

Resource Advisory Committees (RACs)

What is a RAC?

On October 30, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act, also known as Public Law 106-393. Under this law, Section 205 allows for the formation of a committee to serve as a mechanism for local community collaboration with federal land managers in recommending projects to be conducted on federal lands or plans that will benefit resources on federal lands. Such committees are known as resource advisory committees (RACs).

What are the duties of RAC Members?

The committee's duties include reviewing proposed forest management projects in accordance with the act and making recommendations to the US Forest Service, coordinating with land management agency officials, and providing opportunities for interested parties to participate in the project development process. Committee members should be dedicated to working collaboratively with other interests for the long-term benefit of national forest system lands.

Committee members serve three-year terms without compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses. Meetings are generally held quarterly at locations within the geographic area the RAC serves. Members must reside within the state in which the RAC is located, and to the extent feasible, within the county where the Forest lands lie. Serving on a RAC calls for a substantial commitment of time and energy.

How are RAC Members Selected?

Each RAC is assigned a Designated Federal Official (DFO) to serve as the point of contact. A typical RAC has 15 members and a number of alternates. Three interest categories identified in Public Law 106-393 call for balance in RAC member assignments:

Category One consists of people who represent one or more of the following interests: organized labor; developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation; energy and mineral development; commercial timber industry; or federal grazing or land use permit holders within the RAC area.

Category Two is composed of those who represent one or more of the following interests: nationally, regionally, or locally recognized environmental organizations; dispersed recreation activities; archaeological and historical interests; or nationally or regionally recognized wild horse or burro groups.

Category Three includes individuals who represent one or more of the following interests: state-elected office holders or their designee; county or local elected office holders; American Indian tribal representatives from tribes within or adjacent to RAC areas; school officials or teachers; or citizens representing the affected public at large.

Nominees are to be evaluated based on their education, training, and experience working with the interest area they represent, their knowledge of the geographic area covered by the RAC, their demonstrated commitment to collaborative resource decision-making, and their contribution to the balance and diversity of the RAC.

Equal opportunity practices in line with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) policies shall be followed in all committee membership appointments. To ensure that committee recommendations have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups the USDA serves, membership shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.