

Timber Resources Question 1 – Economic Timber Sales, Shelf Volume, and Contract Volume

Goal: Provide for the continuation of timber uses and resources by the timber industry and Alaska residents. Manage the timber resources for timber production of saw timber and wood products for suitable forest lands made available for timber harvest on an even-flow, long term sustained yield basis and in an economically efficient manner.

Objective: Pre-commercially thin previously harvested suitable forestland. Evaluate non-clearcutting silvicultural systems. Seek to provide an economic timber supply sufficient to meet the annual market demand¹ for Tongass National Forest timber and the market demand for planning cycle, up to a ceiling of the Forest Plan's allowable sale quantity, which is 2.67 billion board feet in the first decade. Maintain young-growth to improve habitat for wildlife and commercial timber products. Review standards and guidelines for applicability to young-growth stands. Provide 2 to 3 years supply of volume under contract to local mills and then establish shelf volume² to maintain flexibility and stability in the sale program. Review the timber sale program and work with the state and other partners to implement changes that will keep an "economic timber" perspective throughout the process and monitor the implementation of these reforms to ensure they are consistently employed across the Forest.

Timber Resources Question 1: Is the timber management program meeting the objectives of achieving economic timber sales and rebuilding the volume under contract and shelf volume components of the sale program?

The evaluation criteria and sampling / reporting period are outlined below. No data relative to this question was reported.

Evaluation Criteria

Forest Plan Chapter 2 Timber Goals and Objectives states that Congress mandates that all timber sales offered for sale by the Tongass National Forest, using the Residual Value Appraisal System and with western red cedar appraised for domestic processing be above base rates before they can be offered for sale. No timber sale in Region 10 shall be advertised if the indicated rate is deficit when appraised using residual value approach that assigns domestic Alaska values for western redcedar. The primary evaluation criteria include timber volume offered for sale, and timber sale volume under contract. Secondary information that may help management determine if the Forest Plan objectives are met includes timber sale bid rate, volume of timber sold, number of no bid timber sales, and volume of no bid timber sales. Tertiary information that may help management determine if the Forest Plan objectives are met includes annual volume harvested and number of timber sale purchasers.

¹ The annual market demand forecast is a methodology used to set the short-term goals for the Tongass Timber Program – volume the Forest plans to offer in the current year, pending sufficient funding and sufficient National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-cleared volume. NEPA-cleared volume is defined as NEPA documents with a signed decision.

² Shelf volume is that volume that has been NEPA-cleared and is available for offer.

Sampling/Reporting Period

Timber sale volume offered sale is reported annually. Timber sale volume under contract is reported monthly. The secondary and tertiary information can be collected from the primary reports or from reports currently available in the TIM system.

Monitoring Results

In FY 2012, the Tongass offered 52.51 MMBF, sold 52.51 MMBF and had 0.0 MMBF in no-bid timber sales that remained unsold at the year of the fiscal year. In FY 2012, the purchasers harvested 20.83 MMBF and had an ending inventory of 130.46 MMBF. The average annual harvest for the past 5 years is 30.8 MMBF. In FY 2011 the harvest level was 32.6 MMBF with timber sales of 37.5 MMBF and a remaining inventory of 104.9 MMBF and 3.67 years of volume under contract based on a 5 year average annual harvest of 34 MMBF/year. The average bid rate for the timber under contract is \$26.22/MBF. At the end of FY 2011, the average bid rate was \$28.02/MBF.

Evaluation of Results

The Tongass has not been able to establish shelf volume to maintain flexibility and stability in the sale program.