



United States  
Forest Service

Research and  
Development

1400 Independence  
Avenue, SW,  
Washington, DC 20250

**Date:** September 18, 2019

**To:** Carl Lucero, Director of Landscape Restoration and Ecosystem Services Research,  
Institutional Officer of the USDA Forest Service Research and Development Institutional  
Animal Care and Use Committee

**From:** USDA Forest Service Research and Development Institutional Animal Care and Use  
Committee

**Subject:** Fall 2019 Semi-Annual Report to the Institutional Official

The USDA Forest Service Research and Development Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (USFS R&D IACUC) was established in October 2015 to oversee the care and use of all vertebrate animals in research related activities within the USFS R&D to ensure legal compliance with the USDA Animal Welfare Act (AWA). This Fall 2019 semi-annual report is a summary of ongoing IACUC operations, outlines any deficiencies, and provides recommendations for improvements.

Since its implementation four years ago, the IACUC has increased its workload from an initial oversight of 15 new approved research proposals per year to managing **69** approved research studies to date. The IACUC receives an average of 15 new proposals each year. Oversight includes post-approval monitoring of these projects until their completion. As of September 2019, twenty-four (24) multi-year studies have been completed, leaving **45** ongoing studies for IACUC oversight. IACUC operations continue to build our services to meet the needs of our research scientists, along with a concurrent increase in operational workload.

This report summarizes the IACUC's oversight of USFS R&D animal care and use activities, as required by the AWA regulations, as applicable. This report also details the Forest Service's compliance with the AWA and identifies deficiencies and potential deficiencies in compliance with the AWA. Submission of semi-annual reports to the Institutional Official (IO) is a condition of the institution's official registration as a federal research facility by USDA Animal Care. The following topics were discussed during this program review; the IACUC is working to address any issues and recognizes that some may require action from Forest Service executives.

## 1. IACUC Membership and Functions

- The IACUC is duly constituted and consists of an IACUC chair, an Attending Veterinarian, two non-affiliated community members, and primary and alternative members from each of the five Forest Service Research Stations. A liaison from the USFS Starkey Experimental Forest and Range IACUC is an 'at large' non-voting member.
- Committee membership remains fully appointed. A new SRS representative began serving as the SRS Alternate in May 2019. The extended service of several other committee members has made this latest transition seamless and the committee is functioning well.



- The IACUC recognizes the AWA requirement to complete semi-annual inspections of "animal housing facilities" where animals are housed for more than 12 hours. While such USFS research animal housing is rare, often temporary or seasonal, or in logistically remote locations, the IACUC has been meeting this requirement through virtual inspections such as requiring investigators to send photo-documentation (photographs and videos) of these animal housing facilities. The Committee recently has formed a work group to develop a written 'Virtual Facility/Animal Housing Inspection Protocol'. This task is in progress.
- The IACUC Administrator (IA) position was filled in June 2018 and has markedly increased the IACUC efficiency. The IA is managing the IACUC Share Point database of approved research proposals including tracking reviews and post approval monitoring to maintain AWA regulatory compliance and to address any protocol violations. The IA also coordinates Committee activities by arranging meetings, preparing meeting minutes, and assisting with webinars and teleconferences; preparing USFS IACUC semi-annual reports and USDA annual reports; and develops/updates content for the IACUC internet / intranet web pages and IACUC SharePoint site. The IA participates in development of annual training in the principles of animal welfare for USFS scientists.
- MINOR DEFICIENCY PARTIALLY CORRECTED: The IACUC continues to address feedback from the USFS research community on the survey conducted last November 2018. Specific action items included requests for training webinars specific to fish & wildlife research techniques, simplifying IACUC template forms, and developing a library of standard technical procedures. These tasks are partially completed. The proposal template has been revised to be more streamlined and other template forms are being updated. An IACUC training webinar is being scheduled this Fall-2019.
- IACUC oversight of certain NFS animal activities. NFS wildlife management actions are not currently covered by USFS IACUC, although several NFS scientists have inquired about IACUC review of their activities. The IACUC will continue to consider what, if any, oversight is necessary for NFS wildlife management actions such as fish & wildlife population surveillance and monitoring studies. A small IACUC working group will be created to further discuss this issue. There may be opportunities to foster collaborations between NFS and R&D through IACUC, such as including an R&D scientist on NFS animal field projects when proposals are submitted for IACUC review; or adding an NFS representative to the IACUC committee.

## 2. IACUC Records and Reporting Requirements

- MINOR DEFICIENCY NEARLY CORRECTED: A standard naming convention was developed this year to resolve incongruent nomenclature on document files in the IACUC SharePoint site filing system. Still pending completion is better file organization to be consistent and easy to retrieve information. Specifically, creating file names to clearly distinguish annual reviews.
- MINOR DEFICIENCY CORRECTED: Recently, the IA and AV worked with the CIO staff to resolve a software error in an essential search tool for the IACUC Share Point database. The error was identified and corrected.
- The IACUC DMR Protocol was revised to include using this process for approval of annual renewals and minor amendments.
- MINOR DEFICIENCY PENDING COMPLETION: A semi-annual email notice to R&D scientists





needs to be initiated as a reminder of the resources that have been made available to scientists when working with the IACUC. An email notice will be sent to USFS researchers to inform of recently updated forms and other resources on the IACUC intranet.

- The requirement for an IACUC approval on any research project involving fish or wildlife, as appropriate, was included in the latest revision of FS Manual 4060 (Research Facilities and Areas) for Experimental Forests and Research Natural Areas, effective Sept 11, 2019.
- The IACUC has begun preparations for the 2019 Annual Report to USDA Animal Care due by December 2019. All previous annual reports were submitted on time.

### **3. Attending Veterinarian**

- The Forest Service Attending Veterinarian (AV) continues to provide general oversight for animal care and use, guidance on use of controlled substances/drugs for chemical immobilization, anesthesia, and euthanasia; and guidance on handling, surgery, and biological sample collections. The AV may delegate responsibility for direct "hands-on" veterinary care of animals used in R&D research stations to contracted local veterinarians. Such contracted veterinarians would report any animal care and use concerns to the AV.
- A "Verification and Veterinary Consultation" (VVC) protocol is being used by the AV for approval of certain minor amendments to IACUC approved research study proposals.

### **4. Personnel Qualifications and Training**

- MINOR DEFICIENCY PENDING COMPLETION - Some IACUC members, the IA, and the IO must complete the initial required Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program training modules or the 3-year refresher training. Reminders will be sent to those who need to complete their respective online trainings.

### **5. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)**

- OHS training for USFS scientists appears to vary among the Research Stations and collaborating universities. The IACUC continues to express interest in emphasizing field biosafety training and how to complete a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) for fish and wildlife research as it relates to animal welfare concerns to minimize disease transmission between animal populations.
- The AV's contributions were accepted to the Chapter 50 revision on zoonotic diseases in the USFS Field Manual. The updated edition has been completed and released in both hard copy and electronic version. The AV continues to serve as a member of the USDA Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Program to represent the USFS, and on the WO Safety & Health Committee.

### **6. Veterinary Medicine, Surgery, Pain & Distress, Euthanasia, Drug Control**

- The IACUC commented that wildlife researchers could benefit from further training on proper euthanasia methods. The AV has offered to give a webinar to all R&D wildlife researchers on acceptable methods of euthanasia and how to make determinations about euthanasia. This webinar will be scheduled in the Fall-Winter 2019. The IACUC will also continue to search relevant training and reference resources for euthanasia, and post or provide links on the IACUC intranet.





- The AV continues to provide guidance to USFS researchers on the process to acquire federal and state DEA permits to use controlled substances. The IACUC and AV make every effort to assist researchers to meet the legal requirements of the DEA Controlled Substances Act.
- The IACUC and AV have discussed whether there is a need for veterinary 'back-up' for the occasional situations when the AV is unavailable for an urgent matter. The IACUC SOP states on page 9, "*The USFS AV can delegate his or her authority to anyone he/she designates as appropriate to do so; e.g. in cases wherein the project under assessment is geographically distant, and on-site assessment by the sitting AV is impractical, the AV may choose to delegate his or her authority to another, local veterinarian in the vicinity of the project locale.*"

#### Action Items and Next Steps for the IACUC to correct deficiencies and improve operations:

- MINOR DEFICIENCY: IACUC filing system - improve file document nomenclature for better organization - for example, create file name suffixes (AR-1, AR-2) to identify chronology of Annual Reviews. Move Terminated Studies to a separate Share Point folder.
- MINOR DEFICIENCY: CITI Training-Insure all IACUC members, the IA, and IO are current on their trainings. Contact CITI Program to inquire if they can provide automatic reminders.
- MINOR DEFICIENCY: An IACUC working group will be created to develop animal housing/facility virtual inspection protocols for remote animal housing sites.
- Distribute updated information and postings on the IACUC Intranet to USFS research community. Examples include revised IACUC proposal template and DMR Protocol. Annual Review Form to be updated over the next six months.
- Provide an "IACUC Bootcamp" basic training webinar in the Fall-2019 and a separate webinar later this year to address USFS scientist's needs in field research. Plan to record webinars for posting on the IACUC intranet.
- Develop briefing paper on IACUC oversight of certain NFS animal field projects. A small IACUC working group will be created to further discuss this issue and report back to the full Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

**TODD WILSON** Digitally signed by TODD WILSON  
Date: 2019.09.20 08:20:40 -07'00'

USFS R&D IACUC Chair

**SCOTT STOLESON** Digitally signed by SCOTT STOLESON  
Date: 2019.09.23 07:55:53 -04'00'

Northern Research Station

**JOHN SQUIRES** Digitally signed by JOHN SQUIRES  
Date: 2019.09.23 08:20:01 -06'00'

Rocky Mountain Research Station

**LIEF GALLAGHER** Digitally signed by LIEF GALLAGHER  
Date: 2019.09.24 12:38:49 -07'00'

Pacific Southwest Research Station

(b)(6)

Non-Affiliated Member

**PATRICE KLEIN** Digitally signed by PATRICE KLEIN  
Date: 2019.09.20 20:53:10 -04'00'

Attending Veterinarian

**ROGER PERRY** Digitally signed by ROGER PERRY  
Date: 2019.09.24 14:53:04 -05'00'

Southern Research Station

**JULIANNA JENKINS** Digitally signed by JULIANNA JENKINS  
Date: 2019.09.24 13:02:46 -07'00'

Pacific Northwest Research Station

(b)(6)

Non-Affiliated Member

