

Measuring the Benefits of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program for Local Communities in Northeast Washington FY2012-2015

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About the author

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About the Forest Industry Research Program

The Forest Industry Research Program is located in the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana. The program's work spans the western United States monitoring forest products operations and the industry's size, diversity, and economic impacts.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of Montana was contracted to conduct a study on the utilization of local contractors by the Colville National Forest through the NEW Forest Vision 2020 Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) project. The purpose of the study aimed to identify and measure the opportunities and benefits the NEW Forest Vision 2020 CFLRP project is bringing to communities in the region. The BBER used records of service contracts, timber sale contracts and agreements to characterize the number of local entities (businesses, nonprofits, agencies) involved in meeting the restoration objectives of the CFLRP through the NEW Forest Vision 2020.

The study found that between fiscal years 2012 and 2015 the CFLRP resulted in the investment of over \$4 million dollars via service contracts; the sale of roughly 140 million board feet; and partnerships with 7 organizations including two state agencies, three universities and two non-profits. While these activities are significant and may not have occurred without the program, the benefits received by local communities have been mixed. Service contract records suggest the program

has not had the intended impact of increasing the share of restoration investments reaching local communities and economies. CFLRP spending represented between 31 and 58 percent of annual restoration spending on the Colville National Forest between 2012 and 2015, and the share of contracts and contract dollars going to local businesses was greater for non-CFLRP contracts than CFLRP contracts (20 versus 17 percent, on average). The greatest gains came from Stewardship contracts, for which 41 percent of contracts let through the CFLRP went to local businesses, compared to only 22 percent for all non-CFLRP stewardship contracts. Out-of-State businesses consistently garnered the majority of restoration contract value, accounting for between 55 and 63 percent of total restoration contract dollars.

On the other hand, all of the timber volume sold through the CFLRP was purchased by local mills in Colville and Kettle Falls. Of the nearly 140 million board feet (MMBF) sold, all was sold utilizing stewardship timber contracts allowing the forest to retain the value from the timber and reinvest it in further restoration activities. The timber receipts for these 10 sales were valued at \$13.7 million dollars. In addition to the revenue generated, these mills

likely worked with local logging and forestry companies to conduct the suite of timber harvest and restoration activities included in the integrated stewardship contracts creating additional local benefits.

Finally, the study found that the Forest Service used partnership agreements to engaged a variety of non-federal entities and leveraged federal dollars to accomplish restoration in the NEW Forest Vision 2020 project area. These partners all brought additional cash and in-kind resources to the table and included state agencies, universities and regional or national nonprofits. Partnerships with state agencies were likely for the purposes of meeting ecological objectives, universities were mostly engaged to meet project and collaborative monitoring objectives, and nonprofits were used to

accomplish work on the ground through youth corps and national organizations interested in wildlife habitat. Only one of the partners engaged was local to the impact area.

A number of strategies and suggestions for further leveraging public investments in restoration and promoting the positive impact of CFLRP for local communities are described in the Recommendations section. Suggestions include: increasing the use of stewardship contracting; leveraging new authorities related to best value criteria; closing the gap in Small Business Administration contract set-asides —specifically through the HUB Zone and 8(a) programs; and engaging with local nonprofits, tribes and/or economic development organizations to offer training and build local capacity to conduct work on federal lands.



INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In 2009, Congress passed the Forest Landscape Restoration Act which established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) with the purpose of promoting “the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes through a process that encourages ecological, economic and social sustainability” (Pub. L. 111-11, Sec 4001). The Act goes on to state that a successful proposal will “benefit local economies by providing local employment or training opportunities through contracts, grants, or agreements”. The CFLRP, administered by the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service), provides a unique opportunity for communities to work collaboratively with the Forest Service to prioritize and implement projects that meet the goals defined in the Act (Shultz, Jedd, and Beam 2012).

In 2012, the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC) in Washington State was successful in securing funding for their NEW Forest Vision 2020 landscape restoration project, providing an opportunity to measure the impact of restoration investments on local businesses, communities and economies. The purpose of this study is to quantify and describe local business and organizational participation in the NEW Forest Vision 2020 project and compare the results with non-CFLRP project trends. The results of this study will help guide the development of restoration opportunities that accomplish both forest health and community benefit objectives.

Importance of this Study

Restoration and maintenance of forests and watersheds is increasingly a focus of public land management and, in addition to traditional forest management activities, has the potential to contribute to the economic vitality of local, forest-dependent communities. However, previous studies have shown that the extent to which local communities benefit from restoration and management activities is highly variable. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) provides a unique opportunity to understand the community and economic benefits of a 10-year committed investment in restoration, combined with monitoring and adaptive management, to evaluate what is working and where opportunities exist to increase the share of benefits captured by local communities.

The NEW Forest Vision 2020 project in northeast Washington encompasses approximately one million acres dominated by the Colville National Forest and Colville Indian Reservation and centers on the diverse forests of the Kettle River Range. The project aims to improve watershed conditions; maintain, improve and decommission forest roads; replace culverts to improve fish passage; treat forested areas in the Wildland Urban Interface to protect private property and restore natural fire regimes; treat noxious weeds; improve recreation areas and access; and create jobs and economic opportunity for communities in the region.

Socioeconomic Context

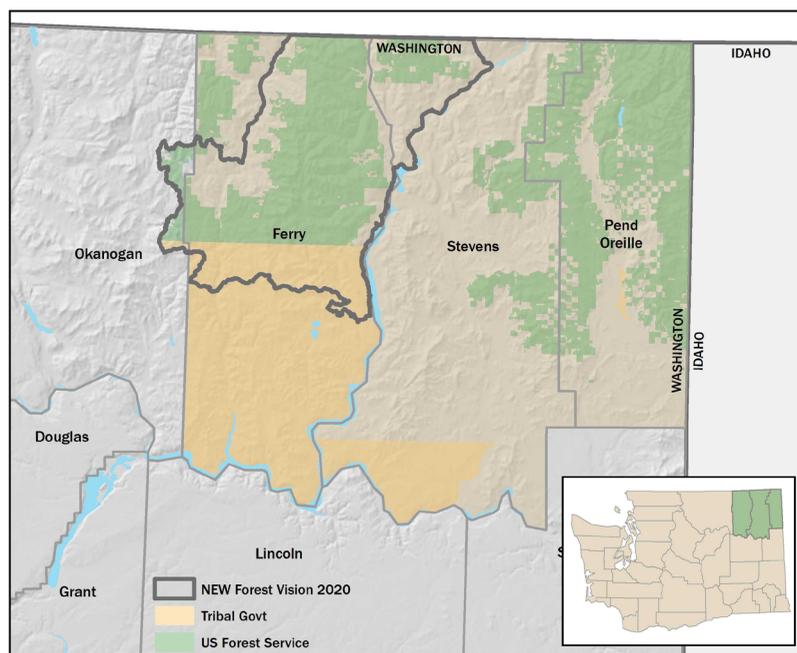
The impact area for the NEW Forest Vision 2020 project includes Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties (see fig. 1). As documented in the forthcoming report from Forest Econ, Inc. (Green, Green, and McKetta 2015), economic activity in the region is heavily concentrated in the Colville-Kettle Falls trade center in Stevens County. The economy is still largely driven by natural resources in the form of logging, wood products manufacturing, and recreation-based activity. As timber harvest levels on national forests in Washington have declined over the last three decades, jobs associated with the removal, transport and processing of timber have also declined. These impacts have been especially hard for communities dependent upon federal land management, such as those in the NEW Forest Vision 2020 impact area. Unemployment in Ferry and Pend Oreille counties are the highest in the state at 8.8 and 7.8 percent, respectively; Stevens County unemployment is not far behind at 6.8 percent (Washington State Employment Security Division 2015).

Factors that can influence the ability of local businesses to capture federal contract opportunities include a number of programs administered by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Since the enactment of the Small Business Act in 1953, the federal government has sought to ensure that a “fair proportion” of federal purchases and contracts go to small businesses (Clark, Moutray, and Saade 2006). This has been accomplished through setting aside a mandated proportion of contracts for

competition only among small businesses. In addition, the SBA 8(a) program and the historically under-utilized business (HUB) zone program require the Forest Service and other federal agencies to set aside contracts for qualified businesses who may be socially, economically, or geographically disadvantaged. In addition, under these two programs, the federal government can also provide sole source opportunities and price evaluation preferences. Owners of businesses that are members of socially disadvantaged groups qualify under the 8(a) program and contractors located in areas of low median household income or high unemployment (or both), such as rural counties, Indian reservations, and selected urban census blocks can qualify under the HUB zone program (Moseley and Toth 2004; US Small Business Administration). There are also a number of small business set-asides that apply to women-owned, veteran-owned and emerging small businesses. Because these programs favor small and potentially rural businesses, they are of particular interest to the study of federal contracting in rural forest-dependent communities.

Many of the forested counties in the inland northwest region including northeastern Washington, north and central Idaho, and northwest Montana, struggle with high unemployment and low wages as evidenced by the high proportion of HUB Zone designated counties. In northeast Washington in particular, Ferry County is a designated HUB Zone county due to high unemployment. Pend Oreille and Stevens counties are also designated

Figure 1--New Forest Vision 2020 Project and Impact Areas



HUB Zone counties, but their designation is set to expire in 2018. In addition, the Colville Indian Reservation is a designated HUB Zone, as are all Indian Reservations. Two adjacent Idaho counties, Bonner and Boundary, are also designated HUB Zones which may increase competition with businesses located in the impact area.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to which local contractors, organizations and manufacturers in the tri-county region are benefiting from CFLRP opportunities and identify opportunities for achieving greater impact. This is accomplished by measuring the rate of local contractor participation in the NEW Forest Vision 2020 CFLRP project and comparing these rates to similar restoration activities occurring in the tri-county impact area. The results of this study will help to identify whether additional steps are needed to improve the retention of CFLRP funds in local communities to accomplish forest health and community benefit objectives. In addition, demonstrating that local economies are benefiting from the CFLRP is important for maintaining and augmenting local

and national support for subsequent program funding.

Defining Local

Local contractors and organizations were defined as those with business addresses in the tri-county impact area of Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties. In addition, contracting trends were analyzed for adjacent counties and the state of Washington to also investigate leakage trends. In this report, leakage refers to those dollars invested by the US Forest Service in the local area that leave the local economy. This first-level leakage represents direct investments in restoration businesses that are lost, but also represents the indirect and induced effect those dollars could have had in the local economy as business and workers purchase goods and services in their communities. To illustrate, studies in Oregon have found that for every \$1 million dollars invested in restoration, an additional \$1.1 to \$1.4 million in impacts occur as those investments circulate in the local economy through the purchasing of materials, supplies, equipment and services and as workers spend their incomes on personal and household goods and services (Nielson-Pincus and Moseley 2013).



MEASURING THE IMPACT OF CFLRP

SERVICE CONTRACTING

Annual contract expenditures for restoration are dependent upon federal appropriations and tend to vary significantly from year to year. In northeastern Washington, investments in restoration have ranged from \$1.1 million to \$2.9 million annually. Between fiscal years 2012 and 2015, the Colville National Forest invested \$9 million in restoration; spending associated with the NEW Forest Vision 2020 accounted for 46 percent of total restoration spending on the Forest. A total of 9 local contractors captured an average of 17 percent of NEW Forest Vision 2020 contract value, for a total of \$0.7 million; in comparison, local contractors captured 28 percent of non-CFLRP contract value, for a total of \$1.4 million. Out-of-State contractors were the largest recipient of contract dollars, capturing 63 percent of CFLRP expenditures and 41 percent of non-CFLRP expenditures. In total, 83 percent (\$3.5 million) of contract dollars obligated through the NEW Forest Vision 2020 project

were lost due to leakage out of the tri-county economy.

Forest Service spending by work type varied widely from year to year. Restoration activities are typically organized according to work type because employment, compensation and other job quality attributes can vary significantly according to the activities being conducted (table 2). For example, equipment-intensive work tends to be very capital intensive and operators are highly skilled, garnering a high hourly wage. Labor-intensive activities tend to be lower on the skill and wage spectrum, but are also low on capital requirements making them accessible to more people. Table 2 provides examples of work activities found within each category.

Table 1 - NEW Forest Vision 2020 contract expenditures by year and contractor location, FY2012-2015

Contractor Location	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	Total
	-----2012 dollars-----				
Local	200,835	38,197	243,678	225,751	708,461
<i>Ferry</i>	126,310	8,342	2,924	8,100	145,676
<i>Pend Oreille</i>	64,600	2,836	50,895	121,016	239,348
<i>Stevens</i>	9,926	27,019	189,859	96,635	323,437
Leakage	562,960	1,379,404	306,710	1,256,258	3,505,332
<i>to Adjacent Counties</i>	207,692	100,659	59,150	50,547	418,048
<i>to Other Counties</i>	126,510	25,096	0	276,933	428,539
<i>to Other States</i>	228,757	1,253,649	247,560	928,777	2,658,744
Total	763,795	1,417,601	550,388	1,482,009	4,213,793
Local	26%	3%	44%	15%	17%
<i>Ferry</i>	17%	1%	1%	1%	3%
<i>Pend Oreille</i>	8%	0%	9%	8%	6%
<i>Stevens</i>	1%	2%	34%	7%	8%
Leakage	74%	97%	56%	85%	83%
<i>to Adjacent Counties</i>	27%	7%	11%	3%	10%
<i>to Other Counties</i>	17%	2%	0%	19%	10%
<i>to Other States</i> 8,866	30%	88%	45%	63%	63%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 - Work Types and Examples

Work Type	Example Activities
Technical	Architecture and Engineering Services; Various natural resource studies and surveys
Equipment-intensive	Maintenance, alteration or repair of roads, streets, bridges (includes road decommissioning); culvert placement; stream restoration
Labor-intensive	Tree planting; Other range/forest improvement; Hand- or mechanical-tree thinning
Supplies	Floating dry docks; mineral construction materials; chemicals
Stewardship	Contracts let using stewardship authority. Often combine sale of products (timber) with acquisition of services. Can generate revenue to fund additional restoration projects

On average, equipment-intensive and labor-intensive contracts have been the leading work types in terms of total contract value, accounting for 44 and 43 percent of spending, respectively, between FY12 and FY15.

Local contractors successfully captured 41 percent of stewardship contracts, 26 percent of equipment-intensive contract dollars, 9 percent of labor-intensive contract dollars, and less than 5 percent of technical and supply dollars (table 3). Out-of-state businesses continued to capture the majority of contract dollars, garnering 63 percent of total investments.

Table 3 - NEW Forest Vision 2020 spending by work type and contractor location, FY2012-2015

Contractor Location	Equipment Intensive	Labor Intensive	Stewardship	Supplies	Technical	Total
----- 2012 Dollars -----						
Local	486,905	156,801	50,895	2,836	11,025	708,461
<i>Ferry</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>134,652</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>11,025</i>	<i>145,676</i>
<i>Pend Oreille</i>	<i>185,617</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>50,895</i>	<i>2,836</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>239,348</i>
<i>Stevens</i>	<i>301,288</i>	<i>22,149</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>323,437</i>
Leakage	1,351,948	1,656,749	71,851	88,000	336,783	3,505,332
<i>to Adjacent Counties</i>	<i>274,105</i>	<i>143,944</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>418,048</i>
<i>to Other Counties in WA</i>	<i>20,685</i>	<i>220,150</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>88,000</i>	<i>99,705</i>	<i>428,539</i>
<i>to Other States</i>	<i>1,057,159</i>	<i>1,292,656</i>	<i>71,851</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>237,079</i>	<i>2,658,744</i>
Total	1,838,853	1,813,550	122,746	90,836	347,808	4,213,793
Local	26%	9%	41%	3%	3%	17%
<i>Ferry</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>Pend Oreille</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>Stevens</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>8%</i>
Leakage	74%	91%	59%	97%	97%	83%
<i>to Adjacent Counties</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>to Other Counties in WA</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>97%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>to Other States</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>63%</i>
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Small Business Administration Set-Aside Programs

The vast majority of contracts let by the NEW Forest Vision 2020 CFLRP project were set aside solely for small businesses (87 percent by value). Local businesses captured 19 percent of contracts set aside for small businesses, down from 25 percent for similar contracts not let through the CFLRP. Businesses located in other states were most successful at capturing all contracts regardless of set-aside. Businesses in adjacent counties had significantly more success capturing contracts set aside for HUB Zone businesses--even though all three counties in the local impact area are designated HUB Zones. None of the NEW Forest Vision 2020 contracts set aside for HUB Zone businesses went to contractors in the impact area, even though 9 local businesses with experience conducting restoration on public lands were HUB Zone certified (see table 4).

Contract and Business Size Trends

Information on contract and business size trends can help increase understanding about the capacity of businesses engaged in forest and restoration work, and can help agencies tailor contracts to fit the needs of local businesses. The study found that local businesses tended to be smaller, employ fewer people and be awarded smaller contracts.

Whereas 100 percent of the local businesses conducting restoration in northeastern Washington had between 1 and 10 employees, only 44 percent of businesses from other states were in this category.

In addition, the average award size for local contractors was just over half of that for out-of-state contractors at \$35,423 and \$60,426, respectively. Similar to capture rates, average award size varied across work types as well as by contractor location. Average award size was greatest for equipment-intensive contract obligations and lowest for technical work. Notable discrepancies in average award size by contractor location were evident in all work type categories, with award sizes to non-local businesses as much as 7 times those to local businesses.

Sixty-five percent of the contracts captured by local firms were less than \$25,000 in value, and 25 percent were under \$5,000. In comparison, contracts captured by non-local firms were significantly more weighted to the higher end with 66 percent greater than \$25,000 and 16 percent over \$100,000 in value. Across all contracts, the highest proportion (42 percent) of service contracts were valued between \$25,000 and \$99,999. However, local contractors were most likely to have a contract in the \$5,000 to \$24,999 size class.



Table 4--Restoration Contractor Capacity in Northeast Washington

Business	County	Activity	No. of contracts	CFLRP?	No. of Employees	8(a) certified	HUBZone certified	Veteran-owned	Woman-owned	Small disadvantaged business
Restoration										
AM EXCAVATING, LLC	Stevens	Equipment	2	Y	1-10		Y			
ANTOINE RC TRUCKING LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY	Stevens	Equipment	3		1-10	Y	Y			Y
BIG FOOT TRANSPORTATION, INC.	Ferry	Stewardship	1		1-10					
BLAINE K LINDGREN	Ferry	Labor	7	Y	1-10					
C & J FORESTRY	Pend Oreille	Labor	1		1-10					
COLPITTS, CAROL	Pend Oreille	Labor	2		1-10				Y	
COLVILLE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC	Stevens	Equipment	10	Y	1-10		Y			
D G SERVICES	Stevens	Tech/Labor	11	Y	1-10					
DEESE, DONALD	Ferry	Technical	1		1-10					
GORDON, REBECCA LYNN	Ferry	Technical	1		1-10				Y	
GROTH, JAMES V	Stevens	Technical	4		1-10			Y		
HANSEN LOGGING, LLC	Stevens	Equipment	4		11-50		Y			
HIGH ROCK NURSERY, LLC	Ferry	Labor	14	Y	1-10		Y			Y
HINMAN ECOLOGICAL SERVICES LLC	Ferry	Technical	1	Y	1-10					Y
INNES SR SHANE	Ferry	Labor	1		1-10	Y	Y			Y
J L SHERMAN EXCAVATING & ROCK CRUSHING	Pend Oreille	Supplies	1		11-50				Y	
KAMSTRA, KENNETH	Stevens	Labor	3		1-10					
KENNETH MAUPIN LOGGING CONSTRUCTION	Pend Oreille	Equipment	4		1-10					
LOON LAKE SAND & GRAVEL, LLC	Pend Oreille	Equipment	1		1-10					
LORIES TREE THINNING	Stevens	Labor	1		1-10		Y		Y	Y
LOST CREEK LOGGING	Pend Oreille	Stewardship	2		1-10					
MCNICHOLL, GEORGE	Stevens	Labor	1		1-10			Y		
MIKE COLLIER	Stevens	Labor	2	Y	1-10					
MISCHKE, DAN	Stevens	Labor	3		1-10					
MOORE, RICHARD	Stevens	Technical	3		None					
MYCOTROPE	Pend Oreille	Technical	6		None					
NORTHEAST WASHINGTON WILDLIFE REHABILITATION SOCIETY	Stevens	Technical	1		1-10					
POND, WAYNE LOGGING INC	Stevens	Stewardship	2		1-10					
SILVER KING MINING & MILLING	Pend Oreille	Supplies	1	Y	1-10					
TERRY'S TRACTOR SERVICES	Stevens	Labor	2		1-10				Y	
VAAGEN BROS. LUMBER, INC.	Stevens	Stewardship	8		Over 100					
VERSATILE INDUSTRIES, INC.	Pend Oreille	Equipment	12	Y	1-10		Y			
VINCENT & SON EXCAVATION, LLC	Ferry	Equipment	1		1-10			Y		
WILLIAMSON CONSULTING	Stevens	Labor	2		1-10		Y			

TIMBER SALES

Between FY 2012 and FY 2015, 10 timber sales were sold through the NEW Forest Vision 2020 CFLRP project, accounting for over 130 million board feet (MMBF) in total volume. To date, all timber sold through the NEW Forest Vision 2020 project has utilized stewardship authority, allowing for timber revenue to be re-invested in restoration service work in the project area. The value of these 10 stewardship timber sales was nearly \$14 million; all were sold to local mills in Colville and Kettle Falls. Based on research by Sorenson et al (in press), an estimated 76 jobs are supported annually depending upon the volume of timber harvested and processed in a given year. The jobs supported include employment by forestry and logging contractors, sawmills, facilities that utilize mill residues and biomass energy facilities. However, the full effect is greater as these dollars circulate and are distributed throughout the local or regional economy.

AGREEMENTS

Based on data reported by the Colville National Forest, a total of 10 agreements were signed with seven different organizations including two state agencies, three universities and two nonprofits. The value of these agreements totalled \$679,327 while partners contributed an additional \$167,749 in the form of cash or in-kind resources, thus increasing the impact of limited federal dollars. Partnerships with state agencies were used to meet ecological objectives, while universities were mostly engaged to meet the monitoring objectives of the project and collaborative, and nonprofits were used to accomplish work on the ground through youth corps and national organizations interested in wildlife habitat. One of the partners engaged was a local unit of a state agency, but overall impact to local communities and economies was limited.



DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the economic and community objectives of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program have not been fully realized in northeastern Washington. While the data used for this analysis are largely descriptive (the “what”), the data do provide clues which, when combined with similar research in other areas, can help to stitch together a picture explaining the factors and forces causing these trends (the “why”).

It should be noted that the data used for this study are limited to prime awards made to businesses and organizations and do not capture subsequent subcontracting of specific activities. Furthermore, the data do not represent the full “ripple effect” contract dollars have on communities in northeastern Washington. How these investments equate to direct jobs and labor income, as well as other indirect and induced effects, have been estimated by the US Forest Service using economic impact models such as TREAT. In addition, a more tailored model has been created by Forest Econ, Inc. using key assumptions from this report. Overall, the effect on local communities is assumed to be greatest when local contractors are capturing the work opportunities

and dollars are flowing to equipment dealers and other providers of products and services.

SERVICE CONTRACTING

This study identified 34 local businesses that had been awarded at least one restoration contract in the preceding 8 years. Most had more than one during the study period. However, out-of-state contractors—primarily from neighboring Idaho—garnered the largest share of restoration contracts and contract dollars.

A number of factors could explain why local businesses are not successfully competing against out-of-state contractors. First, local businesses may be operating at full capacity and not able to take on additional contract work given their smaller size. Alternatively, the contracts being offered may not be packaged or sized to meet the skills and capacities of local businesses, thus limiting the pool of potential bidders. Given that local businesses tend to be small (1-10 employees), attention should be paid to the size and length of contracts, as well as making sure the bonding requirements are not overly burdensome, in order to increase local businesses ability to compete.

As mentioned previously, agencies are required to set aside a mandated proportion of their contract opportunities for targeted business types including: small, small disadvantaged, veteran-owned, minority-owned, woman-owned and HUB Zone certified businesses. There is no geographic requirement within SBA program set-asides to target funds to local communities. However, the higher-than-average likelihood that a restoration business is small and located in an economically-disadvantaged area should provide them with a competitive edge when competing for contracts set aside for small and HUB Zone businesses. However, research here and in other regions has not shown this to be the case (see Moseley and Toth 2004).

To address why the Forest Service has not directed more contract opportunities to local businesses it is important to understand the bounds of federal government contracting authority. While programs such as the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program may have lofty intentions of improving conditions for rural, forest-dependent communities, federal agencies are still confined to the limitations of federal rules and policies, such as the Federal Acquisition Regulations, which dictate the way the federal government procures goods and services from the private sector.

One promising development related to federal contracting policy was the inclusion of language in the FY15 appropriations bill authorizing the Forest Service to extend the local preference provision of best value in stewardship contracting authority to all service contracts. This authority has been extended through FY17 (see Appendix A for more information and resources for using this authority).

STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING

Stewardship contracting authority is the only permanent contracting authority that allows the Forest Service to award contracts based on best value rather than lowest bid criteria and includes utilization of local workers and/or businesses as a component of best value. In its FY2013

Budget Justification, the Forest Service emphasized that “stewardship contracting is expected to be the primary instrument for implementing these (CFLRP) projects” (D’Ambrosio 2013). However, this has not been the case. While all of the (10) timber sales offered through the CFLRP were packaged as stewardship contracts, only 15 of the 359 service contracts were offered as stewardship contracts. Broadly, it appears that there is a general shortage of tools with “teeth” to provide procurement staff with new and better mechanisms for making sure that local, forest-dependent communities are reaping the benefits of activities happening in their backyard.

TIMBER SALES

The sale of timber using stewardship authority generated \$13.7 million dollars in receipts that were then available to be reinvested in additional stewardship items or activities on the forest. This is perhaps the greatest selling point of the program in terms of meeting the objectives of the CFLRP: restoring forests with commercial treatments, sending products to local mills, supporting jobs and retaining those dollars to reinvest in additional work.

AGREEMENTS

As non-competitive, mutual benefit transactions, agreements can be an effective way to meet community, economic and resource objectives by partnering with local nonprofit, community-based organizations. Opportunities to create social and livelihood benefits are enhanced when the project and implementation strategies selected align with community needs and priorities (Davis and Moseley 2012). As documented by Davis and Moseley (2012) these partnerships can be opportunities to share the risk of innovation and experimentation, but they require a strong nonprofit partner with program delivery and fundraising capacity.

In the absence of a strong local partner, agreements may be a way to build relationships and capacity by starting with smaller, less complex projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Make Full Use of Best Value Criteria.

Until recently, stewardship contracting was the only tool with which the Forest Service could include local rural community benefit in its evaluation criteria. Within the FY15 appropriations bill, congress provided authority for the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to extend the use of best value criteria, including local community benefit criteria, to all acquisitions. Region five developed a number of resources for acquisition staff which can be found in Appendix A. At a minimum, evaluation criteria for all CFLRP contracts should include points for utilization of local businesses, subcontractors and workers located in the tri-county area.

2. Use Agreements to Meet Local Objectives.

Engage local community organizations in identifying opportunities to build the capacity of the local workforce and business sector to engage in restoration activities on public lands. The following four recommendations are ideally suited to being accomplished through partnerships. A good summary of the various types of agreements and how they can be used to meet community and forest service objectives can be found at ewp.uoregon.edu under Publications, Working Paper 38: The social and livelihood benefits of USDA Forest Service agreements with community-based organizations.

3. Engage Tribes through the Tribal Forest Protection Act.

This legislation authorizes the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to give special consideration to tribally-proposed stewardship contracting projects on agency lands bordering or adjacent to trust lands. Conversations with the tribes by Forest Econ, Inc. revealed a strong interest by the tribes in engaging in restoration work on public lands. This interest, combined with the SBA's 8(a) program to promote minority-owned businesses and the Tribal Forest

Protection Act (TFPA) could be leveraged to promote economic development in the region.

4. Hold an Annual Contractor/Purchaser Meeting.

Use this meeting as a way for the Forest Service to share information on the contracts expected to be advertised that year, get feedback on how contracts are being packaged and generally gauge interest and capacity to bid on both standard and stewardship contracts. Engage economic development and/or PTACs (Procurement Technical Assistance Centers) and Small Business Development Centers to provide information and resources on how to do business with the federal government and how to participate in Small Business Administration set-aside programs.

5. Investigate Sub-contracting Trends.

In order to enrich the story of how CFLRP is benefiting the local economy, talk to Vaagen Brothers Lumber and other local restoration contractors (see table 9) about their firms subcontracting activity. This may provide some insight into how the direct investments are trickling out into other areas of the economy.

6. Conduct a Workforce Assessment.

To better understand the level of interest and capacity in the tri-county region to meet the needs of the NEW Forest Vision—and restoration in general—a survey of local logging and restoration contractors could be conducted. Information could also be collected on real and perceived barriers to engaging in federal contracting, ideal size and type of contracts, and other topics that could lead to more targeted technical assistance or more appropriately designed or scaled contracts. Resources for conducting a workforce assessment can be found at <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/assess>.

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APPENDIX A

Washington Office Letter to AQM Directors re: Consideration for Local Contractors in Evaluating Proposals, dated July 7, 2014

Region 5 Letter to Staff Directors and Forest Supervisors re: Consideration to Local Contractors in Evaluations, dated August 5, 2014

Example Evaluation Factors for Projects with Appropriated Funding (R5)

Sample Section M for Stewardship Evaluation Factors (R5)



File Code: 6300/1580
Route To: (1580), (6300)

Date: July 7, 2014

Subject: Consideration for Local Contractors in Evaluating Proposals

To: AQM Directors

The Forest Service (FS) may consider local contractors when evaluating proposals, increasing the commitment to local business and communities. Annual appropriation indicated the authorization to consider local contractors residing in and providing employment and training to dislocated/displaced workers in an economically disadvantaged rural community when evaluating bids and proposals; this includes historically timber-dependent areas affected by reduced timber harvesting on federal lands and other forest-dependent rural communities isolated from significant alternative employment opportunities.

Additionally, the FS may award contracts, grants or cooperative agreements to "local non-profit entities, Youth Conservation Corps, or related partnerships with state, local, non-profit youth groups, or small or micro-business or disadvantaged business."

These contracts, grants or cooperative agreements must be for the forest hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring or restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, or habitat restoration or management.

The terms "rural community" and "economically disadvantaged" shall have the same meanings as Public Law 101-624, section 2374. The definitions are located on page 41 of "The Principal Laws Relating to USDA Forest Service and Private Forestry Programs" handbook:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/SPF-CF%20handbook.pdf>.

If the authority is anticipated to be utilized for advertising and awarding contracts to other than the small business, HUBzone, 8(a), or Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business contractors, specifically address this in the market research and in the AD1205 Small Business Clearance request.

If the authority is anticipated to be utilized for contracting, place an announcement in the pre-solicitation; include specific evaluating criteria and responsiveness determinations.



The current authority is in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, Section 427 and is effective through FY 2015. Any questions, please contact Shawn O'Donnell at 703-605-4544 or via email at sodonnell@fs.fed.us.

/s/ George A. Sears
GEORGE A. SEARS
Director, Acquisition Management

cc: WO AQM APC
pdl wo ops aqm directors
pdl wo ops aqm fessaa
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File Code: 1580/6300

Date: August 5, 2014

Route To:

Subject: Consideration to Local Contractors in Evaluations

To: Region 5 Staff Directors and Forest Supervisors

The Forest Service has been given the authority to give consideration to local contractors or cooperators in evaluating offers provided in response to federal projects funded by certain appropriations for defined types of projects. This authority has been granted to the Forest Service through the Consolidated Appropriations Act through fiscal year 2015 at which time the authority may be extended. The language authorizes use of specified evaluation criteria in acquisition instruments to enhance effects on certain rural communities.

The Forest Service may include consideration of local contractors and cooperators who are from, and who provide employment and training for dislocated and displaced workers in economically disadvantaged rural communities including contracts, grants or agreements, for hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring or restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, or habitat restoration or management. This definition includes those historically timber-dependent areas that have been affected by reduced timber harvesting on federal lands and other forest-dependent rural communities isolated from significant alternative employment opportunities. The terms "rural community" and "economically disadvantaged" shall have the same meanings as in Section 2374 of Public Law 101-624.

As with all evaluation criteria, the actual language and relative importance given the criteria is dependent on the circumstances of the work and location of each contract, grant, or cooperative agreement. However, Contract Specialists and Grants and Agreement Specialists should assure that the intent of the statutory authority is reflected in all contracts and agreements for restoration type work.

Additionally, Forest Service Handbook 2409.19, Chapter 60-Stewardship Contracting states that the Contracting Officer shall award all Stewardship Contracts on a best value basis, including consideration of criteria other than cost or price. One of the suggested criteria to use for evaluation in all Stewardship Contracts is the utilization of local workforce (the types of jobs and number of workers to be hired and/or employed from the defined local area in completing required work).

Although this authority can be applied to projects funded through any appropriation provided the specific project meets the defined criteria, this region would like to emphasize the use of this authority specifically for stewardship projects, collaborative forest landscape restoration funded projects, and fire restoration projects, so that we can further align ourselves with the intent of these programs.



For further information on how the Forest Service can utilize this authority, please refer to the following source of information, consideration for local contractors toolbox located at Region 5 AQM webpage:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/workingtogether/contracting>

When using this authority in anticipation of advertising and awarding contracts to other than Small Business, HubZone, 8(a), SDVOSB, and WOSB contractors, please specifically address this in your market research and 1205 Small Business Clearance Request. Also, when using this authority in contracting, please include language in your pre-solicitation, or request for proposal, that indicates use of this authority and includes specific evaluating criteria and responsiveness determinations.



PIERCE E. TUCKER
Director, Acquisition Management

cc: Theodoris Broussard, Kellie Hamilton, Don Tinsley, Sheila Finney, Edmond Avakem,
Andrei Rykoff

Evaluation Factors for Project with Appropriated Funding (R5)

FAR 52.212-1 –Addendum to:

Quoters shall provide the following information:

1. Relevant Past Performance

Contractor shall submit a list of projects (similar to the type in this solicitation) completed within the last 3 years, including the name and phone number of the contract administrator. Include information on the technical demands and complexity of each project. The Government may research Contractor's performance on any federal, state, local, and commercial contract performance of the Contractor that is known to the Government, but not included on the submitted Performance Information. Additionally, personal experience and evaluator knowledge of Contractor performance may be utilized. Offerors may use the attached form to provide completed comparable projects.

2. Benefit to the Local Community

Information on the Contractor's planned workforce for this project, including each employee's qualifications and area of residence. Contractors shall describe how the award of this contract will benefit the local community. The local community is defined as Grant and Harney County, Oregon. Adjoining counties will be considered the next most impactful. The Contractor's local community benefit proposal will become a part of any resultant contract.

Contractors are cautioned that sufficient and detailed information must be presented in their technical offer to enable the Government to evaluate their offers fully in accordance with the evaluation and award criteria contained herein. The Government is not obligated to ask for additional information and in the absence of appropriate information the offer will be rated deficient.

Note: If the contractor does not provide relevant past performance information, or indicates a lack of Relevant Past Performance with its offer, the Contracting Officer need not pursue further information if it is clear that the Contractor's price is not competitive.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has authorized Federal agencies to collect past performance information under OMB clearance number 9000-0142

FAR 52.212-2 Evaluation - Commercial Items (JAN 1999)

(a) The Government will award a contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible Contractor whose quote conforming to the solicitation will be most advantageous to the Government, price and other factors considered. The following factors shall be used to evaluate quotes and are listed in descending order of importance:

1. Relevant Past Performance

Relevant past performance will be evaluated in terms of Contractor's performance on recent thinning, hand piling, and burning work based on information obtained from references provided by Contractor and other sources. If Contractor has no record of past performance, the quote will be rated neutrally.

The Government will consider the relevance of past performance information obtained in relation to the scope of this procurement with respect to similar efforts, the length and scope, number, complexity, and diversity of contracts completed by the firm. Past performance, either positive or negative, which is considered by the Government to be more closely related to the scope of this effort will be given additional weight in the evaluation process.

Evaluation Factors for Project with Appropriated Funding (R5)

Contractors with past performance data will be evaluated in the same manner as all other evaluation factors; however, those Contractors with no past performance data will be treated as an unknown performance risk and neither be evaluated favorably nor unfavorably. Therefore, Contractors will receive credit for good past performance, lose credit for poor past performance, and neither receive nor lose credit for no relevant past performance.

*An excellent rating would be achieved under relevant past performance if, in the last three years, the Contractor has completed at least 2 projects similar to that being solicited in a timely manner, with a pay range of 90% or higher, with high customer satisfaction/business relations in specific reforestation contracts. (Government evaluators will select contract administrators to contact regarding customer satisfaction.)

2. Benefit to the Local Community

The Government will evaluate the methods proposed by each contractor for benefiting the local community. The evaluation will include a determination as to how realistic and achievable the proposed methods are with added consideration for the impact and magnitude to which the local community will benefit from their operations. Local community for this solicitation means Grant and Harney County being the most important and adjoining counties next.

(b) *Options*. The Government will evaluate offers for award purposes by adding the total price for all options to the total price for the basic requirement. The Government may determine that an offer is unacceptable if the option prices are significantly unbalanced. Evaluation of options shall not obligate the Government to exercise the option(s).

(c) A written notice of award or acceptance of an offer, mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful offeror within the time for acceptance specified in the offer, shall result in a binding contract without further action by either party. Before the offer's specified expiration time, the Government may accept an offer (or part of an offer), whether or not there are negotiations after its receipt, unless a written notice of withdrawal is received before award.

Note: Award will be made to the Contractor whose technical/price relationship is the most advantageous to the government. The critical factor in making any price/technical tradeoff is not the spread between the technical scores, but rather what is the significance of the difference. The significance of the spread in scores will be determined on the basis of what the difference might mean in terms of performance and what it would cost the government to take advantage of it. Award may not necessarily be made to the quoter submitting the lowest quote. The Government reserves the right to make price/technical tradeoffs that are in the best interest and to the advantage of the Government.

Relevant past performance and benefit to the local community, when combined, are approximately equal to price. The degree of importance of pricing will increase with the degree of equality of the quotes in relation to the other factors on which selection is to be based, or when the price is so significantly high as to diminish the value of the technical superiority to the Government.

SAMPLE – Section M for Stewardship Evaluation Factors

Evaluation Criteria - Offerors will be notified in the solicitation to submit offers as follows:

I. Technical Proposal Instructions:

Technical proposals will be evaluated to determine the ability of the contractor to meet the requirements of the Government. Therefore, the technical proposal must present sufficient information to reflect a thorough understanding of the requirements and a detailed description of the organization, techniques, procedures and program for achieving the objectives of the specifications/statement of work. Proposals that merely paraphrase the requirements of the Government's specifications/statement of work, or use such phrases as "will comply" or "standard techniques will be employed" will be considered unacceptable and will not be considered further.

II. As a minimum, the proposal must clearly provide the following:

Technical Approach:

- a. Contractor shall provide a plan of operations for both restoration service type work activities and product removal including the timeline (start and completion dates) and the rationale for work activities to ensure all contractual work will be completed by the contract end date. Contractor shall describe all staff and/or subcontractors that will be utilized and any diverse removal and delivery systems. Contractors are advised to review the solicitation for additional operational requirements and restrictions. Also, describe how you plan to organize, schedule, and staff woody biomass removal if included in the contract.
- b. Contractor shall provide a quality control plan for service type work items and product removal and the measures you will use to ensure the plan is followed. Contractor shall also provide a safety plan that discusses the multiple hazards inherent in the work identified in the sample contract. Contractor shall include mitigation measures in the safety plan.
- c. Contractor shall provide resumes for the contract manager and the on-the-ground supervisor to be assigned to this project. Contractor shall describe their ability to complete the multitude of activities listed within this project including product removal and all restoration type work activities. If multiple subcontractors will be used, Contractor shall describe their plan for managing all subcontractors.
- d. Contractor shall provide a list of equipment to be used on this project and all equipment capability. Contractor shall also prepare a response to each of the end results indicating how Contractor will use and deploy your equipment and personnel, and/or subcontractors, in achieving the specified end results.
- e. Contractor shall describe their production capability to accomplish this project within the specified contract time i.e. how many logging subcontractors will be needed to complete the required work?

III. Relevant Past Performance: The technical proposal must address past performance for both the Offeror and any proposed major subcontractors (subcontractors performing at least 15% of the work). Offerors shall provide the information listed below. Performance information will be requested from references provided and other known clients. Contractor shall submit a list of similar project work that was completed by their firm or any of their proposed subcontractors in the last 3 years. Emphasis will be placed on past work specifically related to the work elements in the solicitation. Contractors may also describe past accomplishments that indicate the firm's ability to perform the work required by this solicitation.

a. Contractors shall provide:

- Names, telephone numbers, and FAX numbers of principal officials in charge of the project who are familiar with Contractor's performance.
- A description of the work performance,
- The agency/company or individuals they worked for,
- The size (value) and location of the contracts,
- Contract numbers.

Contractor shall provide information on any problems encountered on the identified contracts and corrective actions taken.

Individuals or businesses without prior contracts as a business entity, shall list contracts and subcontracts completed under other names or by their employees.

At the option of the offeror, this list of past performance references may be provided prior to the due date of proposals, reference Block 9 of the Solicitation, Offer and Award Form.

However, the list **MUST** be provided **NO LATER** than the due date/time of Proposals.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has authorized Federal agencies to collect past performance information under OMB clearance number 9000-0142. Both this information provided in the proposal, and Government records will be used to evaluate the offeror's past performance; however, references other than those listed may also be contacted.

- 1. Key Personnel.** Contractor shall provide the resume of the person to be designated as the Project Manager. Contractor shall include a list of projects managed by this individual within the last three years, including reference names and phone numbers for these projects.

2. **Benefit to Local Community** *(In accordance with the authority granted under Section 347 Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of FY 1999, as Amended by Sec. 323 of P.L. 108-7, 2003)*
“Local” community for this project is defined as _____ Counties, _____ State.
3. **Forest Products Processing in the Local Community** –Provide the name and location of all processing facilities. Identify the percent of product processed locally by product type such as saw timber, chips and biomass, and whether the offeror will assist in establishing local processing capacity if it is not currently available in the local area.
4. **Jobs and Job Quality in the Local Community** – Provide the location of the prime contractor’s place of business. Provide the location of all sub-contractors’ locations. Provide detailed information on the offeror’s and all subcontractors’ workforces. Provide job title and city location of each employee who will work on this project. Describe any new jobs that will be created, the number of jobs that will be retained, any enhancements that will be created, and any training of local workforce where necessary skills are lacking. Be sure to list all job types, such as managerial, mechanical, and manual labor. List the percentage of local workforce compared to the prime’s and subcontractors’ overall workforces to be used on this project.
5. **Involvement of Other Local Community Groups** – Describe the type and amount of involvement of any other local community groups that will be involved in this project. List the percentage of the overall project that will be accomplished by these entities.