



News Release
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Media Contact: Tayloe Dubay
(928) 523-5088

NAU Regents' Professor Appointed to Federal Forest Policy Committee

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Renowned for his work in revolutionizing forest restoration practices, Northern Arizona University Regents' Professor William Wallace "Wally" Covington, Ph.D., has been selected to help shape a 20-year national forest management policy that emphasizes conservation and landscape-scale restoration.

On Tuesday, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Covington, NAU Regents' Professor of Forest Ecology in the School of Forestry and Executive Director of the Ecological Restoration Institute at NAU, to represent the scientific community on a federal advisory committee for the new US Forest Service Planning Rule. Demonstrating a push toward a more collaborative, science-based approach to managing America's 193 million acres of public land, the committee will provide guidance and input on the implementation of the new planning rule. Covington will work collaboratively alongside 20 other committee members from varying public interests to address critical management needs and make recommendations to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on planning directives.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with such a great group of people to help the Forest Service achieve their conservation goals with the new planning rule," Covington said. "By working together to restore these lands, there will be plenty of resources for all of us to share and to share with the rest of nature."

Covington has a long track record of working collaboratively with legislators, public interest groups, land managers, and fellow researchers. His ability to combine science and innovation while engaging diverse audiences has earned him numerous accolades. He served as founding chair of the Science Working Group of the Society for Ecological Restoration International and was a founding commissioner for the National Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry. In 2009, Covington received the prestigious SERI Theodore M. Sperry Award, an international award honoring individuals who have made significant lifetime contributions to ecological restoration. In addition to these career achievements, Covington is lauded for his work on the "Covington Curve," in which he determined the rate of recovery to reference conditions in northern hardwoods while earning his Ph.D. in ecosystem sciences from Yale University in the 1970s.

Continuing the practice of seeking effective ways to advance restoration ecology, Covington is looking forward to his role as advisory committee member to the USDA on the new Planning Rule. "Restoration ecology is a recent science but it is the approach of the future, the approach of right now," Covington said. "At its foundation, this committee is about collaborative people working together in good faith to learn about ecological functions and restoring health and resilience to ecosystems."

The final planning rule will focus on landscape-scale principles that include watershed health, climate change response, species diversity, wildlife habitat, sustainable National Forest System lands, and proactive collaboration. For more information about the Forest Service's new planning rule and the committee, visit www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule. To learn more about Covington and the Ecological Restoration Institute at NAU, visit www.eri.nau.edu.