

Modernizing Four Forest Restoration Initiative Implementation - Progress



- **What does this work respond to?**

- 1) Partner's request to improve operational efficiency and reduce logging costs by decoupling the loading operations from the cut/skid/deck operations.
- 2) Partner's request to reduce logging costs by allowing additional time for material to dry, thus hauling less water.

- **What was done?**

- 1) Request for altering the time between cutting and removal provision was brought to the table by TNC in 2017 while developing the first SPAs.
- 2) Language was added to SPAs that allowed for a phased approach to this concept:
 - ◇ The default phase was agreed to be the normal time frames described in the Forest Plan.
 - ◇ Subsequent phases would allow progressively longer residence times after a review of risks and approval by the responsible line officer on a case by case basis.
- 3) The FS worked with Forest Health Protection, NAU, and TNC to conduct a drying study at multiple locations to monitor the efficacy of extended drying times and measure the associated insects activity.
- 4) TNC submitted a formal request to implement extended decking in Chimney Springs, and although they eventually received approval, the concept was not implemented because the harvesting was nearly complete.

- **What was the process?**

- 1) Contractor/Partner formally requests from the responsible official either a site-specific waiver of the standard removal provision or advancement to a phase that allows more time between cutting and removal:
 - ◇ Along with the request, a mutually agreeable monitoring and mitigation plan should be submitted. If one does not exist, allow sufficient time to collaboratively develop the plan.
- 2) The line officer works with the relevant staff to review risks to resources and public safety. Specific considerations may include: seasonal timing, proximity to communities, dispersed and developed recreation areas, powerlines, approved environmental analysis decision requirements, or forest pest activity. Additional mitigation measures may be developed based on the review.
- 3) Line officer approves or denies the request in letter.
- 4) Outcomes will be monitored for the development of unexpected risks or changing conditions that increase risk.

- **What worked well?**

- 1) Having the language in the SPAs to allow for this through written agreement, rather than through modification to streamline the process.
- 2) Partners and managers are now better aware of what is needed and the implications when reviewing this type of request.



- **Key points for implementation?**

- 1) Agreements are convenient mechanisms to test and implement this efficiency because the specifications can be more flexible. The flexibility is not readily available in other contracting instruments nor is it the intent.
- 2) Did not actually implement this experiment because of timing issues, nor was the risk-minimization and monitoring plan developed.
- 3) Each project may have unique conditions and risk, requiring consideration on a case-by-case basis.
- 4) Risk is a relative assessment of potential costs and potential benefits. Our perception of the relative risk changes over time as market conditions and forest conditions change.
- 5) Trade-off between operational efficiency/cost benefits and protection of resources/ mitigating risk are complex for decision makers.

- **Recommendations**

- 1) Site-specific reviews take time. Ensure that formal requests are provided in advance of planned implementation to avoid delays.
- 2) Begin collaboration early in the development of a monitoring and mitigation plan.
- 3) Have an agreed-upon timeframe for signature/response from responsible official.
- 4) Communicate early and often.

