

Collaborative Restoration Workshop

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Implementation | Using Stewardship Authority to Advance Restoration

Key Topics: Stewardship Authority

Speakers

- **Mae Lee Hafer**, Stewardship Coordinator for Regions 8 and 9, USFS
- **Rebecca Barnard**, National Forestry Programs Manager, National Wild Turkey Federation
- **James Mordica**, Timber Management Assistant & Region 8 CFLR Coordinator, USFS

Overview

This session introduced Stewardship Contracting and Agreements and offered two successful examples. The resources included at the end of this document provide more information on Stewardship processes.

What is Stewardship Authority?

Stewardship Authority is a strategy of natural resource management that seeks to promote a closer working relationship with local communities in a broad range of activities that improve land conditions. Stewardship projects not only strive to shift the focus of federal forest and rangeland management towards a desired future resource condition ecologically, but they are also a means for federal agencies to contribute to the development of sustainable rural communities, increase public collaboration in project planning and implementation, and provide a continuing source of local income and employment.

The seven land management goals of Stewardship:

1. Road and trail maintenance or obliteration to restore or maintain water quality
2. Soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values
3. Setting of prescribed fires to improve the composition, structure, condition, and health of stands or to improve wildlife habitat
4. Removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce fire hazards, or achieve other land management objectives
5. Watershed restoration and maintenance
6. Restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish habitat, and
7. Control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishing native plant species.

There are a number of factors that suggest when stewardship authority is the right tool to use, including,

- Ability to bundle several contracts into one and treat at a larger landscape scale
- Ability to trade goods for services
- Contract terms of up to 10 years
- Up-front collaboration with government (Federal, State, local), Tribal governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and interested groups or individuals
- There are organizations interested in completing restoration treatments through a mutually beneficial agreement.



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Two Stewardship Examples

1. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF)

The NWTF was an early adopter of the stewardship agreement tool. They have partnered on more than 85 projects nationally. Below are some of the benefits they have found to using stewardship agreements

Overall, stewardship authority:

- Enhances the pace, scope, adaptability, and financial feasibility of restoration projects
- Harnesses collaboratives to build trust and community support to accomplish stewardship work

Community Involvement

- The NWTF has partnered with local communities to plan and implement work in National Forests. This type of local management fosters local pride and care for public lands.
- The stewardship authority can directly enlist volunteer labor and in-kind donations, decreasing cash costs while increasing local involvement.

Increased Funding

- Projects can combine the timber value, Forest Service funds, and partner match to leverage more funds for restoration work.

Increased Efficiency and Adaptability

- The stewardship authority administers both timber and service work, which increases project efficiency and coherence.
- Coupling timber and service work under one agreement also adds administrative efficiencies for Forest Service.
- Timber money can be used outside of sale area boundary.
- Agreements can last 10 years, but they allow for annual modifications.

2. Camp Shelby, Mississippi

Camp Shelby is the largest state-owned military training site in the nation, much of which lies in the DeSoto National Forest. In a unique partnership between the Forest Service, the Mississippi National Guard, and The Nature Conservancy, an immense amount of restoration work has been carried out that has improved forest conditions and benefited rare species habitat, while also improving space and conditions for military training.

Lessons

- Partnerships with the Forest Service and other agencies is very important in making an all lands approach work.
- Stewardship is not the right tool everywhere.
- Partners cannot profit from stewardship contracts. This is a common misperception.
- Stewardship can enable significant leverage in funds and other resources.
- Stewardship contracts allow restoration projects to be flexible.

Resources

- [Stewardship Authority Overview, from NFF](#)
- [Forest Service presentation on Stewardship End Result Contracting](#)
- [Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 – Renewable Resources Handbook, Chapter 60 – Stewardship Contracting](#)



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