

Timber Resources Question 4 – Tongass Timber Reform Act

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.

Timber Resources Question 4: Is the timber demand being met within limits of the adaptive management strategy and TTRA?

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

Evaluation Criteria

The adaptive management strategy (see Forest Plan ROD p. 64 through 66) will be implemented in three phases based on the annual timber harvest. Phase 1 restricts the timber program to a portion of the suitable land base that excludes moderate and higher value roadless areas. Should the level of harvest reach 100 MMBF for 2 consecutive fiscal years, the Tongass could then plan for timber projects in the Phase 2 portion of the approved suitable land base. However, personal use of timber, micro sales, salvage sales, small commercial timber sales generally less than 1 MMBF, young-growth management projects, and the roads associated with these activities, would be allowed in development LUDs outside of the Phase 1 portion of the ASQ land base within Phase 2 lands. Should the harvest reach 150 MMBF for 2 consecutive fiscal years (FY), the Tongass could then plan for timber projects in Phase 3 areas, which includes the entire suitable land base.

In addition, the Tongass National Forest, specifically, is directed under the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA) to seek to provide a supply of timber that meets market demand annually and for the planning cycle. The annual demand calculation is an analysis of the timber industry in Southeast Alaska, where some of the variables include installed mill capacity and utilization, projected harvest level, and timber volume under contract. The demand calculation is not based on actual timber harvest. The demand

¹ The annual market demand forecast is a methodology used to set the short-term goals for the Tongass Timber Reform 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.

analysis is done for four different scenarios – Limited Lumber, Expanded Lumber, Medium Integrated and High Integrated – as explained in the 2008 Forest Plan Amendment FEIS, Appendix G.

Sampling/Reporting Period

The amount of timber harvested is calculated monthly and annually, and shows in the Volume under Contract reports. The demand calculation is done annually. These reports are posted on the Alaska Regional Office website.

Monitoring Results

In FY 2012, all timber harvest harvested and offered was from Phase 1 lands. In FY 2012, the Annual Demand Calculation was 127 MMBF using the expanded lumber scenario. In FY 2012 the Tongass offered 52.51 MMBF, sold 52.51 MMBF and had 0 MMBF in no-bid timber sales. Timber harvest for FY 2012 was 20.8 MMBF.

Evaluation of Results

The amount of harvest less than 100 MMBF indicates that the Tongass timber harvest planning efforts should continue in Phase 1 areas on the Forest with the exception of small sale opportunities. At the end of fiscal year 2012 there was 130 MMBF under contract. Approximately 19 MMBF under contract in the Juneau Access Road volume and Upper Carroll II timber sale is technically not available for harvest due to litigation on the Access Road and timber sale contract termination negotiations on Upper Carroll II. The corrected volume under contract for the end of FY 2012 was approximately 111 MMBF. Since the demand calculation estimates that there should be an estimated 127 MMBF under contract, the objectives of TTRA are not being met and efforts to establish shelf volume should continue.



Timber Resources 4 Picture 1. Front loader working at a log transfer facility, Tuxekan Island, AK