

Timber Resources Question 3 – Allowable Sale Quantity

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 from 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.

Background: The allowable sale quantity (ASQ) for the Tongass National Forest as specified in the 2008 Forest Plan is 2.67 billion board feet for the first decade following implementation of the plan. The ASQ consists of two separate non-interchangeable components (NIC), also referred to as an operability inventory. Under the 2008 Forest Plan, the ASQ is divided into two non-interchangeable component (NIC) classifications based on land type and difficulty of harvest. NIC I (set at 2.38 billion board feet of timber per decade) and NIC II (set at 0.29 billion board feet per decade) and a proportional mix set at approximately 89 percent NIC I and 11 percent NIC II (Forest Plan ROD).

Timber Resources Question 3: Is the ASQ land base consistent with resources information and programmed harvest?

Evaluation Criteria

New information leading to changes in timber utilization standards, timber inventory results, timber dispersion requirements, tentatively suitable land base, yield tables, operability inventory projections on area managed for riparian, beach fringe, and estuary resources; implementation factors, spatial limitations of analysis and natural condition.

Sampling/Reporting Period

Analysis of Forest Plan ASQ compared with the actual sale and harvest can be produced annually.

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.

Monitoring Results

Table 1 displays the sale volume for fiscal year (FY) 2003 through FY 2012. For FY 2003 through FY 2012, the average annual volume sold was 45.8 million board feet (MMBF) or 17 percent of the annual Allowable Sale Quantity. This information is presented to observe the trend in recent allotment of timber sale ASQ. The decline in timber sale volume is based on a variety of factors including economic conditions, harvest costs, and litigation.

Timber Resources 3 Table 1. Timber Volume Sold for Fiscal Years 2003-2012 MMBF

Fiscal Year	Timber Volume Sold	Percent of ASQ Sold	Annual ASQ
2003	37 MMBF	14% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2004	87 MMBF	33% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2005	65 MMBF	24% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2006	85 MMBF	32% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2007	30 MMBF	11% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2008	5 MMBF	2% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2009	10 MMBF	6% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2010	49 MMBF	18% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2011	37.5 MMBF	14% of ASQ	267 MMBF
2012	52.5 MMBF	19.6% of ASQ	267 MMBF
Ten Year Average	45.8 MMBF	17% of ASQ	267 MMBF

Evaluation of Results

No action is necessary at this time because the annual volume sold has been, and is expected to continue to remain, well below the ASQ. Recommendations are to continue to monitor the trend of annual ASQ sold.