

- Charter -
Bureau of Land Management, Montana/Dakotas
State Science Committee

I. Mission Statement:

To support the Montana/Dakotas organization, as it pursues mission-oriented science, the State Science Committee will promote the management, analysis, and application of scientifically accurate information in order to provide a sound and defensible basis for decision making and program implementation.

II. Committee Background and Scope

Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. MT-2016-023 established the State Science Committee (hereafter called the Committee) to make recommendations to the State Leadership Team in order to implement the National Science Strategy *Advancing Science in the BLM: An Implementation Strategy* (NSS) at the State, District, and Field Office levels. The NSS consists of two broad goals: (1) to ensure effective and consistent science integration into the BLM's core work processes; and (2) to ensure that relevant, timely scientific information is accessible to BLM staff and managers. The NSS also contained six national strategies and numerous actions.

The IM also identified a number of potential tasks including: Scientific Oversight, Scientific Delivery, and Peer Review (with the actual work plan to be developed by the Committee). To develop priority tasks, that are consistent with both the NSS and the IM, the Committee completed a science needs survey in early 2017. This survey identified a number of obstacles that resource specialists face in accessing scientific information as well as products that could improve this access. While addressing many of the "needs" fall within the responsibilities of individual Program Leads, the Committee is directed to work across programs to more effectively and efficiently meet our organizational needs.

The following statement from the NSS summarizes our statewide vision: "To be most effective in achieving its mission, the BLM should continue efforts to advance a culture that makes it a priority for employees to remain current on the most up-to-date science and the latest research of their peers and deliberately obtain and apply relevant science to all programs and projects. Managers and staff should have the tools and data necessary to apply the best available science in decision making and adaptive management..."

For the purposes of this charter science is defined as the knowledge and study of the world based on facts learned through experiments and systematic observations (from the NSS).

III. Oversight:

Oversight will be provided by the Chair (Branch Chief Biological Resources and Science) and a Management Representative (Field Manager). The primary roles for these individuals are to: (1) serve as liaisons between the Committee and State leadership (e.g., SLT, MDL, and Field

Committee); (2) facilitate integration between disciplines; and (3) ensure that the priority science needs of both resource specialists and decision makers are addressed.

IV. Membership and Operating Guidelines:

The Committee should strive to include representatives from across the Montana/Dakotas organization. Team members should represent a diverse range of disciplines engaged in scientific activities. These could include the biological, physical, and socioeconomic sciences. The Committee should also include the USGS scientist embedded in the Montana/Dakotas State Office. It is expected that the actual makeup of the Committee will vary over time depending upon specialist availability and current issues.

Upon approval of the Charter, the Committee should establish its internal operating guidelines. These guidelines (committee decision making, terms, documentation, etc.) maybe updated without modifying the charter.

a. Chair Responsibilities:

- To schedule and facilitate meetings.
- To serve as a team member.
- To serve as the primary spokesman for the Committee.
- To facilitate interactions between the National and State Science Committees.
- To recruit new members as issues warrant.
- To recruit replacement members as existing members leave the Committee.

b. Management Representative Responsibilities:

- To ensure that management's needs are met when conducting committee business.
- To help the Chair elevate issues from the Committee.
- To serve as a team member.
- To co-facilitate Committee activities along with the Chair.
- To "back up" the Committee Chair during the Chair's absence.

c. Member Responsibilities:

- To represent their office and discipline(s) during Committee work.
- To actively disseminate information back to their programs and offices.
- To serve as liaisons to other local or statewide committees (e.g., geospatial committee) to represent the scientific community.
- To serve as a liaison between the Committee and other scientific entities (through partnerships, collaborations, and projects).
- To serve on sub-groups as time and expertise allows.
- To provide support to the Chair (including representing the Chair) on topics pertaining to their expertise.

d. USGS Advisor Recommended Activities:

- To participate in committee activities in accordance with BLM-MOU-MT931-1502 (including any renewals or updates).
- To represent their “field of expertise” during Committee work.
- To serve as a liaison between the USGS and the Committee.
- To serve as a liaison between the committee and other scientific entities (through partnerships, collaborations, and projects).
- To serve on sub-groups as time and expertise allows.

V. Committee Functions:

The Committee’s primary function is to serve as the science advisor(s) to the State Leadership Team. In this capacity, the Committee would make recommendations intended to move the Montana/Dakotas organization towards achieving the goals of the NSS. It is also expected that the Committee will lead the way or assist in implementing approved actions.

These actions would typically fall within the following categories:

- Working to ensure that BLM employees and scientific partners are addressing key management questions.
- Working to ensure that data is collected, managed, and used according to established standards.
- Working to improve access to, and application of, scientific information.
- Serving on additional local or statewide committees that would benefit from scientific input.
- Serving as scientific advisers, or subject matter experts, across the organization.
- Stepping down national direction and/or guidance to the Montana/Dakotas organization.

Sub-groups may be established to accomplish specific tasks. The Committee may invite additional BLM employees, or partners, to participate as needed to address specific topics. These sub-groups will remain in place just long enough to achieve the task at hand.

VI. Meetings:

The Committee will hold regular conference calls. The frequency will be determined by the task at hand. At a minimum, there will be quarterly calls.

Occasional face-to-face meetings may be needed to address certain topics.

VII. Status Reports:

Information will be shared using a variety of approaches including:

- Briefings at program and leadership team meetings (at both the statewide and local level),
- “Story of the Weeks,” and
- Information Memorandums (IM) and Information Bulletins (IB).

VIII. Funding and Support:

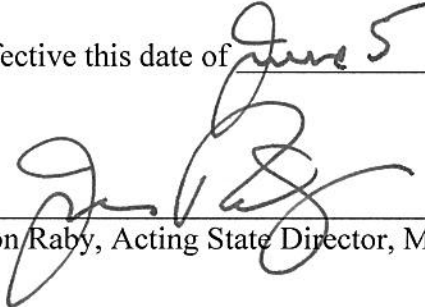
The Science Committee was established by –IM No. MT-2016-023. Its continued existence is dependent upon both local and statewide management support.

The State Director’s Office will provide \$10,000 annually to support committee operations (e.g., travel, materials, web support, programming, etc...). Resource programs should consider providing additional support to projects advancing the work of the science committee.

IX. Charter Modification:

At a minimum, the Charter will be reviewed biennially. Any recommended modifications must be approved by the State Director.

Effective this date of June 5, 2017



Jon Raby, Acting State Director, Montana/Dakotas