

Healthy Forests and Stewardship Contracts

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Healthy Forests Initiative

- The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 (P.L. 108-148), contains a variety of provisions to speed up hazardous-fuel reduction and forest restoration projects on Federal, Tribal, State, and private lands that are at risk of wildland fire and/or insect and disease epidemics.

With Respect to Removing Hazardous Fuels, HFRA:

- Provides authority for expedited vegetation treatments on certain types of USFS and BLM lands that:
 - a) are at risk of wildland fire
 - b) have experienced windthrow, blowdown, or ice storm damage
 - c) are currently experiencing disease or insect epidemics or,
 - d) are at imminent risk of such epidemics because of conditions on adjacent lands.

With Respect to Removing Hazardous Fuels, HFRA:

- Provides expedited environmental analyses of HFRA projects.
- Provides administrative review before decisions are issued on proposed HFRA on USFS lands.
- Contains requirements governing the maintenance and restoration of old-growth forest stands when the USFS and BLM carry out HFRA projects in such stands.

With Respect to Removing Hazardous Fuels, HFRA:

- Requires HFRA projects on USFS and BLM land to maximize retention of larger trees in areas other than old-growth stands, consistent with the objective of restoring fire resilient stands and protecting “at-risk” communities and Federal lands.
- Requires collaboration between Federal agencies and local communities, particularly when Community Wildfire Protection Plans are prepared.

With Respect to Removing Hazardous Fuels, HFRA:

- Requires using at least 50% of the dollars allocated to HFRA projects to protect areas adjacent to communities at risk of wildland fire (WUI).
- Requires performance to be monitored when agencies conduct hazardous fuel reduction projects and encourages multiparty monitoring that includes communities and other diverse stakeholders (other citizens and Tribes).

With Respect to Removing Hazardous Fuels, HFRA:

- Encourages courts to expedite judicial review of legal challenges to HFRA projects.
- Directs that when courts consider a request for an injunction on an HFRA-authorized project, they balance the short term and long-term environmental effects of undertaking the project against the effects of taking no action.

In Addition HFRA:

- Encourages biomass removal from public and private lands.
- Provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to improve water quality and address watershed issues on non-Federal lands.
- Authorizes large-scale silvicultural research
- Authorizes the acquisition of Healthy Forest reserves on private lands to promote recovery of T&E species, and improve biodiversity and carbon sequestration.
- Directs the establishment of monitoring and early warning systems for insect and disease outbreaks.

Stewardship Contracting



Important to define “Stewardship”

- Restorative or maintenance work in ecosystems such as watershed restoration and maintenance, road obliteration for sediment control, wildlife habitat improvements, fuel load reductions, timber stand improvements, and insect/disease protection
- In the past, these stewardship projects were completed largely within the confines of timber sale contracts.
- Revenues generated within these sales provided the funds necessary for stewardship work.

Purpose of a Stewardship Contract

- Provides another tool for vegetative treatments and fuels reduction
- Will help improve the ability to accomplish important forest & rangeland health, land restoration, and rehabilitation.
- Can facilitate implementation of HFRA and National Fire Plan.



Stewardship Contracting

Definition:

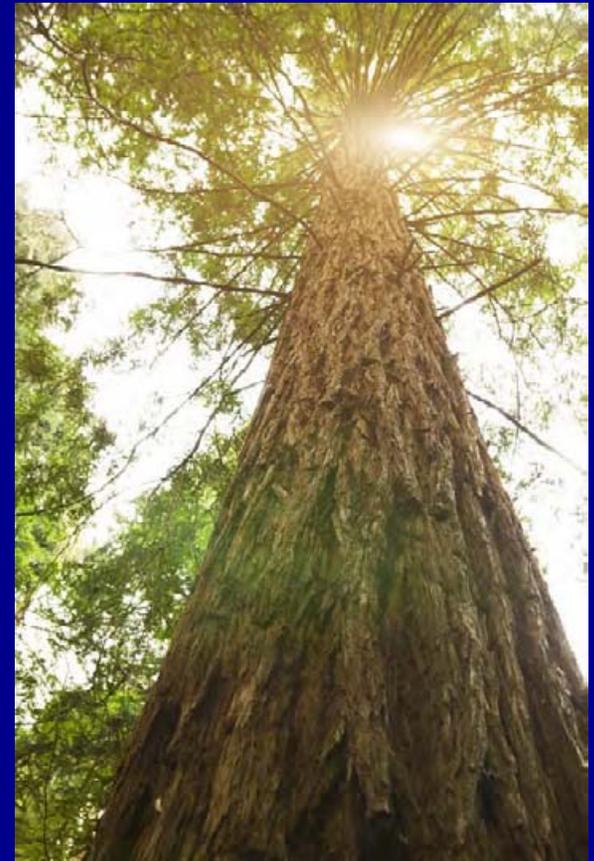
A performance based service contract in which many different tasks are combined into one contract, to make the work more efficient on the job-site, and quality end-results are emphasized. Reducing management costs by exchanging goods for services, selecting local contractors on a best value basis, and long-term contract periods are also authorized.

Stewardship Contracting

- The USFS and BLM received new authority to implement stewardship contracting and agreements in the 2003 appropriations act (P.L. 108-7). Provisions under this authority include:
 - Allows for the exchange of goods for services
 - Facilitates land restoration and enhancement efforts by using value of traded goods for important work on the ground
 - Requires contracts to be awarded based on “best value”
 - Contracting period up to 10 years may be utilized

Provision also allows:

- For early collaboration by public, contractors, and federal agencies to identify local community needs. “Local community” is defined by the local management agency.



Two Types of Stewardship Contracts

1. **Performance Based Contracts:** Projects that treat hazard fuels and generate low value material that will be removed from the project area.
2. **Integrated Resource Contract:** Project involves the removal of high value products (saw timber) and the accomplishment of various land management activities

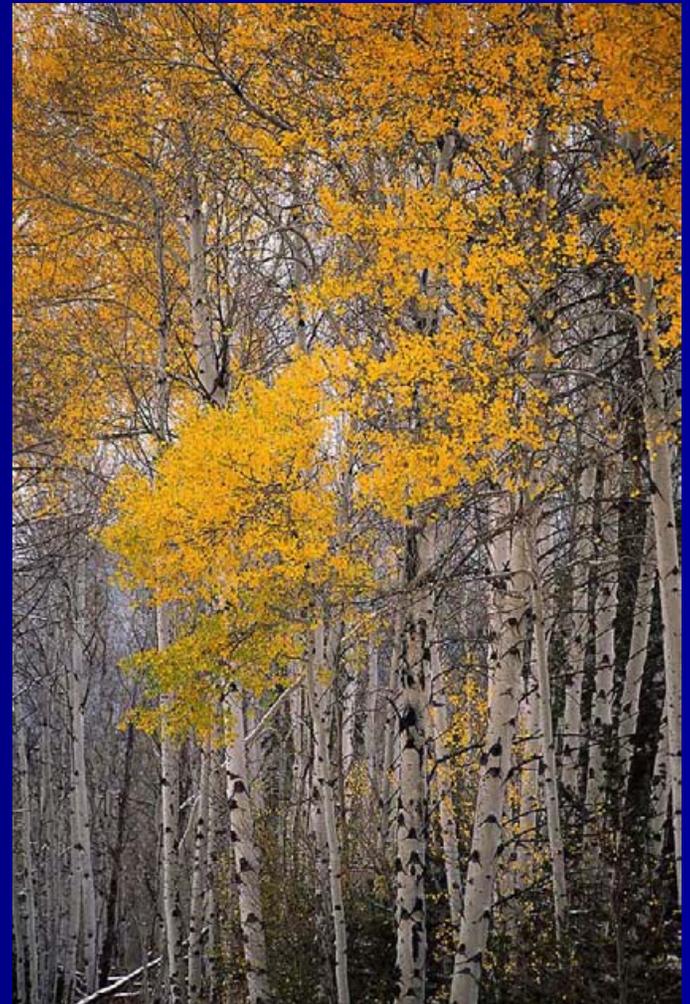
Benefit to Indian Tribes



- May improve forest conditions adjacent to reservation boundaries.
- Provides for expanded and early project consultation.
- May support tribal economic enterprises, and/or establish opportunities for new or expanded tribal forest industries.

Benefit to Indian Tribes

- Tribal Communities and resources may be better protected by treatments, and may be included in large landscape scale treatments.
- Tribal entities can and should participate in multi-party monitoring activities.



Examples of Tribal Involvement in Stewardship Contracting

- **Manidu Stewardship Project, Plumas National Forest,** The objectives of this project are to advance the knowledge about Native American forest stewardship using traditional ecological knowledge to enhance vegetative diversity and improve forest health.

Examples of Tribal Involvement in Stewardship Contracting

- **Mescalero Apache Tribe, 16 Springs Stewardship Project, Lincoln National Forest,** proposal made by Tribe under the Tribal Forest Land Protection Act. 16,000 acre project will contribute to the central priority of restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and restoring natural ecologic processes across a range of forest vegetation types. The project provides forest products to the local community and enhance watershed conditions.

Informational Sites

- **USFS Stewardship Contracting Webpage:**
<http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/projects/stewardship/newauthority/index.shtml>
- **BLM Stewardship Contracting Webpage:**
http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/forest_initiative/stewardship_contracting/
- **Stewardship Contracting Projects (by state)**
<http://www.healthyforests.gov/initiative/map.html>
- **Stewardship Contracting Forms:**
http://fsweb.rl.fs.us/forest/land_stewardship/lsc_index.shtml