



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:
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To: Directorate

From: Director

Steve Williams

Subject: Establishment of Service Science Committee

We have worked together for the last year to lay the groundwork for establishing a Service Science Committee. Our discussions at Directorate meetings have underscored the importance of putting together a Committee whose primary purpose will be to promote science excellence throughout the Service and to support the science programs and science needs of all Service employees, especially those of biologists and managers in the field.

I appreciate the ideas and recommendations you offered over the past year about the Science Committee, especially its purposes, size, membership and work. You said you wanted the Committee to be:

- A useful vehicle for supporting, promoting and expanding science excellence, and not just a new bureaucracy;
- as small as possible;
- selective in using Service resources, like time and money, that are in short supply everywhere in the Service; and
- comprised predominantly of field and Regional personnel.

You emphasized that the Committee should:

- support science and employees who practice science throughout the Service;
- undertake its work in ways that enable, encourage and empower field and Regional personnel to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently; and
- work in concert, coordination and communication with other science-based or science-oriented groups within the Service.

I am confident that the revised charter (Attachment 1) for the Committee reflects your recommendations.

I have asked our Science Advisor, Dan Ashe, to help me take the final steps in forming our Science Committee and scheduling its first meeting. I have also asked Dan to help me in moving ahead with a related idea you supported during discussions at our Directorate meetings, namely forming a small Directorate Oversight Council to help the Committee with its work.

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I am pleased to report that Dave Allen, Tom Melius, Paul Schmidt and Steve Thompson have offered to serve on the Council, and that I have accepted their offers. I have also asked Dan Ashe to serve on the Council.

I thank you for recommending so many distinguished employees to serve on the Science Committee. Regrettably, I could not appoint all of them to the 13-member Committee. Consequently, I chose employees who have displayed exceptional abilities and who represent a diverse array of Service programs, Regions and scientific backgrounds (Attachment 2).

My first charge to the Committee will be to undertake two activities we agreed at our last three Directorate meetings are important Servicewide. I plan to charge the Committee with: 1) developing a publications policy and process for the Service that provides opportunities for our scientists to share their findings and accomplishments formally with their colleagues in the Service and with the scientific community at large; and 2) stepping down the Department's Peer Review Policy and Code of Scientific Conduct, to reflect and reinforce the high standard of professionalism for which U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees have always been known, and so the Directorate can support our scientists and their work enthusiastically. The Service's Science Liaison to USGS and the IAFWA Science and Research Liaison are Committee members, and therefore, it is my expectation that the work of the Committee will be closely coordinated with our two principal scientific partners – the USGS and the States. I am also empowering the Committee, in consultation with the Directorate Oversight Committee, to develop and carry out a long term agenda that will identify and build the infrastructure needed to strengthen our tradition of science excellence.

I have asked Dan Ashe to convene the Committee before March 31, 2005, so it can develop a schedule and move forward with addressing my initial charges. Thank you for joining me in supporting the Committee and its work.