

Forest Products Modernization Innovation Underway

Deck Scaling on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Overview

In 2017, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest set out to explore the use of deck scaling on an 80-acre, red pine, non-sawtimber sale, cut according to a spacing prescription. This project tests the viability of measuring all logs at the landing, prior to hauling by train, and eliminates the need for truck ticketing and haul route restrictions. The forest has found that deck scaling is a way to diversify its measurement toolbox and increase the efficiency of post-harvest measurement on sales like this one.

Ingredients for Success

Legal authorization, specific sale characteristics, collaboration, and mill buy-in have been critical to the success of deck scaling during this project. Specifically, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest has:

- Exercised prescription sales on national forests as authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill.
- Applied deck scaling to single-species, non-sawtimber designation on prescription sales.
- Worked with State, Federal, and university researchers to develop the deck scaling process for the Forest Service.
- Conducted outreach to local timber purchasers prior to initiating the project to garner positive feedback regarding deck scaling. Many mills prefer hauling to truck hauling and weight scaling is unavailable to some mills. Deck scaling is commonly used by States, counties, and mills in the Lake States area.

Lessons Learned

Deck scaling entails strict operational requirements:

- The timber must sell as a uniform product type.
- Decks must consist of logs of uniform length.
- Scaled decks cannot intermingle with unscaled wood.
- No logs may leave the landing prior to scaling by Forest Service personnel.

In light of these requirements, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest completed specified deck scaler training.



Processed logs waiting for transport from a landing. USDA Forest Service photo.

Next Steps

Going forward, deck scaling may increase the viability of salvage and forest restoration projects on National Forest System land. Given the success of this ongoing project, the Forest Service will consider expanding deck scaling to other forests in the Eastern Region.

For More Information, Contact

Gary Church, Measurement Specialist
Eastern and Southern Regions
johnchurch@fs.fed.us
404-347-3985

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.