



WORK PLAN FOR THE ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE FORESTS - COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH WORK GROUP

July 27, 2007

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I. BACKGROUND

At the September 2006 Roundtable on Sustainable Forests (Roundtable) meeting, the Communications and Outreach Work Group (COWG) was reactivated to help fulfill the Work Plan for the Roundtable. As detailed in the December 6, 2005 draft of the Work Plan, ongoing Roundtable activities are occurring in the following four areas:

1. Reporting and monitoring on progress towards sustainable forests.
2. Coordinating with related national data and indicator efforts.
3. Fostering sustainable forest management through the application of the Criteria & Indicators (C&I).
4. Engaging the broader community of forest stakeholders at multiple scales.

In support of these activities, the Roundtable charged the COWG with the following broad objectives:

1. Identifying and further defining the audience(s) of the National Report on Sustainable Forests (National Report), and assessing related issues of report format and information access;
2. Assessing the need for, defining, and helping to implement additional engagement activities regarding preparation for the 2010 National Report and other related short- and longer-term Roundtable activities;
3. Developing strategies to enhance the use of the 2010 National Report and beginning a long-term process to foster institutionalization;
4. Creating and taking advantage of opportunities to link activities associated with the 2010 National Report to other aspects of the Roundtable's Work Plan; and
5. Providing input to the redesign of the Roundtable website.

The following Work Plan is designed to achieve these five objectives.

II. APPROACH

The COWG initiated its planning process examining the objectives for the group based upon the Roundtable charge. An overarching goal was identified which the COWG used as the context for defining a specific set of realistic and manageable tasks to achieve the five broad objectives. The goal and objectives are presented below in Section III.

Three common elements are used in communications plans, and the COWG used these in developing specific actions that support the goal and objectives:

1. Identifying and crafting the message or messages to be conveyed;
2. Identifying the audience or audiences to be reached with the messages; and
3. Identifying the most effective methods and media to reach these audiences and to hear back from them.

With these elements as context, the COWG considered the five overall objectives and described each one in terms of what the group believes must be achieved in order to accomplish the objective.

Section IV lists the specific actions or activities that need to be undertaken, either directly by the COWG, the Core Group or the Roundtable as a whole. Additional information is provided about the product/deliverable, timeframe, responsible party, and resources needed. The timing of each action was considered in the context of the phases of activity outlined below in Section V, which directly correlate with stages of producing the 2010 National Report.

In the process of preparing this work plan, the COWG considered about 100 separate actions or activities that could be used in a communications and outreach campaign. That longer list of actions was shortened to those items that are of highest priority. The question of available resources and who would be responsible for each item will ultimately be determinants as to what is accomplished. The COWG is a volunteer organization with limited human and financial resources. However, this work plan is a “work in progress” and the group will continually review progress on each activity, and where possible, add additional action items as is practical. Progress on the priority action items in Appendix A will be assessed on an annual basis.

III. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

To increase informed involvement of all forest and other affected stakeholders in achieving sustainable forests through opportunities to participate in the dialogue on the sustainability of the nation’s forests.

Objectives

1. Identifying and further defining the audience(s) of the National Report on Sustainable Forests (National Report), and assessing related issues of report format and information access.

In order to identify and further define the audience(s) of the National Report on Sustainable Forests, the COWG has a number of resources from which to draw. These include: the current and previous Roundtable communications efforts; the National Stakeholder Consultation Report; the consultation on the Montreal Process C&I circulated to prepare for the Indicator Refinement Workshops in 2005; the forest database on file at the Meridian Institute; and the distribution list for the 2003 National Report on Sustainable Forests. In addition, the COWG must make a thorough search for potential new audiences that include local and state government officials, and also expand the network to include social scientists and economists interested in the two new indicators, #38 and #44.

To help address issues related to report format and information access, the COWG will seek assistance from the communications staffs of Core Group and other Roundtable participants to discuss content, media, and format alternatives and information access techniques.

2. Assessing the need for, defining, and helping to implement additional engagement activities regarding preparation for the 2010 National Report and other related short- and longer-term Roundtable activities.

The COWG has identified two categories of work tasks in this objective, namely seeking out opportunities to discuss the preparation of the 2010 National report and encourage participation in

this work action, and seeking opportunities to discuss the three other Roundtable activities – namely, reporting and monitoring on progress towards sustainable forests, coordinating with related national data and indicator efforts, fostering sustainable forest management through the application of the C&I, and engaging the broader community of forest stakeholders at multiple scales.

3. Developing strategies to enhance the use of the 2010 National Report and beginning a long-term process to foster institutionalization.

The Core Group has discussed several ways that the C&I data can be used in an interactive computer format to encourage and promote the use of the national data, and also discussed ways to make it useable at a regional, state or local scale. To meet this objective, the communications and outreach work activities must explore alternative ways and methods to take best advantage of new communications technology and programs. Further, the COWG and Core groups must reach out to the agencies and forestry professionals to encourage them to take the C&I message to their members and incorporate them in their own thinking and planning.

4. Creating and taking advantage of opportunities to link activities associated with the 2010 National Report to other aspects of the Roundtable's Work Plan.

The COWG sees three actions that will implement this objective: first, explore and create opportunities to link the 2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests with other Roundtable work plan activities; second, encourage participation in the Roundtable process; and third, improve connections with domestic and international sustainable resource processes.

5. Providing input to the redesign of the Roundtable website.

Having a dynamic and continually updated web site is probably the most cost effective means to share the Roundtable messages and provide responses to questions for multiple stakeholders.

IV. 2007 WORK PLAN PRIORITIES

In the attached Action Plan (Appendix A), the COWG has described the high priority actions – those which respond directly to Roundtable direction from the September 2006 national meeting, and those which can be achieved within established timeframes and within the scope of limited resources available to participants in the COWG. The twelve action items are focused on:

- Message development and dissemination to target audiences;
- Outreach to partners to enlist their assistance in communicating the concept of sustainable forests and the C&I as a tool for assessing sustainability;
- Supporting the development of the 2010 report through communication and outreach regarding new indicators and new methods of engaging stakeholders in interpreting and discussing the data.

The COWG Work Plan is an evolving document. As tasks are completed or as additional resources are forthcoming, this Work Plan will be updated.

V. TIMETABLE

The COWG will pursue its goal and objectives in four phases, based on the timetable outlined and accepted by the Roundtable's Core Group on February 9, 2007. The phases are:

- Phase I:** February 2007 – December 2008
This timeframe equates to the inception of the COWG through the release of the 2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests for public comments, including the workshops on Indicators #38 and #44 in September, 2007.
- Phase II:** December 2008 – February 2009
This timeframe equates to the 90-day public comment period for the 2010 National Report.
- Phase III:** March 2009 until the Release of the 2010 National Report
- Phase IV:** Following the release of the 2010 National Report

VI. CHALLENGES

Since the completion of the 2003 National Report on Sustainable Forests, other national and global initiatives have come about that put the issue of sustainable forests in a much broader and more urgent context and provides opportunities to discuss this topic in a way that contributes to the substance of global sustainability.

Climate Change and Sustainable Forests

The publication of the first three reports of the fourth assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in March, April and May, 2007 have made it very clear that climate change is not only present and real and that human activity is the major contributor to these changes, but also makes clear that these climate changes impact the very basis for the discussions on sustainability. The reports also make clear that sustainable forests can make a major contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the recovery over time to below the 1990 levels called for in the UN's Kyoto Agreement. Closely connected with this discussion is the role of sustainable forests in the future world energy picture, the development of bio-fuels, the conservation of biodiversity, the slowing of land conversion to urban and suburban uses and much more. The COWG must take the opportunity now to link the Montreal Process C&I process and reports to these broader discussions.

Revolution in Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

In the four years since the 2003 National Report was released there has also been a revolution in communication methods and products. The COWG must take full advantage of these new communications opportunities, making full use of the Internet, of interactive web sites, and the instant links to a whole host of on-line news outlets and news services. The COWG should explore the creation and maintenance of a regular news service to serve the Roundtable and the Montreal Process. Many of these ideas spring from the Consultancy Report presented to the Roundtable Core Group on Feb. 9, 2007.

Broader Stakeholder Involvement

The advances in communication technologies have spurred, and been spurred, by great expectations of public involvement in natural resource and environment issues, broadly speaking, and sustainable forest dialogues specifically. A communication challenge for the COWG is to find and adopt new ways to connect with interested stakeholders. The risks inherent in this (for example, specific organizations that dominate the dialogue) are real, but the advantages of greater engagement, diversity of thought, and actions on the ground out-weigh the risks.

Communicating effectively with forestry professionals and related federal agencies

Although the Roundtable has enjoyed considerable support and involvement from the professional forestry community and related federal agencies as they work to establish criteria and indicator programs for their respective fields of responsibility, the need today is more urgent than ever to broaden and deepen the understanding of the role of sustainable forests and the Montreal Process C&I in a host of sustainability activities. The Roundtable cannot know if it is achieving international and national sustainability goals without some coordinated set of criteria and indicators. Yet in too many instances the agenda, the work activities and the data available in the 2003 national report are being ignored or even considered not relevant to the immediate needs of the profession, the states and other federal agency activities. Answers to the Roundtable's own Consultancy report survey show that this is the case. The Roundtable must therefore make a more determined effort to communicate, to link the Montreal Process criteria and indicators to this broader sustainability discussion, and make the 2003 and the 2010 data available in a user-friendly digital format on a GIS-based platform to be of maximum utility in this important endeavor.

VII. RESOURCE NEEDS

The Roundtable and its Work Groups have no dedicated or guaranteed funding from public or private sources. At this time, the Roundtable relies solely on a Cooperative Grant from USDA Forest Service and contributions of time and expertise of participants. The work of the Roundtable, the Core Group and the COWG is constrained by the resources that are available. Furthermore, the work of the Roundtable is likely to resonate with the goals, priorities, and agendas of various public and private organizations and these may be potential funding sources. Periodically the COWG will develop an updated plan of work and will ascertain what resources are available to carry out the priority tasks.

VIII. TARGET AUDIENCES

The audiences who have a stake in the nation's forests include:

- Core Group participants
- Roundtable participants
- Industry
- Landowners
- Foresters, including state foresters and Society of American Foresters
- Key lobby groups on forest and farm issues
- Conservation interests
- MOU signers in federal government
- Others involved in C&I work -- water, range, minerals, Heinz, CEQ
- Indigenous groups
- Biologists of all kinds
- Economists and sociologists, involved in #38 and #44 indicators
- Mayors, city officials
- County officials
- Planners
- Students and young professionals
- International groups
- Special interest: Congress and their staffs; news organizations.

IX. OPERATION

In general, the COWG will meet via telephone. Between February and the end of April, when much of the work drafting the 2007 COWG Work Plan occurred, the group met every two weeks. The meeting schedule after April will be less frequent and task-driven. To help with planning and ensure a meeting time is reserved, the group will establish a monthly call starting in April. When possible, the Group will meet face-to-face around other scheduled Roundtable events.

APPENDIX 1. ACTION PLAN FOR 2007

Action	Description	Product/Deliverable	Timeframe (Phases I - IV)	Responsible Party	Resources Needed
1	<p>Develop and disseminate key messages that are target audience-specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop key messages regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable forests ○ Critical issues and threats to sustaining the nation's forests ○ Montreal Process C&I – what it is and how it can be used ○ Preparation of the 2010 national report on sustainable forests • Consult with the National Association of State Foresters and Society of American Foresters to determine what sustainable forest messages they have developed that can be used by the RSF. 	<p>A series of 4 one-page flyers/ brochures that describe the four key messages.</p> <p>Written and electronic communiqués for distribution to target audiences; utilize RSF website to the maximum extent possible.</p> <p>Adopt their messages where appropriate, link ours and their messages.</p>	<p>Immediate, Phase I</p> <p>July, 2007</p>	<p>COWG and Meridian, Core Group</p> <p>COWG co-chairs and Meridian; State foresters and SAF</p>	<p>Volunteer time of COWG members, Meridian, help from US Forest Service communications staff. Draw on Multiple perspectives report, National 2003 Report, Stakeholder Consultancy Report</p> <p>COWG, Meridian</p>
2	Develop a process for updating and improving the RSF website on a regular basis.	New and updated information to Meridian (Walen); format and design suggestions to COWG for consideration.	Phase I July and August, 2007	Meridian and COWG	
3	Identify and provide to the RSF Website Manager site content and other modifications that can be made efficiently to update the website and strengthen the message regarding “How to Participate.”	List of website updates. (COMPLETED)	Phase I	Meridian and COWG	
4	Solicit Core Group participants’ assistance in accessing their communications staff to		Spring, summer 2007 and	COWG, Core Group and	

	provide assistance in message development and dissemination.		continued activity	Meridian	
5	Develop an initiative to engage stakeholder groups and RSF participants in an “Outreach Partner” program that: 1) utilizes others who commit to providing sustainable forests and RSF information to their staffs, members, and volunteers through their print and electronic media, 2) provides for website link “reciprocity”, and 3) expands the reach of the RSF	<p>“Outreach Partner Program”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program prospectus. • List of target stakeholder groups (prospecting list). • Commitments from the Roundtable and Core Group participants to take the Roundtable messages to their own organizations. 	Phase I – IV (August, 2007 and ongoing)	Norland and Cox with Meridian	Staff and volunteer time
6	Develop and provide Roundtable orientation to “first time” meeting participants.	PowerPoint presentation and RSF brochure and other related materials (e.g., RSF Work Plan)	September 2007 and ongoing	COWG and Meridian	Staff and volunteer time
7	Improve engagement with Tribal communities and look for opportunities to learn more from them to inform the content of the 2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests.	<p>Participate in the “Sharing Indigenous Wisdom Conference” in Green Bay, WI (June 2007) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and provide an RSF exhibit and tri-fold brochures. (COMPLETED) ▪ Make a presentation about the RSF and the importance of participation. (COMPLETED) <p>Roundtable website linked to the “Sharing Indigenous Wisdom” Conference website.</p>	Phase I, immediate	Meridian and COWG members	COWG/RSF table top poster = \$250. COWG volunteers, with technical support of USDA Forest Service
8	Support the September 2007 RSF and National Technical Workshops for Indicators 38 & 44 by publicizing them and promoting participation.	Press coverage, advance PR, e-mails to Roundtable participants, RSF website	Phase I	Meridian and COWG	
9	Invite Simon Bridge, Senior Advisor, Forestry Criteria & Indicators, Canadian Forest Service, to present a seminar/workshop/discussion at an RSF meeting about using the internet to increase	Presentation at September RSF meeting and posting of presentation on RSF website.	Phase I – September 2007	COWG and Meridian	Travel funds

	utilization of national report data and increase RSF participation.				
10	Develop and suggest strategies for state and local governments (and their agencies) to incorporate and institutionalize sustainable forest concepts in their statutes, ordinances, resolutions and plans.	“Strategies” fact sheet(s)			
11	Attend conferences and workshops to exhibit the RSF display and to learn more about how different stakeholders view sustainability and how the RSF could be of value to them.	<p>Communication to Core Group and RSF participants about the availability of the RSF display for use at conferences.</p> <p>Prioritized list of at least 6 key conferences to exhibit at (exhibit content: sustainable forests, the use of criteria and indicators, 2010 report, and the work of the RSF).</p> <p>List of RSF and Core Group participants who would be willing to attend the conferences and staff the exhibit.</p>	2007, 2008, 2009, Phase I through IV	Core group, COWG, Roundtable and Meridian	

12	Identify and outreach to key and new audiences, particularly state and local government officials and planners, who have interest in, or responsibility for, forest resources (directly or indirectly).	<p>List of organizations that represent/comprise key and new audiences.</p> <p>Key contacts identified at each organization.</p> <p>Special Core Group meeting for key contacts for a briefing and discussion about: sustainable forests, the use of C&I, how to participate in the development of the 2010 report, and the work of the RSF</p> <p>“Cross-walk” document that compares indicators and state and local government issues, responsibilities and authorities.</p>			
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