

Internal Questions and Answers for Soliciting Recreation RAC Nominations

What criteria should we use to evaluate nominations?

The Washington Office has three basic criteria that regions will use in evaluating potential members:

- 1) They must identify what interest group they represent and why.
- 2) They must state why they want to serve on the committee and what they can contribute.
- 3) They must show their past experience in working successfully as part of a collaborative group.

What groups do I need to reach when asking for nominations?

Use the membership list in the Act as a guide. The membership is:

- Category One: Five people who represent recreation users and include as appropriate: winter motorized, winter non-motorized, summer motorized, summer non-motorized, and hunting and fishing.
- Category Two: Three people who represent interest groups that include, as appropriate: motorized outfitters and guides, non-motorized outfitter and guides, local environmental groups.
- Category Three: Three people, one in each position: State tourism official, a person who represents affected local government interests, a person who represents affected Indian tribes.

Do I need to have someone represent EACH of the 11 kinds of interests or groups identified in the Act?

No. However, there are restrictions. Category one generally represents recreation users. You must have five people that represent, as appropriate, those kinds of users; however it may not be reasonable to have each specific interest represented. Category two is restricted to having members represent outfitter guides and/or environmental groups. Category three is more specific. You must have one person representing each of the three interests.

Why do I need to contact the Governor and County Commissioners?

The Act states that the Governor and designated county official from each county in the relevant State or Region **may** submit a list of nominations in the categories described. Regions must contact Governors and County Commissioners, asking them if they would like to submit nominations. A sample letter provided by the WO, is available.

What happens if the Region does not receive enough nominees to meet all the member categories described in the REA?

As stated above, some flexibility exists within the member categories. However, if the Forest Service can show that a good faith outreach effort was made, but there doesn't

seem to be enough public interest to provide broad and balanced representation for membership on the Recreation RACs, then the Secretary can, in consultation with all the Governors of the States involved, elect to not establish a Recreation RAC covering that region.

What happens if the Governor of one State does not want recreation fee proposals in his or her State to go through the Recreation RAC recommendation process?

The Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior ultimately make the decisions on whether or not recreation fee issues will be vetted through Recreation RACs. However, Governors can submit a letter to the Departments stating their position and what process, if any, they prefer. The Secretaries will review the letter and make final decisions. If a State is dropped from the Recreation RAC process, any change to Forest Service and BLM recreation fees in that State will follow the normal fee-change process of the agencies, including public involvement as required by the REA.

Why do I need to reach out to underserved populations?

The Forest Service must ensure that enacting the Recreation RACs will not have adverse impacts on any portion of the public or on the Forest Service work force. To do this, the Forest Service has developed a Civil Rights Impact Analysis that identifies possible groups and media outlets that may have an interest in this issue. Each region will include minority populations in their outreach efforts. When the Recreation RAC charter is renewed in 2008, each region must identify, specifically, what those outreach efforts entailed.

What are the key items people should be told so they can make an informed decision about whether or not to apply for membership?

- 1) They will be making recommendations, not decisions, about specific recreation fees.
- 2) They will be one part of a larger public involvement process.
- 3) They will be subject to FACA (Federal Advisory Committee Act) rules, which include the requirement to hold open, public meetings.
- 4) They will not receive compensation for their time. However, they will be reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses.
- 5) They will go through a background check prior to being approved for membership.
- 6) They must supply us with their Social Security number for the background check.
- 7) They may be selected as a member or an alternate.
- 8) They will be expected to attend meetings, if at all possible.
- 9) They will be expected to work through differences of opinion to generate recommendations for the Forest Service and the BLM.

What is the incentive for being a member of the Recreation RAC?

Recreation RAC members are in a unique position to provide valuable insight and direction for the recreation fee program on public lands managed by both the Forest Service and the BLM.

What is the role of alternates?

Alternates ONLY fill positions if the position becomes permanently vacant. If a member cannot make a meeting, an alternate will not 'fill-in' for that meeting.

How will we get alternates for membership positions?

We will not ask people to apply for alternate positions, but will choose them from the original list of membership nominations.

Do we need to find an alternate for every position?

That is desirable, but may not be possible. It may be possible that some alternates could fill a vacancy in more than one membership category (for example, in Category two, you may have identified only one alternate. If any position becomes vacant, that person could fill it.) Regions should identify as many alternates as possible.

Can more than one alternate be named for a position?

No. Every alternate must go through a background check, so only those most likely to replace a Recreation RAC member will be put through this time-consuming process. (wording was a little odd in the original....)

What happens if a vacancy occurs and we do not have an alternate?

The first step will be to ask Governors and county officials if they would like submit a new list of nominees for the position. They will have two months to provide a list. If they decide not to provide a list, we can go back to the original list of nominees to determine if we have an appropriate candidate. If not, we can either do an outreach for nominations or (if the Recreation RAC can still meet quorum, majority and majority category requirements), we may determine that the committee can wait until the next round of membership nominations to recruit a candidate.