings”,
- Vote on pre-decisional information, or
- Share deliberative information relating to FRCC projects and discussions.