



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

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Region

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Route To:

Subject: PAL Management

To: Forest Supervisors

This letter is a reminder of my direction and emphasis regarding the management of the Project Activity Level (PAL) system utilized on timber sales, stewardship contracts, service contracts, and special use permits throughout the Region. Forests have done a good job managing the PAL system and we want to issue this reminder in order to continue this positive trend.

In May of 2010, Deputy Regional Forester, Jim Peña along with the Directors of Ecosystem Management and Fire and Aviation Management conducted a series of 5 province level meetings (aka "Fireside Chats") to discuss the day-to-day management of the activity levels which dictate operational restrictions on these projects. The intent was to keep Timber Sale Purchasers, Logging Contractors, as well as other Contractors and Permittees who utilize PAL, working in the woods as long as reasonably possible. The meetings affirmed that the Forest Service had the sole discretion to manage the daily PAL values at the Forest Level and encouraged Line Officers, Contract and Special Use Administration Teams and the Fire Management Staff to collaborate to achieve that goal.

Daily management objectives of PAL were to identify and mitigate any anomalies in the predicted PAL values, especially in the early-spring and late-fall portions of the operating season, and continue to balance the need for accomplishing the work against the risk of an unwanted ignition resulting in a large fire.

We need to continue to actively manage the daily PAL values at the forest-level. Tips and tools to help develop and maintain the situational awareness helpful in accomplishing this task are included in the Frequently Asked Questions and R5 PAL Toolkit posted on the PAL Webpage.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/fire-aviation/management/?cid=stelprdb5372656>

Additional tools are being developed for the 2013 season.

The concern regarding the decision maker's liability in the case of a good decision resulting in a bad outcome (a large fire) continues to plague the daily management process, often resulting in a Forest just posting the predicted activity levels without any management involvement. The Regional Office continues to encourage informed decisions and supports Line Officers and other decision makers when decisions are based on scientific data linked to the PAL outputs. This should include a review of recent PAL history (Predicted verses Actual), the short and long-term



weather forecasts, an evaluation of current fire activity, the Forest's current firefighting capabilities along with local knowledge and experience.

Questions related to the contractual aspects of PAL should be directed to Don Otis, Timber Sale Administration Program Leader at (707) 562-8693. Questions related to the fire danger aspects of PAL and management of the daily values should be directed to Russ Gripp, NFDRS/ WIMS/ RAWS Program Lead in Fire Management's Predictive Services Group at (530) 841-4439.

/s/ Jeanne Wade Evans (for)

RANDY MOORE
Regional Forester

cc: Alan D Olson
Joe Millar
Russell A Gripp
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