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Route To:

Subject: Summary of 2008 National EMS Management Review

To: Files

2008 was the initial year of implementing the Forest Service's national Environmental Management System (EMS). In conformance with the ISO 14001 standard, the agency conducted a management review of its EMS to evaluate its performance and make any needed changes as part of our commitment to continual improvement.

Input for this review came from the results of 124 management reviews conducted on individual implementing administrative units, 10 organizational management reviews conducted at regional offices and the Washington Office, national audit report, and observations and recommendations of the National EMS Team. Top management of the agency—the Executive Leadership Team—completed the review on April 14, 2009.

Considering that EMS was new to the agency and its employees and that this led to the inevitable schedule adjustments and technical difficulties of implementing something for the first time, the overall results of the review were encouraging. Our accomplishments and findings included:

- Setting up an implementing infrastructure of 142 administrative units, each with its own EMS representative
- Training over 20,000 employees
- Compliance audits are helping to improve environmental performance
- 39 finding notices filed; most were of local concern and are now closed
- Audits conducted on random sample of 12 units
- Adaptive nature of EMS well suited for managing dynamic ecological systems
- Environmental policy is satisfactory; no need to change

Despite our unfamiliarity with the ISO standard and its new language and requirements, our audit showed that our EMS was developed and implemented in conformance with this standard. The establishment of the EMS also meant that the Forest Service met the EMS requirement of the 2008 planning regulations for all NFS units. Also through this accomplishment, the Forest Service helped USDA to significantly improve its scorecard metrics for fulfilling the requirements of E.O. 13423, which calls for all agencies to have an operating EMS. We met our major target of reducing the consumption of petroleum-based fuel for the Forest Service fleet by two percent.



A tenant of our EMS environmental policy is that we are committed to a process of continual improvement. The management review highlighted several areas that we will be working on this year as our EMS matures and expands. These include:

- Refine the training modules and how we document accomplishment
- Clarify the process for employees to identify poor or exemplary environmental performance
- Edit and improve our guidance documents for implementing the EMS
- Add a new significant aspect that will help us better manage how we mitigate environmental impacts from our vegetation management activities
- Add new objectives and targets for land management addressing vegetation diversity and watershed condition
- Add new objectives and targets for addressing energy and water conservation
- Appoint a national EMS representative to improve the governance of EMS establishment, implementation, and maintenance