**Southwestern Region Regional Leadership Team**

**CHARTER DRAFT**

**1. Purpose**

On behalf of the Southwestern Region (Region), the Regional Leadership Team (RLT) provides direction through the Region’s Strategic Plan and allocation of resources to foster collective success. The RLT also serves as the filter for the interpretation and communication of Agency policy and initiatives for regional implementation. RLT meetings are a venue in which cross-pollination and integration are fostered among regional units and programs.

**2. Background**

The Region operates in the diverse landscape of the southwest, spanning parts of four states, with shared borders with tribal lands and Mexico. To meet the diverse demands of this land, the Region is comprised of 11 Forests and 4 Grasslands, a wide variety of programs, and approximately 2000 permanent employees. All of this demands a broad range of expertise and perspective to inform the highest-level decisions of the Region. The RLT provides both the perspective and expertise to create alignment and capitalize on opportunity in Regional operations.

**3. Scope**

The RLT’s scope is the land it stewards, the communities served by it, and the workforce that implements the Region’s activities. The RLT's purview covers all regionwide, strategic level issues and content. The RLT identifies and acts upon cross-cutting issues, opportunities for optimization and efficiency, and establishment of Regional priorities. RLT deliverables come in the form of the Strategic Plan, governance decisions, regional guidance, leadership intent, and delegation of actions.

**4. Authority**

The RLT is authorized and convened by the Regional Forester (RF). Since the RLT exists in perpetuity, its charter endures beyond any one RF tenure. Therefore, amendments to the RLT Charter are considered and approved by the RLT, which includes the RF and DRFs. The RLT's authority extends over the entire region, and its deliverables are to be implemented by all.

The RLT’s conduct aligns with the US Forest Service Leadership Stance and Habits [link] direction, specifically, the four leadership abilities:

* steward the whole place;
* see opportunity;
* share leadership with peers, subordinates and cooperators;
* and build community.

**5. Membership Composition**

Recognizing the need for full representation of the region while maintaining a deliberative body, membership is comprised of the following:

Principal Members

The Region's executive leader positions, forest supervisors, and Regional program directors are each mandatory RLT members with voting privileges. Each RLT member brings corporate knowledge of their area to inform the RLT for the benefit of the entire region.

If a principal member must miss an RLT meeting, this is communicated to the Chief of Staff, and the absent member prepares and briefs her/his official deputy, or if there isn’t an official deputy, an “alternate,” who acts in all capacity of the absent member (with voting rights). Further, the member who missed the meeting is responsible for upholding decisions made at the meeting.

Standing Advisory Members, nonvoting

Official deputies and/or assistant directors attend RLT meetings to ensure alignment, without voting privileges, unless acting for their Supervisor/Director.

There may be occasions when the RF calls for principle voting members only; this will be made clear in the agenda.

Other Participants: By Invitation

Non-voting – Advisory to RLT on subjects as identified

SMEs are assigned a Point of Contact (POC) from the RLT who provides to the SME: Agenda, time, topic, pre-work, their purpose at the meeting, and any other pertinent information to ensure the SME is contributing to the RLT. SMEs can include Tribal Liaison, Civil Rights, Human Resources, Law Enforcement, Safety, WEPO, Union, etc. [List all here]

**6. Membership Roles**

RLT Principal Members have the same role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. There are several additional roles designated for the purpose of supporting the work of the RLT, as follow:

Meeting Agenda Development: Chief of Staff [address in Meeting Process below]

“Strategic Plan Coordinating Group” – [need draft charter for this]

Orientation of new RLT members: Role performed by the Chief of Staff/Communications Director

Meeting Logistics Coordinator: Administrative Officer, [address in Meeting Process below]

Topic Sponsor: RLT member serves as topic sponsor to ensure appropriateness of topic and adherence to protocols [address in Meeting Process below]

Notetaker: Administrative Officer [address in Meeting Process below]

Meeting Facilitator: Deputy Director of OCE. Assist with agenda development, prework, and meeting facilitation. Supported through cadre of facilitators [address in Meeting Process below]

The RLT reviews the above roles and the positions that fill them for their effectiveness at minimum one time per year, and more frequently, as needed. Individual performance in these roles is accomplished through regular performance appraisals.

**7. Operational Norms/Procedures**

Meetings

Quarterly RLT Meetings

The RLT meets in-person each quarter the first week of the month (Feb, May, Aug, Nov). The quarterly meetings follow an annual cycle of focus based on the Strategic Plan.

One in-person meeting per year is held in Arizona. Remaining in-person meetings will be held in the vicinity of the Regional Office.

Monthly RLT Meetings

The RLT meets virtually each month for a half day on the fourth Friday. These meetings are devoted to emerging issues affecting the Region. These meetings also support the identification of issues for quarterly RLT meetings.

Decision Process

RLT decisions are made, to the greatest extent possible, by full agreement among voting members. Each RLT meeting is attended by all voting members or their deputy/designated alternate, who has voting rights on behalf of the absent RLT member.

Additionally, some issues will be the purview of the Regional Forester (RF) alone; such issues will be identified in the RLT agenda, so as to alert RLT members that on these issues they act as advisors to the RF.

In cases where the RLT does not achieve full agreement in the time allocated, one of the following options below will be selected. Any decisions made utilizing these options are considered official decisions of the RLT, upheld as such by all members.

1. Table: postpone the decision to a future meeting; may assign RLT members to prepare further information on the issue to aid the RLT in reaching a decision.
2. Majority Rule: In this case, each RLT member has one vote and the simple majority rules.

The RLT may allow members with strong reservations about the decision the opportunity to present new information at the next RLT meeting supporting her/his viewpoint. The decision will stand as decided unless a majority of the RLT members agree that the new information is compelling (those presenting the new information are non-voting).

1. Elevate: The issue is elevated by the RLT for decision-making by the Regional Forester.

Charter Revision

Recommendations for revision of the charter may be made throughout the year to the Chief of Staff for consideration and action at the annual review of the Charter.

**8. Performance Assessment**

After each meeting, the RLT evaluates its performance based on following four established criteria:

1. How well the RLT followed the Charter
2. How well the RLT addressed issues of the Strategic Plan
3. How well did the RLT document the decisions made
4. How well did the RLT deliberate as a collaborative leadership body
5. Other pertaining to specific topics of the meeting

The RLT performance is evaluated on an annual basis. The process for RLT performance rating is described in the Appendix.

**Signatories: Principal & Standing Advisory Members**

**Authorizing Signature: The RF**