



## Stewardship Contracting Communication Talking Points



*U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service*

*U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management*

### ***Vision***

The goal of stewardship contracting is to assist in enhancing and restoring landscapes wherever such projects are undertaken. The focus is on what we leave behind – an improved land health. 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 critical tool to implement projects to achieve land management goals that have been developed in collaboration with local communities. As stated in Public Law 108-7, the objective of these projects will be to improve forest or rangeland health; restore or maintain water quality; improve fish and wildlife habitat; and reduce hazardous fuels that pose risks to communities and ecosystem values. We will work with local communities to create jobs, develop new business opportunities, and provide healthier landscapes on the public lands. These authorities will help the agencies and their State, Tribal, and local partners to better implement the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the National Fire Plan.

### ***Principles – what stewardship contracting is***

- We will emphasize on-the-ground results.
- We will collaborate up-front with States, Tribes, local communities, and other interested parties in identifying and agreeing on resource management outcomes and maintaining strong relationships of trusts with the public.
- We will complete the appropriate NEPA process for every project.
- We will comply with all environmental laws such as Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and Clean Air Act.
- Projects will meet the direction of applicable agency land use plans.
- We will follow management policies relating to existing special designations (e.g., Wilderness, Inventoried Roadless Areas).
- We will approve project design and maintain project control.
- Sale of any by-products or other materials designated for removal that result from these restoration activities will be a secondary objective to the restoration goals.
- We will include third parties in our program monitoring.
- We will utilize this authority for projects where the objectives are to improve landscape conditions.
- Projects will be subject to agency appeal and dispute resolution procedures.
- We will work with a diverse group of potential contractors including local governments, communities, Tribes, companies, and non-governmental organizations.
- We will apply any excess receipts toward additional stewardship projects.
- We will work with communities of interest to develop guidelines to implement the program.

### ***What stewardship contracting is not***

- A stand alone initiative or program needing increased staffing or overhead.
- A replacement for existing timber sale programs.
- A mechanism to reduce the public's role.
- A relinquishment of decision making authorities or management responsibilities.

We will refine our instruments and improve our skills to most effectively use stewardship contracting. We will use lessons learned from the pilots in developing guidance for the program.