

Forest Products Modernization: Innovation Underway

Accelerated Response Review Form in the Region 3

The Accelerated Response Review (ARR) form was originally developed in May 2018 to request clarification or relief from USDA Forest Service timber program policies for the Four Forest Reforestation Initiative (4FRI). The form soon proved valuable in the Southwestern Region (Region 3) and has been in use for the last year.

The ARR form is a platform any Region 3 employee can use to suggest an innovation, request permission to create efficiencies in a policy or procedure, and communicate ideas or concerns to the regional or national office. A requestor submits the form to the Regional Forest Products Modernization (FPM) Coordinator and can expect a response within 10 business days. The form also acts as a record of communication between the requestor and the request recipient, including questions, decisions made, and response times.

Ingredients for Success

The Regional FPM Coordinator assists the requestor with the ARR form, ensuring all necessary information is included. The Coordinator then sends the form to the appropriate person(s) at the regional or national level, as needed. Through this accelerated process, the Coordinator acts as a conduit for dialogue, giving the initiator a voice and an opportunity to be heard and decreasing response time.

The ARR form fosters innovation and helps the region accelerate on-the-ground-project implementation by:

- Recording new and innovative ideas, providing a quick way to disseminate them regionally.
- Capturing instances where employees are unaware of current policies. The form would enable more efficiency and create a vehicle to provide clarification across the region.
- Fostering innovation by giving employees a way to communicate their ideas and receive a formal, timely response. The form allows employees to feel heard, further empowering them to develop and share new ideas.

For example, the ARR process enabled the region to create new regional direction for the 4FRI project that eliminated the

Fay Canyon, Coconino National Forest. Forest Service photo by Mark Chavez.

requirement to request regional forester approval for each scaled timber sale.

Lessons Learned

After the first pilot using the form in May 2018, the region realized that for the form to be effective, they needed timely and documented responses. View the sample [Request for Policy Change](#) form at Forest Products Modernization's sharepoint site. Since then, a date stamp was added for each written entry on the form, with the goal of providing an answer within 10 business days of submission.

Next Steps

In Fiscal Year 2020, Region 3 will continue to institutionalize the ARR at the fall Regional Forestry meeting, the New Mexico Forest Timber Summit, and leadership team meetings. As more employees utilize the ARR, further modifications may occur, and responses will be posted on the Region's Forest Management SharePoint site. This will provide a library of decisions related to FPM and innovation implementation. When necessary, regional or national manual and handbook updates and/or supplements will be completed to support decisions documented in ARRs.

For More Information, Contact:

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