



## Procuring Wood and Biomass from California National Forests

### Introduction

The Forest Service and the State of California have agreed to increase the pace and scale of forest management to one million acres per year.<sup>i</sup> USDA has committed to reducing wildfire risk across the west with an additional 20 million acres of forest management on National Forest lands over 10 years.<sup>ii</sup> These management activities are expected to produce millions of tons of woody biomass that could be available for use in wood products and energy production. This guide is meant to help potential users of forest biomass navigate the biomass procurement process.

### National Forest Management

The Forest Service manages National Forest land to improve forest health, increase forest resilience, and provide forest products, among other multi-resource objectives. This active forest management produces forest products including sawlogs and other biomass available to industry.<sup>iii</sup> Forest products from the National Forests must be sold through contracts in accordance with federal law and policy.<sup>iv</sup> As it relates to Forest Products, there are three major categories of contracts and agreements with the Forest Service:

- **Timber Sale Contracts and Permits<sup>v</sup>:** These contracts include the removal of commercial forest products. Biomass removal may be required or be subject to agreement between the Forest Service and the purchaser of the sale. A purchaser will typically agree to biomass removal if they have a purchaser for the biomass, otherwise biomass may be subsequently offered after the commercial treatment through restoration contracts. Timber sale contracts are awarded through a competitive bidding process. Permits, similar to contracts, can be for commercial or personal use but are small in scope and size and are direct sale.
- **Integrated Resource Timber Contracts (IRTC)<sup>vi</sup>:** An IRTC often includes the bundling of forest stewardship project activities with the removal of forest products. Contracts are awarded based on the best value of submitted proposals. These stewardship contracts allow for the value of product removed to cover certain stewardship projects, often termed “goods for services”.
- **Integrated Resource Service Contracts (IRSC):** An IRSC includes forest stewardship service work items that cannot be fully covered by revenues generated from harvested material. These contracts include paid work. Contracts are awarded based on the best value to the government. Submitted proposals may generate forest products, primarily biomass. Please see the R5 Stewardship Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) opportunity<sup>vii</sup>.
- **Stewardship Agreements:** The Forest Service enters into stewardship agreements with partners (generally nonprofits) that permit the partner to complete forest management activities on National Forest land. Project-specific work under those agreements may result in the removal of forest products. Much like Forest Service timber sale contracts, competitively bid timber contracts are arranged by the partner.

Entities wishing to procure wood and biomass from a National Forest can contract directly with the Forest Service, by being a successful bidder on a contract, buy a permit, or purchase material through businesses and organizations holding those contracts, permits and agreements with the Forest Service (i.e. work with the loggers and operators to procure logs and/or biomass).

### Working with Purchasers, Contractors, and Partners

Loggers or licensed timber operators (LTO), forest contractors, and wood industry businesses: These entities with experience and expertise in forestry, logging, and related fields typically bid for and complete timber contracts and service contracts.

Partners (ex. States, Tribes, non-profit organizations): These groups work with the Forest Service to perform stewardship work through Stewardship Agreements, Good Neighbor Authority, and Tribal Forest Protection Act projects. These partners often contract with loggers and other operators to complete the forest management activities and facilitate product removal.

## Other sources of biomass

Forest biomass is a seasonal and variable product. Many facilities augment their biomass feedstock with other forms or supplies of biomass. Here are some additional opportunities to augment biomass needs.

- Non-federal forest biomass: biomass from forest management on state or private land
- Wood processing residuals: waste products from wood processing facilities includes sawdust, shavings, bark, chips, non-conforming logs.
- Urban biomass: woody biomass from urban tree care and yard waste
- Agricultural biomass: woody biomass including orchard removal waste, nut shells, & fruit pits

## Additional Resources

- [U.S. Forest Service Timber Contracting FAQ](#)
- [U.S. Forest Service Timber Sale, Stewardship, and Forest Products Contracts and Permits](#)
- [Timber Sales on National Forests](#)
- [U.S. Forest Service Procurement & Property Services](#)
- [U.S. Forest Stewardship Contracting Overview](#)

**TIPS:** *Keep track of the Timber Sale Program on nearby National Forests. Each Forest has a plan of proposed timber sale contracts and agreements. Contact the Forest Natural Resource Staff, Timber Sale Contracting Officer, or Vegetation Program Manager for each Forest. To identify contracting opportunities, visit the System for Award Management ([www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov)), check online Timber Sales on National Forests and talk to local National Forest timber sale and contracting officers about upcoming offerings.*

**TIPS:** *Establish relationships with prospective Purchasers/Contractors and Partners who are awarded or award contracts and alert them that you are interested in material that could be generated from a timber sale contract, integrated resource contract, or stewardship agreement. Hire a wood procurement professional with experience and relationships in California wood markets to consult or perform wood and biomass procurement responsibilities.*



Figure 2: Ponderosa pine logs harvested from a National Forest in California. Credit: H. Murray



Figure 1: Self-loading log truck with small diameter lodgepole pine logs. Credit: L. Swan

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<sup>i</sup> Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California's Forest and Rangelands Between the State of California and the USDA, Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/8.12.20-CA-Shared-Stewardship-MOU.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> USDA Forest Service, Wildfire Crisis Implementation Plan, FS-1187b, January 2022, [https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs\\_media/fs\\_document/WCS-Implementation-Plan.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs_media/fs_document/WCS-Implementation-Plan.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Sawlog: Higher value logs typically milled into lumber and boards. Minimum size specifications for a sawlog in USFS Region 5 including California are 6" small-end diameter, 10' length, and at least 25 percent sound. Biomass: Any non-sawtimber woody material including, small diameter logs, logging slash, limbs, tops, chips, etc.

<sup>iv</sup> Timber Sale, Stewardship, and Forest Products Contracts and Permits, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/forestmanagement/products/contracts.shtml>

<sup>v</sup> Timber Sale Preparation Handbook, Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2409.18, Chapter 50, Section 53, [https://www.fs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Directives/get\\_dirs/fsh?2409.18](https://www.fs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Directives/get_dirs/fsh?2409.18)

<sup>vi</sup> Renewable Resources Handbook, Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2409.19, Chapter 60, Section 6, [https://www.fs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Directives/get\\_dirs/fsh?2409.19](https://www.fs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Directives/get_dirs/fsh?2409.19)

<sup>vii</sup> <https://sam.gov/opp/1c68385d1dcf4d7b8e869c9c187c1913/view>