

INDIAN AFFAIRS MANUAL

Part 53
Chapter 5

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- 1.1 Purpose.** This chapter documents the policies, standards and responsibilities for conducting and implementing forest development activities on Indian lands.
- 1.2 Scope.** This policy applies to all Indian Affairs (IA) offices and programs participating in the management, accountability, and protection of Indian forest lands. Other Federal agencies and programs that are also involved in the administration of Indian forest lands are encouraged to ensure that the standards prescribed herein are met.
- 1.3 Policy.** Forest development projects and activities on Indian lands must be guided by the forest management goals, objectives, and silvicultural strategies identified in the forest management plan. The forest development program must complement objectives identified in the forest management plan. All forest development projects and activities must be planned and implemented from guidelines established in either a forest management plan or an individual forest development plan. Forest development project funds will only be used when supported by approved silvicultural prescriptions.

1.4 Authority.

A. Statutes and Regulations.

- 1) 25 CFR 163, General Forestry Regulations
- 2) 25 U.S.C. Chapter 33, National Indian Forest Resources Management Act
- 3) 25 U.S.C. § 5109 - Indian forestry units; rules and regulations
- 4) 16 U.S.C. § 594 - Protection of timber owned by United States from fire, disease, or insect ravages
- 5) 18 U.S.C. Chapter 91 - Public Lands, § 1853, 1855 and 1856

B. Guidance.

- 1) 303 Departmental Manual (DM) 2 Indian Trust Responsibilities – Principles for Managing Indian Trust Assets
- 2) 586 DM 1 Timber Management – General Policies and Responsibility

C. Handbooks

- 1) 53 IAM 5-H Indian Forest Management Handbook, Forest Development
- 2) Additional guidance may also be found in other Forestry IAM chapters (Part 53) and handbooks. The IAM chapters can be accessed here:

<http://www.bia.gov/WhatWeDo/Knowledge/Directives/IAM/index.htm>

Handbooks can be accessed here:

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1.5 Responsibilities.

A. Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs is responsible for:

- 1) Developing national forest development program policies;
- 2) Providing assistance in the implementation of regional forest development program direction, oversight, and guidance;
- 3) Justifying and executing the national forest development budget; and
- 4) Establishing reporting standards and requirements.

B. Regional Directors are responsible for:

- 1) Developing regional policies, standards, and forest development program guidelines;
- 2) Providing final approval for forest management plans which address forest development;
- 3) Providing technical assistance to agencies and field offices including tribal programs, monitoring and evaluating field activities and expenditures, and making recommendations regarding program oversight;
- 4) Reviewing, compiling, and approving forest development project proposals, annual project planning reports, and annual accomplishment reports;
- 5) Allocating available funds to field programs for approved forest development activities, and reallocating funds when necessary;
- 6) Reviewing and verifying forest development accomplishments and expenditure reports from tribes, BIA agencies and field offices for annual BIA central office reporting requirements; and
- 7) Periodically auditing the forest development program in accordance with A-123 internal controls.

C. Agency Superintendents are responsible for:

- 1) Preparing and implementing forest development plans or projects in accordance with an approved forest management plan and an approved silvicultural prescription;
- 2) Approving forest development plans that are not addressed in forest management plans;
- 3) Preparing, developing, and submitting the following reports to the Regional Director according to the dates established by the Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs:
 - a) Forest Development Program Planned Projects/Activities Request, and

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- b) Forest Development Program Accomplished Projects/Activities Report;
- 4) Maintaining program funding accountability, project accomplishments and expenditures, and maps;
- 5) Maintaining the forest development Inventory of Need including a geospatial record of all acreage requiring planting or thinning; and
- 6) Assisting tribe(s) with submission of reports and accomplishments.

1.6 Definitions.

- A. Commercial forest lands** means forestland that is producing or capable of producing crops of marketable forest products and is administratively available for intensive management and sustained production. For the purpose of this manual, capability is defined as forest land capable of growing a minimum of 20 cubic feet per acre per year, on average, through rotation age.
- B. Commercial woodland** is land qualifying as forest, containing less than 5 % commercial timber species crown cover, diameters at least 3.0" at root collar of woodland species or 5.0" at breast height, and considered of high site potential capable of growing at least 5 cubic feet per acre per year of merchantable material.
- C. Forest development** means forest land management activities undertaken to improve the sustainable productivity of commercial Indian forest land through reforestation, timber stand improvement, prescribed burning, and related investments.
- D. Forest development plan** is an optional planning document, which contains forest development goals, objectives, priority treatment areas, a schedule of proposed projects, and silvicultural guidelines.
- E. Forest or forest land** means an ecosystem at least one acre in size, including timberland and woodland, which is characterized by a more or less dense and extensive tree cover; contains, or once contained, at least 10% tree crown cover, and is not developed or planned for exclusive non-forest resource use.
- F. Forest management plan** means the principal document, approved by the Regional Director, reflecting and consistent with an integrated resource management plan, which provides for the regulation of the detailed, multiple-use operation of Indian forest land by methods ensuring that such lands remain in a continuously productive state while meeting the objectives of the tribe and which must include standards setting forth the funding and staffing requirements necessary to carry out each management plan, with a report of current forestry funding and staffing levels; and standards providing quantitative criteria to evaluate performance against the objectives set forth in the plan.

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- G. Forestry project fund** means non-recurring congressionally appropriated funding intended to be project-based.
- H. Indian forest land** means Indian land, including commercial, noncommercial, productive and non-productive timberland and woodland, that is considered chiefly valuable for the production of forest products or to maintain watershed or other land values enhanced by a forest cover, regardless of whether a formal inspection and land classification action has been taken.
- I. Noncommercial forest land** means forest land that is available for extensive management but is incapable of producing sustainable forest products within the general rotation period. Such land may be economically harvested but the site quality does not warrant significant investment to enhance future crops.
- J. Timberland** means forest land stocked, or capable of being stocked, with tree species that are regionally utilized for lumber, pulpwood, poles or veneer products.
- K. Woodland** means forest land not included within the timberland classification, stocked, or capable of being stocked, with tree species of such form and size to produce forest products that are generally marketable within the region for products other than lumber, pulpwood, or veneer.

1.7 Authorized Treatment Activities.

There are three major categories of treatment activities: site preparation, reforestation, and commercial forest stand improvement (CFSI).

- A. Site Preparation.** The site preparation group of sub-activities includes the planning for site preparation and the methods of accomplishing site preparation. These methods are further divided into silvicultural evaluation, mechanical methods (mechanized and hand treatments), prescribed fire, and chemical methods of site preparation.
- B. Reforestation.** The sub-activities that are included under reforestation are: silvicultural evaluation; developing the reforestation prescription; the many activities surrounding the promotion of natural regeneration; the artificial regeneration process that includes seed collection, direct seeding, seedling production and care, and tree planting methods; regeneration methods; regeneration evaluation and monitoring, including survey methods; plantation maintenance; and limited road repair. Using reforestation funding to plant a recently harvested timber sale is **not authorized**.
- C. CFSI.** The sub-activities included in CFSI are: silvicultural evaluation; stand selection; project development; the types of projects, e.g., precommercial thinning, understory

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sanitation, prescribed burning, pruning, release cuttings, and fertilization; and the coordination of projects with other facets of the program, e.g., timber sales, fuels management, and other natural resources.

1.8 Standards, Requirements, and Procedures.

Forest development is a segment of the forestry program that addresses activities to sustain and improve commercial forest pursuant to 25 CFR § 163.32.

- A. Funding.** Forest Development is a subactivity of the Forestry Projects appropriation. This funding is made available to the Central Office Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management through an approved budget or continuing resolution. Forest development funding is allocated to the regions based upon a formula that incorporates commercial timber acreage, inventory of need, forest development accomplishments for the last three years, and a base amount for each region.
- B. Proposals.** Agency/Tribe(s) will submit Forest Development Program Planned Projects /Activities Request to their respective regional office which forms the basis for determining allocations of forest development funding to field units. Regions will ensure that all projects are covered by an approved forest management plan or forest development plan. Project proposals will be ranked by the region using benefit/cost analyses following a review of the silvicultural prescription, stand exam, any required tribal approvals, and environmental/cultural compliance or clearances.
- C. Forest Development Management Activities.** Forest development projects implemented without forestry project funding such as fuels management and timber harvesting must adhere to the guidance referred in section 1.4 of this policy.

Approval



Weldon Loudermilk
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

4-14-17
Date