

Forest Products Modernization

At A Glance – July 2019

Modernization Accomplishment Highlights

- **FPM Strategic Framework Completed and Released:** On June 4th, Director of FMRMVE Allen Rowley released the [Forest Products Modernization Strategic Framework for Long-Term Action: 2019-2023](#), the culmination of a two-year, comprehensive review of the entire forest products delivery system, including inputs from more than 1,000 employees and 160 partners. This roadmap to becoming more efficient in how we manage forests, deliver forest products, and carry out timber sales was highlighted by Deputy Chief Chris French in [Inside the Forest Service](#).

People

- **New Timber Sale Prep Course:** In June, the FPM implementation team launched the [Forest Service Basic Timber Sale Preparation course](#) on AgLearn. The course covers the basics of timber sale preparation, policies, and procedures per Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction and is intended for anyone who works on or has an interest in timber sale preparation including foresters, forest technicians, engineers, resource specialists, line officers, and other professional and technician personnel.
- **Employee and Partner Engagement:** On June 6th and June 27th, the FPM core team held two national webinars for partners and employees, respectively, to present the FPM Strategic Framework and answer questions. Transcripts, recordings and notes for both webinars can be found on the [national FPM SharePoint site](#).

Technology

- **Add Volume Program:** We developed an electronic version for tablet of the FS-2400-66 Add Volume Report which is [now available](#) for sale administrators and timber resource specialists. Sale administrators and timber resource specialists should find this a useful tool to streamline data entry for additional volume on timber sales.

Policy

- **New Rates for Low Value Material:** On June 5th, Deputy Chief Chris French issued a letter to Regional Foresters establishing new minimum rates to allow for easier disposal of low-value material on restoration projects. [Read the letter here](#). Accompanying the letter are the [Best Tool Decision Tree](#) and [Appraisal Decision Tree](#) to aid in the selection of the most appropriate appraisal process and contract mechanism for a particular project.

MODERNIZATION IN THE FIELD: Designation by Prescription on the Siuslaw National Forest (Region 6)

The Siuslaw National Forest timber program has fully transitioned to using Designation by Prescription (DxP), a technique authorized under the 2014 Farm Bill that allows the operator to select trees to be removed based on a prescription, versus marking individual trees using expensive paint. Using DxP is saving the Siuslaw NF approximately \$126,000 per year in paint costs and crew time. Agency-wide, we conservatively estimate up to a \$1 million annual savings from use of DxP.

Next Steps and Actions Underway

People

- Working Group on Recruitment and Retention:** We recently formed a working group sponsored by the Business Operations deputy area and Forest Management and made up of human resources specialists and forest management staff. The group held a workshop the week of July 22nd in Fort Collins, CO to review prior work done by FPM solution teams and develop a set of recommendations for: recruiting natural resource professionals to meet shortages in mission-critical occupations; developing a retention strategy for foresters and forestry technicians; creating consistency across all regions regarding the conversion process from 462 forestry technician series to the 460 professional forester series; developing a common sale administration position description to eliminate inconsistencies and grade discrepancies across regions.

Business Practices

- Forest Product Utilization and Markets:** We chartered a cross-deputy markets and utilization team with the goal of improving access to accurate and up to date information on local or regional industry's ability and desire to consume forest products of varying type and quality. Such information can be used to improve project design by including sale viability considerations, develop and reach timber and restoration targets, and expand the use of forest product sales to offset restoration costs. The team developed a set of [potential short-term actions](#) and is meeting the week of Aug 20th to select 2-3 actions from this list and develop mid- and long-term recommendations to address this need.
- TIM modernization:** We are working with Natural Resource Management staff and GSA/18F to begin the first phase of this important work – developing user requirements and workflows for timber contracting and permitting as part of a modernized Timber Information Manager Application (TIM). The first workshop with 18F and TIM users will be held the week of August 12th in Washington D.C. For more information, contact Beth Boddiger.
- Forest Products Certification:** We assembled a team to explore options to increase NFS forest products' ability to compete with certified forest products on the open market. The team is comparing agency procedures and policies against third-party certification requirements as a first step to developing a process that would allow federal timber to better compete with certified timber.

Policy

- Batch 1 Directives Update:** This batch includes changes to the Timber Management manual, the Timber Sale Administration handbook and a new handbook on non-procurement debarment and suspension procedures. Internal review of Batch 1 is complete. Tribal consultation is underway and we are currently working on addressing comments from OGC. The full package of updates will be submitted for final clearance in late August and posted for a 30-day public comment period in early September.
- Batch 2A Directives Updates:** This batch includes changes to the handbooks for timber cruising, timber sale administration and timber appraisal as well as chapters on KV authority. The internal review period has closed. We reviewed all comments received during a [July workshop](#) and are now revising the directives based on this feedback.
- Batch 2B Updates:** This batch includes updated guidance on stewardship contracting and a new chapter on Good Neighbor Authority. [Updates are available for internal agency review now.](#) **Comments are due Aug 16th.**
- A summary of all policy updates is available [here](#).