

Forest Products Modernization

At A Glance – November 2019

Modernization Accomplishment Highlights

People

- The **Pathways Student Recruitment Event** at the Society of American Foresters Convention in Louisville, KY was a great success! 240 entry level positions (Forester, Forestry Technician and Natural Resource Specialists) were advertised at the event. Over 130 students from top forestry schools met with Forest Service HR specialists and regional representatives to discuss the types of work and job locations and to get help applying through USAjobs. We received more than 2800 applications (including interns, recent graduate and merit). HRM is now processing those applications, with the goal of making final selections by mid-January. The partnership with the HRM- National Collective Recruitment and Hiring Team, Region 8 recruiters, WO Forest Management, and Regional Forest Management representatives continue to make this event very successful in recruiting top talent into the Forest Service.

Technology

- **Virtual Boundaries Desk Guide:** To assist Forests in implementing virtual unit boundaries within timber sale or project areas, the Forest Management Service Center developed a Virtual Boundaries Desk Guide. The guide provides an overview of the process to determine where Discernable and Geo-Fence boundaries are applicable and serves as a how-to for establishing boundaries, writing the timber sale contract, and conducting sale administration. [The Guide is available here.](#)

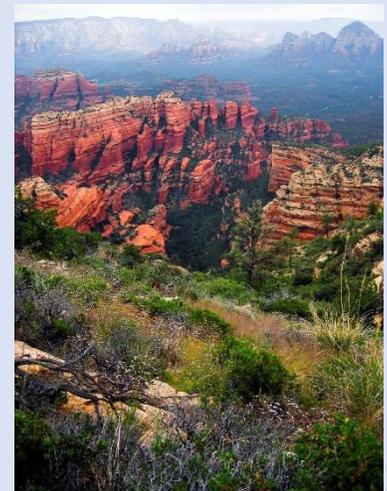
Business Practices

- **Program and Project Management Workshop:** The FPM Program and Project Management team held a workshop October 7th -9th in Phoenix, Arizona to develop recommendations for improving program and project management skills in timber sales and restoration projects. Our current program and project management processes were designed for high-value, commercial timber products and are often unwieldy and inefficient when addressing lower-value products and restoration treatments. By the end of the workshop, the team had identified and prioritized 15 recommendations to reduce the time and cost of project planning and implementation, including integrated project teams; right-sizing the timber sale gate system for landscape restoration; improving staff transition and onboarding procedures; and establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations to improve accountability. The team is now developing action plans to implement the highest-priority actions.

MODERNIZATION IN THE FIELD: Accelerated Review and Response in Region 3

Region 3 is using an Accelerated Response Review (ARR) Form to facilitate more agile communication between field level staff and the Regional Office. Any employee can use the form to suggest an innovation, request permission to create efficiencies in a policy or procedure, and communicate ideas or concerns to the regional or national office. A requestor submits the form to the Regional Forest Products Modernization (FPM) Coordinator, and can expect a response within 10 business days. The form also acts as a record of communication between the requestor and the request recipient, including questions, decisions made, and response times.

The ARR form fosters innovation and helps the region accelerate on-the-ground-project implementation by recording new and innovative ideas and providing a quick way to disseminate them regionally; alerting the Regional Office of needed clarification of new or current policy that would enable more efficiency; and giving employees a way to communicate their ideas and receive a formal, timely response. For example, the ARR process enabled the region to create new regional direction that eliminated the requirement to request Regional Forester approval for each scaled timber sale for the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI).



Next Steps and Actions Underway

People

- **FPM Road Show:** A team from the Washington Office and the Southern Regional Office will host a pilot “FPM Road Show” at the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests headquarters on December 3rd. The road shows are a space for open dialogue between regional and national Forest Management staff and field-level staff on innovative approaches to timber management; challenges, questions and concerns of employees in the field; new training, tools and authorities that can help employees in their day-to-day work and where they can get support on specific issues. Stay tuned for dates and locations of future road shows in early 2020.

Technology

- **Web-based Timber Sale Platform:** The FPM Contracts Team is developing the business case for a web-based timber sale platform designed to update and improve how the Forest Service provides information about and advertises current timber sales and Integrated Resource Timber Contracts. The goal is to develop a National advertisement platform where all timber sale solicitations are posted, providing national consistency and possibly eliminating some newspaper legal ads and mailings. This project involves a number of actions that can be implemented to supplement current processes, including possibly replacing parts or all of current processes, improving the agency’s current online presentation of this information.

Policy

- **Batch 1 Directives Update:** We are nearing completion of tribal consultation on Batch 1. The full package of updates were submitted for final clearance in late September and we anticipate they will be posted for a 30-day public comment period in early 2020.
- **Batch 2A and 2B Directives Updates:** This batch includes changes to the handbooks for timber cruising, timber sale administration and timber appraisal, KV authority, stewardship contracting and a new chapter on Good Neighbor Authority. Thank you to everyone who submitted comments. Batches 2A and 2B were submitted to ORMS in September and are currently under review.
- **Batch 3 Updates:** Review of Batch 3 Directives, including the chapter listed below, is underway. We expect to submit the proposed revisions to ORMS in late January 2020.
 - FSH 2409.19 Zero code and chapter 90 (budgeting)
 - FSM 2470, update to address silvicultural practices, reforestation, tree seed, nurseries
 - FSM 2478, update to address silviculture certification requirements as needed
 - FSH 2409.17, update to address silviculture certification requirements if needed
 - FSM 2410 for sustained yield units
 - FSH 2409.21e any updates needed for reviews and audits
 - FSM 2490 – Timber Management Information System
 - FSH 2409.14 – Timber management information system handbook
 - FSH 2409.11a, chapter 30 (cubic scaling handbook on stacked wood and piles)
 - FSH 2409.18, Chapters 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 – Timber sale preparation handbook
 - FSH 2409.12 chapter 20 guidebook and chapter 80