

CHARTER

Science Committee U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date: July 19, 2010

Background

Excellence in applied science for decision support is the foundation for successfully achieving the Service's mission of working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Maintaining this excellence requires that the Service's employees have timely access to

- Scientific research, information and state-of-the-art scientific tools;
- Technical assistance;
- Peer interaction among scientific colleagues;
- Science-based conservation strategies for habitat and population management; and
- Training and mentoring opportunities in
 - understanding, analyzing, applying and communicating complex scientific concepts, information and tools;
 - awareness of the appropriate practices and procedures to use when engaging in science activities, such as conducting research, seeking peer review and using, publishing and disseminating scientific information.

Purposes of the Science Committee

To ensure that the Service has the infrastructure necessary to promote scientific excellence, the Science Committee is empowered to support the needs identified above. The Committee is responsible for addressing specific charges from the Director, such as helping implement science initiatives and requirements. When charged by the Director, or upon its own initiative and with concurrence from the Directorate Oversight Council, the Committee is empowered to prepare draft policies, procedures and other work products; develop initiatives; prepare special reports and recommendations; and work closely with Service employees and external partners to advance science excellence in fish and wildlife conservation. Completed work products of the Committee will be transmitted to the Directorate Oversight Council for review, coordination and dissemination.

Committee and Council Roles and Duties

The Committee conducts its business under the leadership of the Service's Science Advisor to the Director and in close communication and coordination with the Directorate Oversight Council. The Committee receives specific charges from the

Director and subsequently vets its work products, findings and recommendations with the Directorate Oversight Council in advance of providing them to the Director.

Committee Roles and Duties::

1. Fulfill specific charges given it by the Director;
2. Identify and undertake activities it deems necessary to support and advance scientific excellence in the Service, subject to prior approval by the Directorate Oversight Council;
3. Coordinate and communicate regularly with Directorate members through the Directorate Oversight Council concerning its activities and work products;
4. Provide findings and recommendations to the Director, through the Directorate Oversight Council, in response to charges received and initiative taken;
5. Provide written summaries of its meetings to the Directorate Oversight Council, for dissemination to the Directorate, if appropriate.

Council Roles and Duties:

1. Provide support, guidance and oversight to the Committee, as it fulfills its roles and duties;
2. Approve work products completed by the Committee, and coordinate their review, approval and dissemination with the Director's Office;
3. Function as a liaison between the Committee, the Directorate, and the Director, related to Committee activities and findings.
4. Overseeing activities of the Committee;
5. Overseeing preparation, approval, coordination and dissemination of work products completed by the Committee; and
6. Keeping Directorate members apprised of Committee activities, accomplishments and needs.

Committee and Council Memberships

The Directorate Oversight Council appoints 10-12 Committee members at its discretion, including some representing the Science Applications Assistant Regional Directors. The Council will periodically review the Committee membership and make annual adjustments, if needed, to best meet the needs of the Service. The Council and Committee may reach out beyond their membership to accomplish a specific task.

The Office of the Science Advisor will provide the administrative support to the Council and Committee by preparing an agenda, keeping meeting notes, and making meeting arrangements. Permanent members of the Committee include the Science Advisor to the Director and the NCTC representative. Term length for the other members will be determined by the Council during an annual re-assessment of membership needs and member commitments. An ex-officio member from External Affairs may be invited to participate depending on the agenda items to be considered.

The Directorate Oversight Council is comprised of five members:

- Two Regional Directors
- Two Assistant Directors
- Science Advisor to the Director

The Science Advisor to the Director is a permanent member of the Council. Other Council members are appointed by the Director for four-year terms. One non-permanent member will be replaced each year to enable other Directorate members to participate on the Council.

All Committee and Council members will represent the Service as a whole rather than their particular Regions or Assistant Directorships.

Committee and Council Structures

The Committee is chaired by the Science Advisor to the Director. The Committee may elect other members to serve as deputy chairperson or in other administrative positions, and may establish subcommittees to conduct its work. Communication and coordination with the Directorate and Director is to and from the Science Advisor. The Science Advisor, with prior approval of two-thirds of the members, may invite outside parties to attend Committee meetings as observers, assistants or participants, or serve on subcommittees.

The Council is chaired by a member of its choosing. Communication and coordination with the Committee, Directorate and Director is to and from the Council chairperson.

Committee and Council Meetings and Administration

The Committee meets approximately every six months or sooner, as necessary to fulfill its roles and responsibilities or if asked by the Directorate Oversight Council. The Office of the Science Advisor arranges and manages all meetings of the Committee. This includes notifying the Directorate of upcoming meetings 60 days beforehand, through the Directorate Oversight Council. Meeting dates are determined by consensus of the Committee's members.