

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
TO FOSTER THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH**

between the

**COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

I. DEFINITIONS

An *ecosystem* is an interconnected community of living things, including humans, and the physical environment within which they interact.

The ecosystem approach is a method for sustaining or restoring ecological systems and their functions and values. It is goal driven, and it is based on a collaboratively developed vision of desired future conditions that integrates ecological, economic, and social factors. It is applied within a geographic framework defined primarily by ecological boundaries.

The goal of the ecosystem approach is to restore and sustain the health, productivity, and biological diversity of ecosystems and the overall quality of life through a natural resource management approach that is fully integrated with social and economic goals.

II. POLICY

The federal government should provide leadership in and cooperate with activities that foster the ecosystem approach to natural resource management, protection, and assistance. Federal agencies should ensure that they utilize their authorities in a way that facilitates, and does not pose barriers to, the ecosystem approach. Consistent with their assigned missions, federal agencies should administer their programs in a manner that is sensitive to the needs and rights of landowners, local communities, and the public, and should work with them to achieve common goals.

III. BACKGROUND

In its June 1995, report entitled, *The Ecosystem Approach: Healthy Ecosystems and Sustainable Economies*, the Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force set forth specific recommendations with respect to how federal agencies could better implement the ecosystem approach. The Task Force recommended that member agency representatives sign a memorandum of understanding affirming their intent to implement the recommendations.

IV. THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

Healthy and well functioning ecosystems are vital to the protection of our nation's biodiversity, to the achievement of quality of life objectives, and to the support of economies and communities. The ecosystem approach recognizes the interrelationship between healthy ecosystems and sustainable economies. It is a common sense way for federal agencies to carry out their mandates with greater efficiency and effectiveness. The approach emphasizes:

- Striving to consider all relevant and identifiable ecological and economic consequences (long term as well as short term).
- Improving coordination among federal agencies.
- Forming partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, Indian tribes, landowners, foreign governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Improving communication with the general public.
- Carrying out federal responsibilities more efficiently and cost-effectively.
- Basing decisions on the best science.
- Improving information and data management.
- Adjusting management direction as new information becomes available.

V. THE COOPERATORS AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

- A. Each federal agency that is a party to this Memorandum of Understanding shall designate an individual who will be responsible for coordinating the agency's internal and interagency activities in support of this Memorandum of Understanding to implement the recommendations of the Task Force report as appropriate. Such designation shall be reported to the Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force within 30 days of signature. The collective agency designees will serve as an Implementation Committee. The Committee will

meet regularly to share information on progress in implementing this Memorandum of Understanding, problems encountered, and solutions proposed in resolving them. The Committee shall provide reports at meetings of the Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force. Such reports should include any unresolved issues that may require the attention of the Task Force.

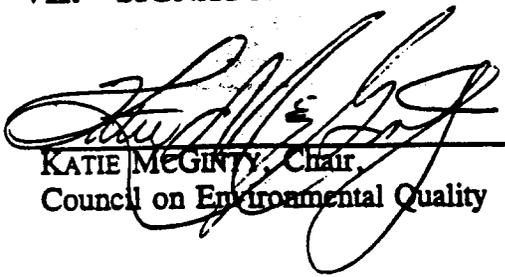
- B. Each signatory agency shall examine the specific recommendations made in the report of the Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force in light of its authorities, policies and procedures, and identify recommendations that may apply to its programs. Based on this review, agencies shall determine what changes or interagency actions are necessary or desirable, undertake appropriate actions, monitor accomplishments, and report their findings and actions through the Implementation Committee to the Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force, on a schedule to be determined by the Task Force.
- C. The Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force shall encourage regional directors or comparable executives of the federal agencies in the various regions to have regular and systematic exchanges of information about plans, priorities, and problems. The purposes are to eliminate inefficiencies and duplication of effort, to keep executives informed about federal government activities outside of their agencies, to clarify the respective contributions to ecosystem activities of federal agencies with varying missions (such as land management, resource management, regulatory, research, infrastructure, technical assistance, and funding), and to strengthen executive-level support for the interagency ecosystem activities of field personnel.
- D. Each signatory agency shall participate, as appropriate to its mandates, in ecosystem management efforts initiated by other federal agencies, by state, local or tribal governments, or as a result of local grass-roots efforts. Members of the Implementation Committee shall identify their ongoing ecosystem efforts and other efforts that come to their attention, share information about those efforts, discuss appropriate agency actions with regard to participating in those efforts, and identify successful and unsuccessful components of those efforts. Signatory agencies shall also look for opportunities in new geographic areas for federal efforts in collaboration with stakeholders.
- E. The Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force will propose, as appropriate, new regional ecosystem demonstration initiatives. These initiatives will build upon the knowledge gained from evaluating the seven ecosystems that were the subject of the Task Force reports.
- F. The Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force will evaluate the potential for joint training programs for the ecosystem approach, in which all signatory

agencies could participate, and in which personnel from all signatory parties could receive training. The Implementation Committee members will share information on agency training programs related to the ecosystem approach, and signatory agencies are encouraged to accommodate trainees from other agencies in such courses as appropriate.

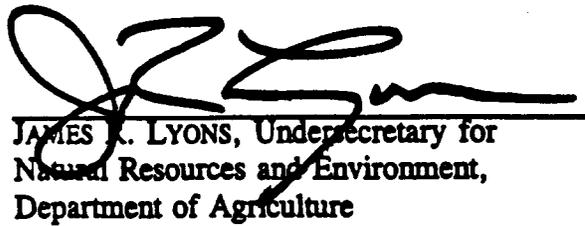
VI. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND AMONG THE COOPERATORS THAT:

- A. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the Cooperators will require the execution of separate interagency agreements, contingent upon the availability of funds as appropriated by Congress. Each subsequent agreement or arrangement involving the transfer of funds, services, or property among the Cooperators must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations, including those statutes and regulations applicable to procurement activities, and must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority.
- B. This Memorandum of Understanding in no way restricts the Cooperators from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other public or private agencies, organizations, or individuals.
- C. Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall obligate the Cooperators to expend appropriations or enter into any contract or other obligations.
- D. This Memorandum of Understanding may be modified or amended upon written request of any party hereto and the subsequent written concurrence of all of the Cooperators. Cooperator participation in this Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated with the 60-day written notice of any party to the other Cooperators. Unless terminated under the terms of this paragraph, this Memorandum of Understanding will remain in full force and in effect until September 30, 1999.
- E. This Memorandum of Understanding is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, nor does it create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.
- F. The terms of this Memorandum of Understanding are not intended to be enforceable by any party other than the signatories hereto.

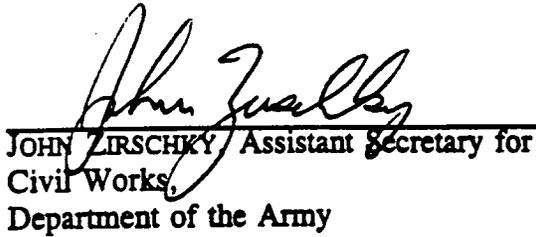
VII. SIGNATURES



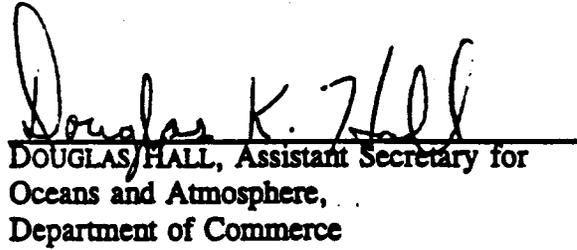
KATIE MCGINTY, Chair,
Council on Environmental Quality



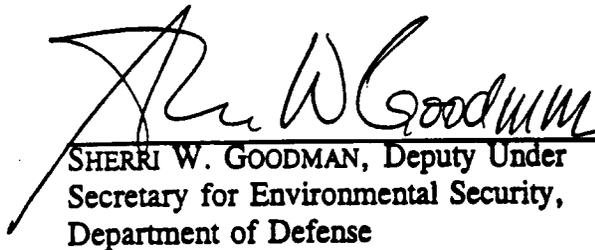
JAMES K. LYONS, Undersecretary for
Natural Resources and Environment,
Department of Agriculture



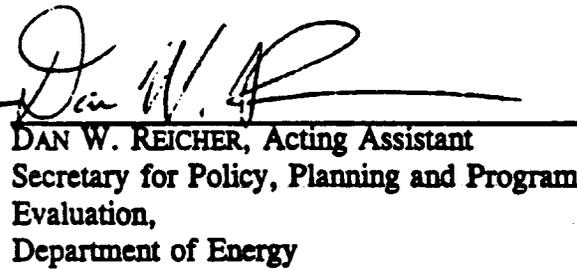
JOHN ZIRSCHKY, Assistant Secretary for
Civil Works,
Department of the Army



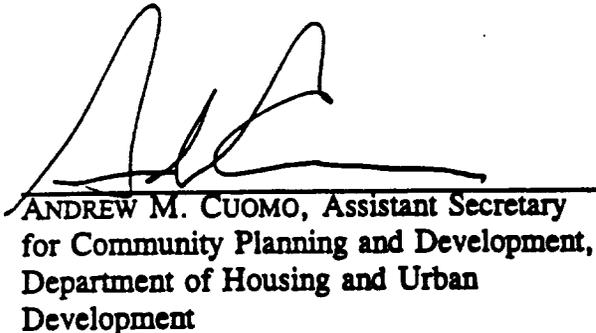
DOUGLAS HALL, Assistant Secretary for
Oceans and Atmosphere,
Department of Commerce



SHERRIL W. GOODMAN, Deputy Under
Secretary for Environmental Security,
Department of Defense



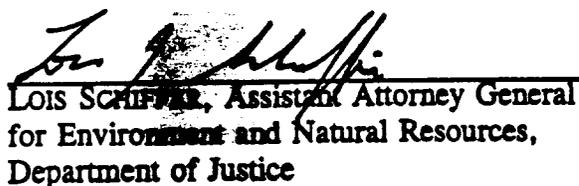
DAN W. REICHER, Acting Assistant
Secretary for Policy, Planning and Program
Evaluation,
Department of Energy



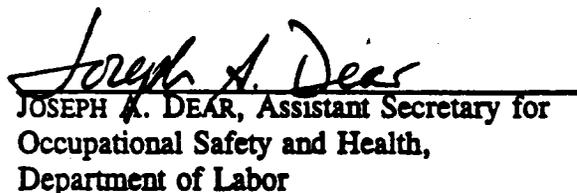
ANDREW M. CUOMO, Assistant Secretary
for Community Planning and Development,
Department of Housing and Urban
Development



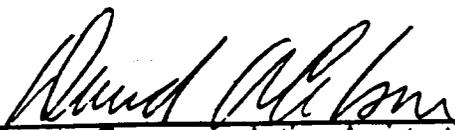
BONNIE COHEN, Assistant Secretary for
Policy, Management and Budget,
Department of the Interior

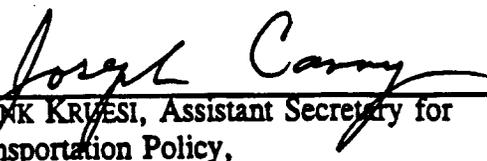


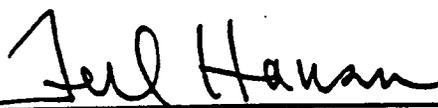
LOIS SCHIFFER, Assistant Attorney General
for Environment and Natural Resources,
Department of Justice



JOSEPH A. DEAR, Assistant Secretary for
Occupational Safety and Health,
Department of Labor


DAVID A. COLSON, , Acting Assistant
Secretary for Oceans and International
Environmental and Scientific Affairs,
Department of State


FRANK KRIVASI, Assistant Secretary for
Transportation Policy,
Department of Transportation


FRED HANSEN,
Deputy Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency


JACK GIBBONS, Director,
Office of Science and Technology Policy

Dated: December 15, 1995