

Advisory Committee Role - Discussion document - January 23, 2002

The role and make-up of the advisory committee have been discussed during the past two committee meetings. Clearly, the role of the committee has evolved as NRIS has evolved. The statute creating the committee identifies matters important at the time of creation of NRIS; while several still apply, there may be additional issues that the committee wishes to be involved in that are relevant to NRIS today.

A. Determine the purpose of the committee

Current Statute:

90-15-201. DUTIES OF COMMITTEE.

The committee shall examine the following matters and make recommendations to the library concerning:

(1) criteria for the categories and types of data to be collected for a natural resource information system; (2) criteria for the format of data collection; (3) identification of existing sources of relevant data in the public sector; (4) identification of data acquisition, storage, and retrieval methodologies that are economical and efficient, that minimize or eliminate the duplication of data bases, and that utilize computer networking; (5) probable costs to agencies furnishing required data and probable costs of managing the data; (6) probable benefits to be realized by the establishment of a natural resource information system; (7) operation of the Montana natural heritage program; and (8) other items the committee considers of importance to the establishment of a natural resource information system.

Recent Advisory Committee comments:

Assist NRIS in developing on-going program support
Provide strategic planning input and advice
Act as liaison between NRIS and agencies
Provide input and advice on policy issues
Evolved from advising on types of data to advising on funding issues
Essential to provide natural resource perspective to the library
Greater role in hiring
Greater role in strategic planning
Elevate role of Advisory Committee to the political realm

B. Determine the entities needing representation in order to accomplish the purpose

Current Statute:

➤ legislative services division

- department of administration
- state library
- each principal data source agency (DEQ, FWP, DNRC, MDT, University System, Ag, Historical Society)

Recent Committee actions/comments:

- Invited informal participation of local government (L&C County has participated in the past; MACo was invited to send a representative to this meeting)
- Invited informal participation of business community (WESTECH currently participates)
- Need federal representative? (recommended yes, as non-voting entity; no action as of this time)
- Need ISD representative? (now moot - SB 131 calls for representative of DofA)

B. Determine the type of individual that should represent each entity in order to accomplish the purpose

Technical liaison

- Understands the needs of their respective agencies and can communicate those needs to NRIS
- Understands the abilities of NRIS to serve agency needs and can explain those abilities to their agencies

Policy/Funding

- Understands the role of NRIS
- Understands their agency budget and has the ability to influence funding
- Can speak for their agency to the Governor's office and to the legislature, or has the ability to communicate directly to those in their agency who do so

Options

- Status quo
- Technical User Group
- Managers/Policy/Funding
- Disband

Is modification of the current statute necessary to accomplish the will of the group?