



Stewardship Contracting

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Stewardship contracting is not a program, but rather a tool for the contracting toolbox to accomplish work on the land as part of the Healthy Forests Initiative and to achieve broad land management goals.¹ This type of contracting may utilize a contracting period of up to 10 years and can help prospective contractors qualify for and obtain loans and equipment opportunities.

This authority:

- Allows the exchange of goods for services.
- Facilitates land restoration and enhancement effects by using value of traded goods for important work on the ground.
- Requires contracts to be awarded based on “best value.”

Goals of Stewardship Contracting

- Achieve key land management goals that: improve, maintain, or restore forest or rangeland health; restore or maintain water quality; improve fish and wildlife habitat; increase resilience to insect and disease; and reduce hazardous fuels that pose risks to communities and ecosystem values through an open, collaborative process.
- Meet local and rural community needs in addition to the land management goal.
- Focus on “end results” through stewardship contracting and agreements.
- Retain receipts for needed service (restoration) work.
- Transfer receipts to another approved project.
- Treat large landscapes.

¹ The USDA Forest Service and the Interior Department’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received new authority to implement stewardship contracting and agreements in Section 8205 of Public Law 113-79, the Agricultural Act of 2014. The Act grants the Forest Service and BLM authority to enter into stewardship contracting projects for up to 10 years with private persons or public or private entities, by contract or by agreement, to perform service to achieve land management goals for the national forests or public lands that meet local and rural community needs. Section 8205 supersedes the authority granted to the Forest Service in section 347.

Important Terms

- A **timber sale** is the sale of commercial forest products, always with return of receipts to the U.S. Treasury.
- **Service contracts** are contracts for services, such as pre-commercial thinning, trail maintenance, and fuel reduction, that are funded with appropriated dollars and do not return revenues to the U.S. Treasury.
- **Stewardship contracts** are contracts by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management for services, such as pre-commercial thinning, trail maintenance, and fuel reduction, in which some of the costs may be offset by the value of vegetative material removed and may not return revenues to the U.S. Treasury. In addition, any excess receipts can be used for other stewardship contracts.

Current Status in Region 5

- The table below displays the number of stewardship project and acres of treatment from 2006 through 2015.

