



USDA Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

Date November 23, 2010

Topic: Revised FS Manual 2550 – Soil Management

Issue: National soil management direction and handbook had not kept up with shifts in national forest and grasslands land management direction. Additionally numerous advances in science and technical guidance have been developed and are in place since the soil management direction was last revised in 1990.

Background: The FSM 2550 Soil Management Manual was revised in 2009. With the manual revision completed, the Regional and WO soil program leaders began the revision of the FSH 2509.18 Soil Management Handbook. After that effort was completed, it was determined that the handbook should be incorporated into the FSM 2550 Soil Management Manual. This effort greatly simplifies and streamlines the national direction for managing the soils associated with National Forest System lands. This was accomplished, in part, with advances in technical guides and scientific references that were not in place in 1990. The handbook material was added to appropriate sections already identified in the FSM 2550.

Key Points:

The revised FSM 2550 Soil Management Manual provides:

- Enhances direction to decision makers on their roles and responsibilities
- Provides direction on the conductance of soil and terrestrial ecological unit inventories as well as monitoring soil quality.
- Provides direction on data storage for soil and terrestrial ecological unit inventories.
- Eliminates the FSH 2509.18 Soil Management Handbook and related Regional Supplements to this handbook.

Summary:

The revision of the FSM 2550 enables land managers to have clear concise policy and direction on sustainable soil management. The revised manual establishes definitions relevant to the soil resource to assist land management planning implementation and development of land management prescriptions. Additionally the revised manual provides a solid framework for regional supplemental direction.

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