

Governor's Task Force on Forests
Group Charter
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Contents

1. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION	1
2. PURPOSE	1
3. PRODUCTS AND OUTCOMES.....	1
4. GEOGRAPHIC AREA.....	2
5. TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION	2
6. ROLE OF THE CO-CHAIRS AND STEERING COMMITTEE.....	3
7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TASK FORCE	3
8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITATORS.....	4
9. DECISION PROCESS	5
10. FINAL REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS.....	6
11. AD HOC GROUPS.....	7
12. GROUND RULES FOR INTERACTION.....	7
13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT GROUP MEETINGS.....	8
14. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA	9
15. SCHEDULE AND DURATION.....	9
16. AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER.....	9

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1. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Approximately 19 percent of Wyoming's land area, or about 11.8 million acres is forested. Wyoming's forests provide clean water and air, wood products, habitat for wildlife and other biota, forage for livestock, the foundation of a profitable travel and tourism economy, and places for recreation and spiritual reflection. However, Wyoming's forests are facing some significant challenges. For example, bark beetle, wildfire, invasive non-native species, increased residential development and drought, are happening at a level not seen in recent history, that may inhibit the ability of some of our forests to provide the full range of multiple uses and values that people enjoy. These challenges continue to compel the state to analyze and consider new response strategies, both active and passive, and management recommendations. Additionally, an awareness of economic opportunities and innovation, both existing and potential, compel the state to study the benefits forests can provide.

The continuing contribution of Wyoming's forests to a sustainable statewide economy requires a coordinated approach to future management actions. Cognizant of the need to better understand the impacts that have resulted from natural disturbances and management, and to identify collaborative responses to some of the changes caused by those impacts, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead formed the Governor's Task Force on Forests in 2013.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Governor's Task Force on Forests is to provide the Governor with recommendations to assess and address the condition of Wyoming's forests. It will accomplish this through mutual education; transparency in process; fostering communication between constituents and governmental agencies; and identifying, evaluating, and recommending options that meet the needs of the many stakeholders involved.

3. PRODUCTS AND OUTCOMES

The Task Force will develop near and long term strategies, recommendations and measurable actions that the State (working with federal partners and private interests) can implement. Recommendations will be submitted to the Governor who can accept, reject, or modify the recommendations. Recommendations may also be shared with federal agencies, local governments, the Wyoming Legislature, and other interested parties and stakeholders.

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4. GEOGRAPHIC AREA

This effort will be limited to developing recommendations pertaining to all forests located within Wyoming, working with federal, state, and private landowners.

5. TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

The Task Force is representative of persons with interests in the condition of Wyoming's forests. Although it is recognized that Task Force members have multiple interests and may participate in discussions from various perspectives, Task Force members broadly represent the following organizations and interest groups:

- Local Government (2)
- Governor's Office (1)
- [Grazing \(1\)](#)
- Wyoming State Legislature (2)
- Wyoming State Agencies (4)
- BLM (1)
- US Forest Service (2)
- Private Industry (1)
- Recreation NGOs (2)
- Conservation NGOs (2)
- Public at large (1)
- University of Wyoming (1)

Task Force members will be expected to represent the interests of (1) themselves, (2) organizations that have authorized the Task Force member to represent them, or (3) groups of constituents from a similar stakeholder group. Ideas presented within Task Force discussions will not be assumed to be the official position of the organizations or groups represented unless specifically stated to be so. Task Force members have the responsibility to keep the organizations and interest groups they represent informed about the actions and outcomes of the Task Force's process.

Each organization and interest group is represented by one or more Task Force members. In the event that a Task Force member cannot attend a meeting, he/she may be represented by an alternate member of his/her choosing without concurrence of the Task Force. Alternate group members are encouraged to attend Task Force meetings along with the primary group members, but should be fully briefed by the primary group member before attending any meetings as the sole representative.

Members are appointed by Governor Matt Mead. Term of membership on the Task Force will be through December 31, 2014. Reappointments will be made by

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the Governor. Service on the Task Force by any group member will be at the discretion of the member's constituent organization or interest group.

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6. ROLE OF THE CO-CHAIRS AND STEERING COMMITTEE

Co-chairs will work together to lead the Task Force through meetings in order to reach a set of consensus recommendations. Co-chairs will work with the Ruckelshaus Institute to provide input and direction at various points throughout the process, as well as communicate with the Governor when necessary. Co-chairs will participate as full Task Force members, including communicating interests and voting on options.

The steering committee will contribute input on the formation and direction of the Task Force, as well as provide support and feedback to the co-chairs and the Ruckelshaus Institute. Co-chairs may convene the steering committee at any point they need guidance on a particular issue.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TASK FORCE

a) Conduct of Task Force Members

Task Force members will engage in open communication at the meetings. This means disclosing interests, needs, actions, and issues in a timely manner and committing to the purpose of the Task Force. The primary responsibility of the Task Force is to balance the interests related to forests throughout Wyoming in providing advice and recommendations to the Governor. Task Force members will endeavor in good faith to develop recommendations that are satisfactory to all Task Force members. Task Force members will ensure that an integrated approach is taken in formulating recommendations by meeting together as needed to assure strong communication and collaboration among Task Force members.

b) Keeping Constituents Informed

Task Force members will engage in active communication with constituents about actions and outcomes of the Task Force. Active communication can include written, verbal, and electronic means of communicating. Members will have meeting summaries available to them for keeping constituents informed.

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c) Representing Constituents

In developing recommendations, Task Force members will consider the interests of other group members as well as their own particular interest group when reviewing issues and recommendations. Task Force members will invite proposals from their constituents to present to the Task Force and will provide proposals from the Task Force to their constituents for feedback and input.

d) Attending Meetings

Each Task Force member is expected to attend and fully participate in each meeting, which includes being present for substantially all of the meeting. Task Force members shall read appropriate materials and arrive prepared to work. Materials presented for discussion should be distributed at least one week in advance of the meeting or longer, as is practical.

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In the event that neither the primary Task Force member nor the alternate Task Force member is able to attend a meeting of the Task Force, and the primary Task Force member is not in agreement with any actions taken by the Task Force during his/her absence, that member has until the meeting summary review at the next meeting to register his/her dissatisfaction with actions taken. A reasonable amount of time will be devoted to old business at meetings. Email may be used to expedite this process.

e) Understanding and Abiding by the Charter

Task Force members are expected to read, fully understand, and conduct themselves in accordance with the requirements of this charter.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITATORS

The Task Force will be facilitated by faculty and staff of the Ruckelshaus Institute at the University of Wyoming. The roles and responsibilities of the Facilitators include:

- Facilitating meetings in a manner consistent with interest-based negotiations and this charter;
- Handling meeting logistics;
- Keeping meeting attendance records of all Task Force members;
- Helping the Task Force stay on task and on process;
- Protecting Task Force members and their ideas from attack while ensuring that provocative issues are not avoided, but are discussed in a candid and respectful manner;
- Helping Task Force members to concisely describe their interests;
- Helping Task Force members find innovative and workable solutions;
- Helping Task Force members reach consensus;

- Providing for equitable participation by all Task Force members;
- Working, both at and between meetings, with Task Force members to assist in the free exchange of ideas between the Members and to resolve any impasses that may arise;
- Periodically surveying Task Force members to assess fairness, meaningfulness and efficiency of the process;
- Maintaining a list of significant topics on which the Task Force has reached consensus or have failed to reach consensus.

In addition to the Ruckelshaus Institute, Richard Stem will aid the Task Force in his role as Senior Advisor to the Governor. His responsibilities include:

- Providing science and management advice/ guidance regarding procedures, policies, and protocol.
- Assisting with connections, actions, and interpretations of the appropriate persons within legislative and administrative levels, including Congressional, Regional Offices, Washington DC offices, and Department levels.
- Providing technical expertise on laws, regulations, processes, and tools available to the Task Force.
- Assisting with conflict resolution.

9. DECISION PROCESS

The Task Force will operate by consensus of all members represented at the meeting. Consensus is the decision rule that allows collaborative problem solving to work. It is a way for more than two people to reach agreement. Consensus prevents domination by the majority, allows building of trust and the sharing of information, especially under conditions of conflict. Consensus does not mean that everyone will be equally happy with the decision, but all do accept that the decision is the best that can be made at the time with the people involved.

Consensus requires sharing information, which leads to mutual education, which provides the basis for crafting workable and acceptable alternatives. Consensus promotes joint thinking of a diverse group and leads to creative solutions. Also, because parties participate in the deliberation, they understand the reasoning behind the recommendations and are willing to support them.

In making decisions, each Task Force member will indicate his/her concurrence on a specific proposal using a six-point scale. The scale allows Task Force members to clearly communicate their intentions, assess the degree of agreement that exists, and register their dissatisfaction without holding up the rest of the Task Force. The six-point scale is as follows:

1. Endorsement –Member likes it.

2. Endorsement with Minor Point of Contention – Basically, member likes it.
3. Agreement with Minor Reservations – Member can live with it.
4. Stand aside with major reservations – Formal disagreement, but will not block the proposal/provision
5. Block – Member will not support the proposal.
6. Indecision – Member cannot make a decision without more information. Member must specify what information is needed, and re-vote once that information has been obtained.

Facilitators will measure and record the Task Force’s consensus on a given proposal by open polling of the members present. The levels of consensus are:

- Consensus - All Task Force members present rate the proposal as a 1, 2 or 3.
- Consensus with Major Reservations – All Task Force members present rate the proposal as a 1, 2 or 3, except at least one Task Force member rates it as a 4.
- No Consensus - Any Task Force member present rates the proposal as a 5.

Any Task Force member that rates a significant proposal (i.e., a proposal that involves significant discussion and has the support or qualified support of a majority of task force members) as a 5 is required to specify their dissent in a written statement for inclusion in the final written report. Dissenters who share the same basic concerns can use a single dissention statement. Dissenters will also identify themselves by name and organization on their dissention statements. Any Task Force member that rates a proposal as a 4 can specify their reservation in a written statement for inclusion in the final written report if the member so chooses

10. FINAL REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ruckelshaus Institute will draft a final report of Task Force Recommendations to be submitted to the Governor and signed by the Task Force Co-Chairs. The report will contain a detailed description of Task Force recommendations. Final recommendations submitted to the Governor will include only the consensus recommendations with votes of 4 and above. Each recommendation will be provided a score that reflects the level of consensus of the Task Force members present. In cases where a member rated a particular proposal as a 4, their reservation statement will be included with the recommendation. The report will also contain the significant proposals that did not gain the consensus of the Task Force. These proposal will be listed separately from the Task Force recommendations and will be labeled as such. Task Force member dissention statements will be included with these proposals.

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11. AD HOC GROUPS

Ad Hoc subcommittees may be formed in order to address specific topics or issues. Work generated from these subcommittees will be reported back to the full Task Force. Subcommittees will follow the same ground rules for interaction as the full Task Force. Subcommittees may choose to bring in subject matter experts for a particular topic, but must first inform the Task Force co-chairs before doing so.

12. GROUND RULES FOR INTERACTION

In order to have the most efficient and effective process possible, Task Force members will follow these basic ground rules:

Discussion Ground Rules During the Meetings

- Raise hand to be recognized by the Facilitator.
- Speak one at a time in meetings as recognized by the Facilitator. Everyone will participate, but none will dominate.
- Be concise and stick to the topics on the meeting agenda. Honor a two-minute time limit for statements and responses unless the Facilitator allows more time.
- Speak only on one topic per entry (no laundry lists).
- Speak to the whole group when talking.
- Avoid side conversations.
- Avoid off-topic questions.
- Treat each other, the organizations represented on the Task Force, and the Task Force itself with respect at all times.
- When communicating with the media, Task Force members will treat each other, the organizations represented in the Task Force, and the Task Force itself with respect.
- Refrain from interrupting.
- Monitor your own participation – everyone should participate, but none should dominate.
- Adhere to the agenda and time schedule with diligence.
- Put cell phones on “vibrate” and leave the room when a call is received.
- Be prepared to start on time.
- Recognize that everyone’s interests are important.
- Avoid repetitiveness (i.e., one-track-mind behavior).
- Agree that it is okay to disagree, and disagree without being disagreeable.
- Avoid “cheap shots” and/or sarcasm.
- Refrain from hostility and antagonism.

Draft 1.3
April, 29, 2014

- Leave personal agendas and “baggage” at the door; put personal differences aside in the interest of a successful Task Force.
- Focus on the problem, not the person.

Process Ground Rules Throughout the Stakeholder Process

- Adhere to the charter.
- Review information and stay informed.
- Work as team players and share all relevant information. Ask if you do not understand.
- Encourage free thinking. Offer mutually beneficial solutions.
- Encourage candid, frank discussions. Be honest and tactful. Avoid surprises.
- Openly express any disagreement or concern with all other Task Force members. Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Actively strive to see the other points of view.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Share information discussed in the meeting with the organizations/ constituents represented and bring back to the Task Force the opinions and actions of your constituencies as appropriate.
- Communicate the requirements of this charter with the organizations you represent to minimize the possibility of actions contrary to the charter.
- Commit to issues in which you have an interest.
- Support and actively engage in the Task Forces’ decision process.

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13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT GROUP MEETINGS

All Task Force meetings are open to observation by the public. Members of the public attending the meetings may comment during the specified time at each Task Force meeting. Public comment periods will be specified in advance. Speakers will have time limits set by the Facilitators to allow as much participation as possible within the allotted time. The Task Force will not normally attempt to respond to public or media comments or questions at the meeting in which they were made. The Facilitators have the right to deny the floor to public speakers who are simply repeating previously delivered messages or who are unruly.

Final summaries of Task Force meetings will be available to the public upon request and will also be available on the Ruckelshaus Institute’s website.

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14. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Task Force members are free to speak with the media. When speaking to the media, members must make it clear they are representing themselves and not the Task Force at -large. If the Task Force member feels uncomfortable speaking with the media, they may refer the media spokesperson to Renny MacKay, Communications Director for the Governor’s Office.

Concise talking points will be generated by the Task Force at the end of each meeting, summarizing the discussion and any decisions made. These talking points may be helpful in communicating with the media, as well as constituents.

15. SCHEDULE AND DURATION

The Task Force will meet periodically at times and locations determined by the group. The intent of the Task Force is to provide advice and recommendations to the Governor. Duration of the Task Force is scheduled for one year. If additional time is needed this can be considered by the Governor and Task Force members.

16. AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER

Changes to the charter can be made at any meeting of the Task Force by consensus.