

official may seek the assistance or advice from a committee, consistent with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. app.) in determining whether there is a reasonable basis to propose an action to address an issue. Each Forest or Grassland Supervisor must have access to an advisory committee with knowledge of local conditions and issues, although an advisory committee is not required for each national forest or grassland. Responsible officials may request establishment of advisory committees and recommend members to the Secretary of Agriculture. Advisory committees used by other agencies may be utilized through proper agreements.

(b) *Participation in other types of community-based groups.* When appropriate, the responsible official should consider participating in community-based groups organized for a variety of public purposes, particularly those groups organized to develop landscape goals (§219.12(b)).

ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC
SUSTAINABILITY

§219.19 Ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Sustainability, composed of interdependent ecological, social, and economic elements, embodies the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528 *et seq.*) without impairment to the productivity of the land and is the overall goal of management of the National Forest System. The first priority for stewardship of the national forests and grasslands is to maintain or restore ecological sustainability to provide a sustainable flow of uses, values, products, and services from these lands.

§219.20 Ecological sustainability.

To achieve ecological sustainability, the responsible official must ensure that plans provide for maintenance or restoration of ecosystems at appropriate spatial and temporal scales determined by the responsible official.

(a) *Ecological information and analyses.* Ecosystem diversity and species diversity are components of ecological sustainability. The planning process must include the development and

analysis of information regarding these components at a variety of spatial and temporal scales. These scales include geographic areas such as bioregions and watersheds, scales of biological organization such as communities and species, and scales of time ranging from months to centuries. Information and analyses regarding the components of ecological sustainability may be identified, obtained, or developed through a variety of methods, including broad-scale assessments and local analyses (§219.5), and monitoring results (§219.11). For plan revisions, and to the extent the responsible official considers appropriate for plan amendments or site-specific decisions, the responsible official must develop or supplement the following information and analyses related to ecosystem and species diversity:

(1) *Characteristics of ecosystem and species diversity.* Characteristics of ecosystem and species diversity must be identified for assessing and monitoring ecological sustainability. In general, these identified characteristics should be consistent at various scales of analyses.

(i) *Ecosystem diversity.* Characteristics of ecosystem diversity include, but are not limited to:

(A) *Major vegetation types.* The composition, distribution, and abundance of the major vegetation types and successional stages of forest and grassland systems; the prevalence of invasive or noxious plant or animal species.

(B) *Water resources.* The diversity, abundance, and distribution of aquatic and riparian systems including streams, stream banks, coastal waters, estuaries, groundwater, lakes, wetlands, shorelines, riparian areas, and floodplains; stream channel morphology and condition, and flow regimes.

(C) *Soil resources.* Soil productivity; physical, chemical and biological properties; soil loss; and compaction.

(D) *Air resources.* Air quality, visibility, and other air resource values.

(E) *Focal species.* Focal species that provide insights to the larger ecological systems with which they are associated.

(ii) *Species diversity.* Characteristics of species diversity include, but are not