

Meeting Summary
Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee
May 8-9, 2006
USDA-Forest Service, Yates Building, Washington, DC

Participants

Committee Members Present:

- Dale Harris, RACNAC Co-Chair – Montana Wilderness Association
- Greg Schaefer, RACNAC Co-Chair – National Mining Association and Arch Coal
- Darin Bird – Utah Department of Natural Resources
- Adena Cook – Blue Ribbon Coalition
- Paul Hansen – Izaak Walton League of America
- Jeff Eisenberg – National Cattleman’s Beef 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
- Todd Schulke – Center for Biological Diversity
- Ray Vaughan – WildLaw
- Chris Wood – Trout Unlimited

Committee Members Absent:

Robert Cope – County Commissioner Lemhi ID
Denny Scott – Carpenter’s Union
Paul Hansen – Izaak Walton League (absent day two)

Forest Service

- Mark Rey, Under Secretary NRE
- Susan Yonts-Shepard, DFO
- Garth Smelser
- Dave Barone

Facilitators:

Kathleen Rutherford
Jeremy Kranowitz

Committee Agreements

Evaluation Criteria: The Committee agreed that it will use the eight elements as published in the 2005 Final Rule (36 CFR 294.14) to evaluate petitions and then present an overall view of each petition to the Secretary.

Scope of Evaluation: The Committee agreed that the charge of the Committee is to identify gaps, deficiencies, needs for clarification, and suggestions to address these deficiencies during rulemaking. Opportunities to address these issues can be made during development of an MOU if the Secretary directs a rulemaking.

Report Drafting: There was agreement that “drafting subcommittees” of two members per petition would be formed to draft narrative reviews based on agreements forged at RACNAC meetings. Drafts will be submitted to co-chairs who will circulate to the rest of the committee for review.

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Upon refinement and approval by the entire committee, the two co-chairs would sign, conveying the recommendation of the whole committee, with copies sent to each member of the Committee, to the Secretary and Under Secretary, and to the submitting State.

Virginia Petition: Jeff Eisenberg and Todd Schulke, to co-chairs by May 17, 2006
North Carolina: Jim Riley and Ray Vaughan, to co-chairs by May 20, 2006
South Carolina: Adena Cook and Chris Wood, to co-chairs by June 1, 2006.

Additional Meeting Highlights

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions:

Dale Harris, Co-Chair of the Committee, presented opening remarks welcoming the Committee and public, and reminded the Committee members of the magnitude of the task at hand, and the necessity to clearly focus their efforts on completing the petition reviews. Co-chair Greg Schaeffer added his welcome, and committee members introduced themselves.

Kathleen Rutherford of The Keystone Center reminded the group of their operating protocols and ground rules.

State Presentations:

Presentations were made by the Governors' staffs of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The North Carolina presentation was made by Jennifer Bumgarner, Policy Advisor on the Environment to Governor Easley and by Marisue Hilliard, Forest Supervisor, National Forests of North Carolina. Virginia presentations were delivered by Steven Gould, Special Assistant to Governor Kaine and Nikki Rovner, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, and Maureen Hyzer, Forest Supervisor, George Washington-Jefferson National Forest. South Carolina presentations were made by Blair Goodrich, Washington Representative to Governor Sanford, and Jerome Thomas, Forest Supervisor, Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. Each of the Governors' petitions requested protection of roadless areas through reinstatement of provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule. In each, the States and Forest Service are working together and expressed confidence that existing discrepancies could be resolved in rulemaking. North and South Carolina requested expedited reviews of their petitions.

Questions from Committee members focused on several themes, including clarification on three principle fronts: acreage (both in National Forest and State and private lands), public support/opposition to the petitions, and exceptions to management prohibitions, particularly as it pertained to road construction and timber management.

Evaluation Discussion:

The RACNAC discussed how they would evaluate the petitions. The discussion covered the need for consistency in review of the body of petitions, and explored whether it was appropriate or feasible to utilize criteria in addition to that which was published in the 2005 Rule. Both substantive and procedural issues raised during this discussion centered largely on the degree to which references to the 2001 Roadless Rule were applicable, and the degree to which effective public

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involvement and agency consultation during the development of a petition could be qualified at the petition stage, in light of required and clear requirements for this in rulemaking. It was clarified that the Committee does not reject or remand a petition and only advises the Secretary to do so.

Public Comment:

Oral public comment was offered to the Committee by the following:

Steven Henson – Southern Appalachian Multiple Use Council.

Betsy Ward – Hardwood Federation

David Carr – Southern Environmental Law Center

Matthew Jacobsen – Heritage Forest Campaign.

Written public comment was offered to the Committee by the following:

Steven Henson – Southern Appalachian Multiple Use Council.

Betsy Ward – Hardwood Federation

Dennis LaBare & Stacy LaBare

Heritage Forest Campaign

Virginia Forestry Association