Forest Products Modernization
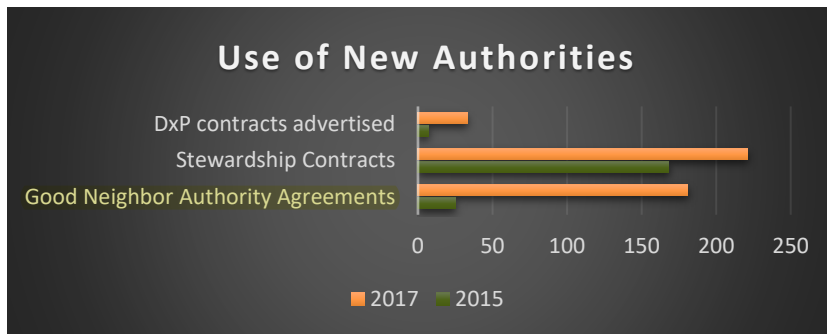
At A Glance – Accomplishments Edition

A strategic effort designed to better align our culture, policies, and procedures with current and future forest restoration needs in order to increase the pace and scale of restoration, improve forest conditions, and improve efficiency of forest product delivery.

Modernization Accomplishment Highlights[1]

Change the Way We Do Business

- Increased use of authorities such as Designation by Prescription (DxP) is accelerating our restoration efforts, resulting in measurable increases in acres offered for sale. For example, the Four Forest Restoration Initiative in Region 3 offered about 47,000 acres of sales in FY18, up from about 33,000 in FY17 based in part on their use of DxP.
- Use of DxP reduces the use of timber marking paint which saves about $70/acre in sale layout. On a typical 2,000 acre sale, that would be savings of $140,000.
- Use of Good Neighbor Authority increased from 25 agreements in 2015 to over 170 agreements in 2017. GNA agreements allow us to increase capacity to sell timber, from sale layout to the award and administration of timber sales.

> IN FY18, WE SOLD **OVER 3 BILLION BOARD FEET** FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 20 YEARS AND WE ACCOMPLISHED THIS **WITH 40 PERCENT LESS FOREST MANAGEMENT STAFF**

Use of New Authorities

DxP contracts advertised
Stewardship Contracts
Good Neighbor Authority Agreements

0   50   100   150   200   250

■ 2017   ■ 2015

Change Processes and Systems

- Salmon-Challis NF piloted a new market-based approach to base price setting for timber sale appraisals. Early results are 4 sales sold on the first offer compared to no-bid sales using standard appraisal process.
- Finalized a best tool decision tree for use in gates 1 and 2 that assists in the selection of the most appropriate contracting tools for landscape level treatment activities.
- Developed detailed process maps for each of the forest products delivery system gates (initial planning through sale award phases) to highlight bottlenecks and cost centers. Results are now being used to assist in establishing a baseline for cost to government so efficiencies over time can be measured.

Train Employees

- Developed an expanded comprehensive forest management training program and on-line training schedule. All existing courses have been updated to include latest direction from Chief in forest products business processes (expanded use of KV authority; use of DxP, Stewardship contracting, and GNA, etc.)
- Developed new Designation by Prescription course and delivered 8 employee/industry staff sessions.
- Initiated sale administration training academy with a call for nominations for roll out in FY19.
- Initiated training and mentoring program via the Agricultural Conservation Experience Service (ACES) program.

Examine and Reform Policy

- Updated six handbooks and manuals to reflect changes in laws and regulations and modernization efficiencies; will submit to ORMS for final review in January 2019. Twelve other directives updates are underway.

- Chief issued interim direction to Regional Foresters in February 2018 to immediately implement actions from the 2014 Farm Bill Authorities, increased use of Good Neighbor Authority and Designation by Prescription, performance metrics, reduced sampling error and certification requirements, and encouraging use of digital technologies.

Improve Efficiency through Technology

- Agency-wide purchase and distribution of over a 125 handheld data recorders, 100 tablets, and 150 lasers to streamline field data collection. We are now at 90% use of digital technology for cruising, versus 50% use just 5 years ago.
- Released Android version of TwoTrails application for area determination to increase efficiencies in sale layout surveys and provide better interaction with maps and photos.
- Piloting the use of many timber preparation tools and techniques with partners to evaluate cost and time savings, including digital restoration guides, tablet-assisted harvesting prescription guides; virtual boundaries and LiDAR for resource assessments.
- Completed a real-time digital system for log accountability, branding, and barcoding to reduce time and effort needed by the Forest Service and our industry partners.
- Initiated unmanned aircraft systems (UAS or drones) demonstration projects for cruising, sale layout, sale administration and monitoring
- Completed business case and stakeholder analysis for improving internet bandwidth for Wi-Fi installation at district offices.

> USE OF **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES** LIKE HANDHELD DATA RECORDERS FOR TIMBER SALE CRUISING RESULTS IN AN **ESTIMATED 30% REDUCTION IN TIME**

FPM Actions Progress

Not Started 17 Total Actions
Complete 41 Total Actions
Underway 70 Total Actions

Summary

We have many modernization actions completed, underway or planned across all five broad change categories. These actions have resulted in the agency selling the same amount of timber that we sold in 1997, but with 40% less non-fire management staff.

Stay tuned for more information as we continue our work on metrics that better describe the gains in each area of technology, business processes, training, and policy reforms. Taken all together these changes have helped to dramatically streamline our delivery of forest products.

Next Steps towards Modernization

FPM team recommendations are coming in soon for improved efficiencies for sale administrator and silviculture **certifications**, how best to address **low value material**, and **contract and appraisal streamlining**, along with other high-priority actions, so these can be incorporated into the comprehensive strategy for long-term actions. We also intend to place more emphasis on **product utilization and markets** as well as **program and project management** that are part of gates 1 and 2 and have overlap with the environmental analysis and decision making (EADM) effort.

The comprehensive strategy will be complete in March 2019 and will include accomplishments to date with a focus on our highest priority actions for implementation over the next several years. The strategy will also include recommendations for how modernization and innovation can become part of our culture and standard operating procedures over the long-term. We want to incorporate the great ideas and feedback received to date from our employees and partners and create a framework for continuing to gather, evaluate, and implement innovative ideas.

[1] *data presented here on cost/time savings, staffing levels, acres treated and agreement types are derived from a variety of sources, some based on preliminary results or anecdotal evidence. Sources include conversations with USFS employees including the measurements steering team, the 4FRI team, and regional staff, reports run from Natural Resource Manager – Timber Information Manager (TIM) and Corporate Data Manager, the USDA-USFS FY1981, FY2017, and FY2019 Budget Justifications, and the 2018 USFS-TNC Master Stewardship Agreement accomplishments report. These initial values will continue to be verified/corroborated as the FPM effort continues.*