

# Stewardship End Result Contracting Projects Vision, Principles, and Key Messages

US Department  
of Agriculture  
**Forest Service**



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## ***Vision***

Section 323 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2003, Public Law 108-7, authorizes the USDA Forest Service (FS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to undertake, for a period of 10 years “stewardship end results contracting projects.” In extending authority that had been available only to the Forest Service on a limited pilot basis, Congress has entrusted agency land managers with a flexible and highly valuable tool. We expect this tool to be used by local land managers to implement projects that have been developed in collaboration with local communities and which will primarily improve forest or rangeland health, restore and rehabilitate recreation facilities and fish and wildlife habitat, and reduce hazardous fuel. Beyond that, stewardship contracting for vegetative treatment and fuel reduction will help the agencies and their State, tribal, and local partners implement the President’s Healthy Forest Initiative and the National Fire Plan. We will show through our actions that Congress’s belief in the two agencies is justified by using stewardship contracting responsibly.

## ***Principles***

- Up-front collaboration with States, Tribes, and local communities is essential in identifying and agreeing on resource management outcomes.
- NEPA analysis will be completed for every project.
- ESA consultation will occur, as needed, on every project.
- Projects will meet the direction of Forest Land Management Plans.
- Agency wilderness and roadless area policies will be adhered to.
- The agency will maintain project control.
- We will include third parties in our program monitoring.
- This authority will be considered primarily for projects where the objectives are to meet stewardship objectives.
- Projects will be subject to agency appeal and dispute resolution procedures.
- We will use a diverse group of contractors including communities, Tribes, companies, and non-governmental organizations.
- Any funds received that exceed the cost of the project can be invested in additional environmental activities.
- Congress provided the agencies all the necessary legal authority to use this tool.
- We will refine our instruments and improve our skills to most effectively use stewardship contracting. We will use Lessons Learned from the pilot in developing guidance for the program.

## *Key Messages*

1. The expanded authority for using stewardship end results contracts will have important benefits for public land management as well as benefits for states, counties, and local communities.
  - Collaboration with the states and local communities is essential.
  - Allows both agreements and contracts with private or other public entities; provides opportunity to partner with conservation groups, Tribes, municipalities or others.
  - Actively manages public lands to achieve land management goals that meet local and rural community goals.
  - Key features:
    - allows exchange of goods for services
    - facilitates land restoration and enhancement efforts by using receipts for important work on the ground
    - awards contracts based on “best value”
    - contracting period of up to 10 years may be utilized; this should help prospective contractors qualify for and obtain loans and equipment
    - opportunities for local communities to respond to contract proposals
2. Stewardship contracting is another tool needed by forest managers.
  - The FS land management activities have evolved over the last 15-20 years. Commercial timber harvest is 10-20% of previous levels and is now concentrated on forest health and non-traditional products.
  - Stewardship contracts will help improve our ability to accomplish important forest health, land restoration and rehabilitation, and recreation and wildlife and fish habitat improvement work.
  - Provides yet another tool available for vegetative treatments and fuel reductions and can facilitate portions of the 10-year implementation strategy of the National Fire Plan.
3. Authorization does not materially change the scope of landscape projects and did not change appropriations or come with earmarked funds.
  - NEPA, ESA and all environmental laws will be followed in project development
  - Projects will be put together with public participation and will be subject to the appropriate review processes in place.
  - Rules regarding the management of Wilderness and Roadless Areas are unchanged.
  - Land Management Plans still apply.
  - Projects will be administered by contracting officers and inspectors
4. Section 323 requires monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.
  - Requires that a multiparty monitoring and evaluation process be developed.
  - Participants may include cooperative government agencies, tribal governments, or any interested groups or individuals.
  - Requires annual reporting to congress.