

interested public should be able to request BLM to form a team; still others said they should be formed by the RACs. Others suggested that the regulations should be flexible enough to let these teams consider issues other than grazing.

A number of commenters spoke to the make-up of the rangeland resource teams. Many supported a local residency requirement for all members, others opposed the emphasis on local residency. Many stated that all members should have a high level of expertise in rangeland issues.

Many different specific suggestions about team make-up were received. Others were concerned that these teams be formed for a limited time, so that they would not be too expensive or perpetuate themselves. A number of specific comments were made on the content of courses to be offered to team members. Another asked how rangeland resource teams would bring on-going consensus efforts like the Trout Creek Work Group "closer to the process."

Many of the above concerns about rangeland resource teams have been addressed in the foregoing discussion of § 1784.6-1. As noted there, the Department has decided to make significant changes from the proposal in this final rule.

The Department has not adopted the suggestions on the makeup and structure of the teams, and has decided to retain the original proposal. However, as discussed below, the final rule will accommodate other models of public participation. If the rangeland resource team structure does not suit local conditions, a different model can be chosen. Similarly, groups such as the Trout Creek Work Group can be incorporated into the process through the use of another model which allows the inclusion of groups of different sizes.

Rangeland resource teams or other subgroups serving similar functions will now be optional features under the required RACs. The final rule does not provide for chartering of any subgroups under FACA, and such subgroups will not advise BLM directly, but will provide assistance to the chartered council to improve its ability to function effectively. All special purpose, short term groups will be formed exclusively by BLM and will be made up of Federal employees, whether regular staff or contract employees. Regarding residency requirements, the Department in the final rule at § 1784.6-1 has decided to require that all RAC members and members of general purpose local subgroups must be residents of one of the States in which

the area covered by the specific council is located. The Department believes this structure both assures compliance with FACA and encourages local level participation in the decision-making process.

The development of the training course is discussed at § 1784.6-1.

This section, which in the proposal was exclusively about rangeland resource teams, now presents three alternate models for public participation, any of which can be chosen by a State Director, in consultation with a Governor and other interested persons. Each model provides specific details about four attributes of the councils: council jurisdiction, membership, quorum and voting requirements, and subgroups.

Model A is based on the work of the Colorado Working Group on rangeland improvement. It has the following characteristics:

(i) *Council jurisdiction.* The geographic jurisdiction of a council will coincide with BLM District or ecoregion boundaries. The Governor of the affected State(s) or existing RACs may petition the Secretary to establish a RAC for a specified BLM resource area.

(ii) *Membership.* Each council will have 15 members, distributed equally among the three groups specified in § 1784.6-1(c).

(iii) *Quorum and voting requirements.* At least three council members from each of the three groups from which appointments are made pursuant to § 1784.6-1(c) must be present to constitute an official meeting of the council.

(iv) *Subgroups.* Local rangeland resource teams may be formed within the geographical area for which a RAC provides advice, down to the level of a single allotment. These local teams will provide local level input to the advisory council. These teams may be formed under the auspices of a RAC on its own motion or in response to a petition by local citizens. Rangeland resource teams will be formed for the purpose of providing local level input to the RAC on issues pertaining to grazing administration within the area for which the rangeland resource team is formed. Rangeland resource teams will consist of five members selected by the RAC. Membership will include two persons holding Federal grazing permits or leases, one person representing the public-at-large, one person representing a nationally or regionally recognized environmental organization, and one person representing national, regional, or local wildlife or recreation interests. Persons selected by the council to represent the public-at-large,

environmental, and wildlife or recreation interests may not hold Federal grazing permits or leases. At least one member must be selected from the membership of the RAC. Members of the rangeland resource teams must be residents of the State in which the area covered by the team's jurisdiction is located.

The RAC will be required to select rangeland resource team members from nominees who qualify by virtue of their knowledge or experience of the lands, resources, and communities that fall within the area for which the team is formed. All nominations must be accompanied by letters of recommendation from the groups or interests to be represented.

All members of rangeland resource teams will attend a course of instruction in the management of rangeland ecosystems that has been approved by BLM State Director. Rangeland resource teams will have opportunities to raise any matter of concern with the RAC and to request that BLM form a technical review team, as described below, to provide information and options to the council for their consideration.

Technical review teams can be formed by the BLM authorized officer on the motion of BLM or in response to a request by the RAC or a rangeland resource team to gather and analyze data and develop recommendations to aid the decisionmaking process. Membership will be limited to Federal employees and paid consultants. Members will be selected based upon their knowledge of resource management or their familiarity with the specific issues for which the technical review team has been formed. Technical review teams will terminate upon completion of the assigned task.

Model B is based on the work of the Wyoming Steering Committee on the Management of Federal Lands. It has the following characteristics:

(i) *Council jurisdiction.* The jurisdiction of the council shall be Statewide, or on an ecoregion basis. The council will promote Federal, State, and local cooperation in the management of natural resources on public lands, and coordinate the development of sound resource management plans and activities with other States. It will provide an opportunity for meaningful public participation in land management decisions at the State level and will foster conflict resolution through open dialogue and collaboration.

(ii) *Membership.* The council will have 15 members, distributed equally among the three groups specified in § 1784.6-1(c) above, and will include at