

Shasta County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)

United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service
Shasta-Trinity National Forest Headquarters
3644 Avtech Parkway Redding, CA 96002-9241 (530) 226-2494



October 11, 2007

Project FIT
Attn. Gary Nakamura
1815 Hartnell Avenue
Redding, CA, 96002

FIT Participants,

In October 2000, Congress passed Public Law 106-393 entitled "Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000" which stabilized federal payments to states for funding schools and roads. This legislation was enacted to provide transitional assistance to rural counties affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests in federal lands. Traditionally, these counties relied on a 25% share of receipts from timber harvests to supplement local funding for school districts and roads. As a school teacher, you can appreciate the value of each and every "unrestricted" dollar that flows into your school district's annual budget.

Additional purposes of the Act included recommending funding for projects that would enhance forest ecosystems, and improve land health and water quality, as well as improving cooperative relationships among the people that use Federal lands and the agencies that manage those lands (USFS, BLM). To accomplish these goals, many counties formed Resource Advisory Committees (RAC's) each consisting of fifteen (15) members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to review project proposals in concert with Federal agency representatives.

RAC members represent diverse, and often conflicting, interests in Federal forestland management. Examples include: Commercial timber, outdoor recreation, energy & mineral development, grazing permit holders, both national and local environmental organizations, dispersed recreational activities, archaeological and Native American interests, State and County elected officials, school officials or teachers and affected public at large. The shared importance being what will work best for the land and its resources. As you can well imagine, convincing a majority of this group to support a particular project is an accomplishment to be valued.

This leads me to project FIT, the Forestry Institute for Teachers, where you have had the good fortune to stumble upon a rare jewel indeed. FIT provides a balanced presentation of current forest management issues and the science that supports decision-making. The program makes use of nationally recognized education curricula such as Project Learning Tree, Project Wild and Aquatic Wild. FIT assembles a variety of resource professionals who are happy to volunteer their time to share both their expertise and passion for the work they do. The magnetism of the FIT program is that it supplies the participant with relevant information and allows you to draw your own conclusions.

The Shasta County RAC has demonstrated their unprecedented support and endorsement of FIT by not only recommending the project through five annual funding cycles, but by voting to do so **unanimously**. I am confident that you will enjoy your time at FIT and that both you and your coming students will benefit from the experience.

Sincerely,

Henry T. "Ted" James
Shasta County RAC Chairperson

<http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/> Follow the payments to states link

