



NATIONAL

ACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service enters a new era, it faces urgent challenges such as meeting domestic lumber demand, reducing wildfire risk, and revitalizing economies. Focusing on priority actions that support active forest management, the agency will fulfill direction from Executive Order 14225 by modernizing processes, building capacity, streamlining compliance, and strengthening partnerships. These actions will deliver greater value to the public, protect natural resources, and ensure America's forests remain resilient and productive for present and future generations.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Capacity Building and Streamlining Implementation

Outdated processes, limited staff, and cumbersome certification processes create challenges for implementing active forest management.

SOLUTIONS:

- Streamline training and certification requirements.
- Make existing authorities more usable and standard.
- Adopt new technologies.
- Effectively use funding.
- Increase operating periods for implementation.

Environmental Compliance

Various statutes require environmental compliance to authorize forest management activities.

SOLUTIONS:

- Streamline regulatory processes.
- Remove barriers.
- Accelerate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews.
- Eliminate scope expansion.

Goals

Support Rural Economies and the Forest Product Industry

Reduce the Risk of Destructive Wildfire

Build Capacity Through Workforce Alignment and Partnerships

Shared Stewardship, Partnerships, Contracting, and Markets

Shared stewardship, partnerships, contracting, and markets are critical to successfully meeting the agency's goals of increasing active management to improve forest health and reduce threats of wildfire, insects, and disease.

SOLUTIONS:

- Strengthen partnerships.
- Implement Good Neighbor Authority modifications.
- Support markets and facilities.

Salvage and Reforestation

To accelerate the pace and scale of post-wildfire recovery and reestablish healthy and resilient forests, the agency must plan and execute salvage and reforestation projects as disturbances happen.

SOLUTIONS:

- Provide for large-scale salvage.
- Mobilize quickly on salvage.
- Modernize processes.
- Build capacity.

HIGH-LEVEL PRIORITY ACTIONS

The following are high-level actions that the agency can take immediately to support active forest management.

Implement Forest Plans

Forest and regional timber programs will focus on implementing land management plans, including the timber volumes and acres identified therein, and revising or amending outdated plans.

Use Long-Term Contracts

The Forest Service will provide a greater certainty for industry to make investments that support active forest management efforts by using long-term contracts, including 10+ year conventional timber contracts, Integrated Resource Service Contracts, Integrated Resource Timber Contracts, Good Neighbor Authority, and A to Z and G to Z contracts.

Integrate Programs

The Forest Service will better align and integrate the current forest management and fuels programs and associated funding, which will lead to better outcomes on the landscape and promote effective fuels treatments while delivering timber volume.

Maximize Authorities

The agency will maximize use of all tools and authorities that have previously not been used to the extent possible, as well as implementing new tools that can be used to facilitate active forest management, including current and future emergency authorities.

Streamline Processes

From the Washington Office to the field, the agency will reduce burdensome requirements, including supplements, certifications, and any practices not in statute.

Provide Training

The agency will increase the skills of employees in timber program delivery and update and streamline courses, including timber-related leadership training, to reflect new processes and expectations.

Ensure Leadership Alignment

The Forest Service will focus on increasing program delivery through understanding local markets, developing partnerships with industry, and prioritizing projects that provide for a reliable, consistent, and increased supply of timber.

Increase Accountability

To ensure alignment, the agency will incorporate increased accountability and timber production and management goals into performance plans for relevant supervisors and staff.

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Timber operations take place on the South Park Ranger District on Pike and San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands in April 2025. USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres.