

Final Meeting Summary
Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee
October 18-19, 2006
Yates Building, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, DC

Participants

Committee Members Present:

- Darin Bird – Utah Department of Natural Resources
- Adena Cook – Blue Ribbon Coalition
- Robert Cope – County Commissioner Lemhi ID
- Jeff Eisenberg – National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
- Paul Hansen – Izaak Walton League of America
- Dale Harris, RACNAC Co-Chair – Montana Wilderness Association
- Geraldine Link – National Ski Areas Association
- Jim Riley – Intermountain Forest Association, also with the American Forest and Paper Association and on the board of The Nature Conservancy
- Greg Schaefer, RACNAC Co-Chair – National Mining Association and Arch Coal
- Todd Schulke – Center for Biological Diversity
- Denny Scott – Carpenters Union
- Ray Vaughan – WildLaw
- Chris Wood – Trout Unlimited

Forest Service

- Mark Rey, Under Secretary NRE
- Susan Yonts-Shepard, DFO
- Meg Roessing
- Bill Supulski

Facilitators:

- Kathleen Rutherford, Kearns & West
- Janet Thomson, Kearns & West

Committee Agreements

RACNAC Charter Revisions:

The RACNAC agreed to recommend to the USFS that the charter be revised to allow the Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the USFS on issues related to roadless area management including, but not limited to, petitions from states. The Committee recommended editing the charter to clarify that the ninety-day clock for reviewing petitions begins once petitions are received by the RACNAC. Additionally, RACNAC members recommended the inclusion of a time extension to allow an additional ninety days to review petitions where needed.

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Petition Evaluation Criteria Revisions:

The RACNAC agreed to use the 2005 rule evaluation criteria as a starting point. Those criteria were modified as follows:

- Criterion Three includes conservation of roadless area values and characteristics, provision and management of recreation opportunities, and consideration of lands not identified as IRA's in forest plans;
- Criterion Four explicitly includes NEPA and ESA as applicable regulations;
- Criterion Six includes effects to water resources as well as fish and wildlife habitat;
- Criterion Seven states that the RACNAC expects to see a broad attempt to engage interested stakeholders; and
- A new Criterion Nine requests identification of any information or data gaps needed to present a complete picture to the committee such as acreage discrepancies or known economic impacts or assessments.

The USFS will convey these revised evaluation criteria in the Federal Register when the next RACNAC meeting is noticed.

<u>Additional Meeting Highlights</u>

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions:

Dale Harris, RACNAC Co-Chair, welcomed the Committee and members of the public. Kathleen Rutherford, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda and ground rules.

The Committee reserved the following dates for potential future meetings: November 28-30 (Washington DC), January 11-12 (Salt Lake City, UT), and February 13-14 (Washington DC).

Overview of Litigation and Petition Status

Bill Supulski provided an update on roadless rule litigation, a summary of petition status, and a review of the RACNAC's revised charter. Judge Laporte is expected to make her final ruling on the 2005 roadless rule within the next thirty days. The government will continue to defend the 2005 rule in the ongoing litigation. On October 5th, Idaho submitted a petition under the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), and the USFS expects that California, Colorado, Michigan, and Maine will likely submit petitions under the APA as well.

Discussion of RACNAC Future Activities

Undersecretary Mark Rey responded to questions from the RACNAC regarding the opportunity for the RACNAC to revise its charter and the petition evaluation criteria, whether the RACNAC should hear petitions from entities other than states, and what advice the USFS would like to receive from the RACNAC in the future.

Discussion of Decision-Making Protocols

The RACNAC reviewed its decision-making protocols and agreed to continue operating by consensus. The group will use straw polls as needed to gauge agreement and as a method to

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work towards consensus. Where consensus does not exist, the RACNAC will represent the different viewpoints clearly and submit them to the USFS.

Discussion of RACNAC Press Agreement

The RACNAC discussed how committee members should field calls from the press. The group agreed that the existing protocols are sufficient, and reiterated the importance of speaking only on their own behalf. When necessary, committee members will consult with other RACNAC members before responding to the press.

Public Comment:

Oral public comment was offered to the Committee but declined by public attendees. No written comment was received by the Committee.