Peer Review Plan

Topic of Review: Study of flammability for several types of mulch used for landscapes around homes.

[X] **Influential Scientific Information**

Agency: USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station

[ ] **Highly Influential Scientific Assessment**

Agency Contact: John F. Kelly, Assistant Station Director for Research (jkelly@fs.fed.us; 828-257-4309)

Subject of Review: Flammability responses were measured and compared for several types of mulch, for use around homes and their characteristics relating to fire protection or increased fire hazard. Mulches included pine straw and cypress chips.

Purpose of Report: This is a study being conducted by Wayne Zipperer, RWU-4952, Gainesville, FL. It is being done in collaboration with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Preliminary findings indicate that pine straw is very flammable. It is very likely that these results will cause state and local communities to ban the use of pine straw for mulch around and adjacent to homes. This could have a huge impact on the pine straw mulch industry, perhaps effectively destroying it, at least in some locales. Furthermore, cypress mulch will be rated fairly well in the study. It's possible that these results could cause the demand for cypress mulch to increase, impacting a resource that some view as not sustainable. This view may not be correct, but some NGOs and Government agencies (including regulatory) are concerned about cypress.

Type of Review: [ ] Panel Review   [X] Individual Reviewers

[ ] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain): _____

Timing of Review (Est.):   Start: August 1, 2008   End: December 30, 2009   Completed: _____

Number of Reviewers: [ ] 3 or fewer   [X] 4 to 10   [ ] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Fire Ecology

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency   [ ] Designated Outside Organization

Organization's Name: _____

Opportunities for Public Comment?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:

How: _____

When: _____

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

Other: _____