

Forest Products Modernization Fact Sheet



Forest Products Modernization

Forest Products Modernization is an overarching effort to examine how we, as U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service leadership, train our employees, reform Forest Service policy, increase the use of technology, and adjust processes to improve efficiency. Forest products include sawlogs, pulpwood, biomass, other round wood products, and firewood as well as “special forest products” such as medicinal herbs, fungi, and edible fruits and nuts. In some cases, forest products are a byproduct of restoration treatments. To improve how we provide these products, we are:

- Examining how we can leverage updated or new training strategies, materials, and methods.
- Identifying redundant processes, policies, rules, and regulations associated with our forest products delivery system.
- Focusing on improving efficiency by strengthening project design and implementation, integrating public engagement, incorporating innovation advances in technology, enhancing communications, and working closely with our partners and staff to identify new ways to accomplish our mission.
- Continuing to follow the law and deliver science-based, high-quality planning and analysis that leads to sound land management decisions and honors stewardship responsibilities.



Our Goals

The Forest Products Modernization effort is designed to 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 products delivery. Our goals for Forest Products Modernization are to:

- Align our practices, policies, and guidance to be more agile, flexible, and adaptable to better meet current and future forest improvement goals.
- Improve forest conditions, meet forest restoration needs, create sustainable landscapes, and increase the amount of forest products coming from National Forest System lands. This effort will help us become more efficient and be the strongest forest products program in the country.
- Identify actions that make restoration harvest work easier and develop an aggressive schedule for their implementation over the short term. In addition, we will complete a shared, long-term, national approach to modernizing the delivery of forest products by winter 2019.



Need for Change

Massive wildfires, changing climate, insect damage, disease, drought, and other forces require us to rethink our forest management practices, including our approach to timber production. Our systems and processes that have served us well in the past need to continue to evolve to keep up with the best available science, changes in authorities, technology, markets, and stewardship ideals. Evolving areas that we can benefit from include:

- Supporting rural and urban communities and economies in a way that leverages or increases our forest improvement treatments.
- Fully using, across the agency, new authorities, such as the 2014 Farm Bill and its authorization of stewardship contracting and Good Neighbor Authority, that provide more flexibility.
- Finding better methods to increase vegetation restoration treatment. Even with our projected increase in treatment to 3.5 million acres per year, it will take more than 20 years to address the vegetation treatment need on an estimated 80 million acres.



Leveraging Our Workforce and Collaborators

Our ability to improve forest product delivery efficiency is critical to getting more work done on the ground. Today's forest products workforce is 38 percent smaller than in 1980, when it included nearly 3.5 times more professional foresters than today. To address these changes in the workforce and to quickly and efficiently adapt to future forest restoration challenges, we will:

- Continue the work of the Forest Products Modernization Team. Made up of a core group of national-level leaders and a guiding team of staff from all nine regions, the team is inventorying systems that are working well, not working well, or need improvement. Solution teams made up of employees with day-to-day experience with our forest products delivery system are identifying and evaluating innovative solutions.
- Embrace the value of collaborating with Tribes, scientists, industry, environmental groups, other government agencies, and the communities we serve.
- Work with our partners to support jobs, rural economies, milling operations, and the development of new infrastructure needed to treat additional acreage.



Forest Products Modernization as a National Priority

This effort is consistent with USDA strategic goals and supports Forest Service National Priority #4: Improving the condition of forests and grasslands. It is also a National Forest System focus area alongside Environmental Analysis and Decision Making, which aims to get more work done on the ground by increasing the efficiency and reducing the cost of our environmental analysis and decision-making processes.



Forest Products and Opportunities for Change

As we examine training, policy reform, technology efficiencies, and systems and business opportunities in all aspects of forest product delivery, we are considering several areas ripe for change:

- Personnel, recruitment, staffing, and training
- Sale layout, including transportation and logging systems
- Timber sale accounting, scaling, and accountability
- Certification
- Appraisals
- Contracting and permitting
- Project and program management
- Overhead rates and trust funds
- Information management
- Forest products utilization and available markets
- Silviculture

For more information, visit [Forest Products](http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/products)
<http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/products>.



Lumber, produced by milling of logs. USDA Forest Service photo.

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