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Subject: Planning Direction, Tentatively Suitable Timberlands and the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for Plan Revision

To: Forest Plan Revision ID Team

Questions have arisen during the plan revision process regarding how much National Forest land is potentially suitable for timber production and what allowable sale quantity (ASQ) would be analyzed in plan revision alternatives. In a public IDT meeting on January 29, 1999, a zero ASQ proposal was discussed with the Regional Director of Forest Management based on conflicting planning direction that had been received from the RO Forest Management and RO Planning shops.

Since the above meeting, these conflicts have been resolved. The intent of this memo, which supplements planning direction contained in previous memos dated March 5, 1998 and August 28, 1997, is to clarify that the process established by 36 CFR 219.14-219.27 for determining suitable timberlands and ASQ will continue to be followed for plan revision.

CFR 219.14 requires three stages of timberland suitability analysis during the forest plan revision process. The first, under section (a), occurs during the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS); the second, under section (b), occurs prior to formulation of alternatives; and the third, under section (c), occurs during the formulation and evaluation of each plan revision alternative.

36 CFR 219.14 (a) Analysis

The first analysis was completed during the AMS. This analysis identified National Forest lands that were not appropriate for timber production based on the following criteria:

- (1) lands that are not forested;
- (2) lands where technology is not available to ensure timber production from the land without irreversible resource damage to soil productivity or watershed conditions;
- (3) lands that do not have a reasonable assurance of being adequately restocked within 5 years after final harvest;
- (4) lands that have been withdrawn from timber production by an Act of Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Chief of the Forest Service. (Note: as per planning direction letter of March 5, 1998, forested lands in the Anicla Wilderness Study Area were not considered withdrawn for the purpose of the section (a) analysis.)

The tabular results of this analysis from the AMS are displayed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Tentatively Suitable Lands on the Chugach NF (CFR 219.14 (a) analysis)

	-----ACRES-----			
	Kenai	PWS	CR	Total
Total Forest lands	218,390	764,650	225,780	1,208,820
Unsuitable Forest lands	191,800	579,340	123,230	894,370
Tentatively Suitable Forest lands	26,590	185,310	102,550	314,450
Percent of T. Suitable Forest by Area	8.5 %	58.9 %	32.6 %	100 %



Since the section (a) analysis was completed for the AMS, 8,750 acres of tentatively suitable timberlands (previously selected by Native Corporations) have been conveyed to Native Corporations in Prince William Sound and Copper River and are no longer tentatively suitable. Table 2 displays the current adjusted tentatively suitable land base.

Table 2 - Tentatively Suitable Lands on the Chugach (CFR 219.14 (a) analysis updated for land conveyances):

	-----ACRES-----			
	Kenai	PWS	CR	Total
Total Forest lands	218,390	757,010	224,670	1,200,070
Unsuitable Forest lands	191,800	579,340	123,230	894,370
Tentatively Suitable Forest lands	26,590	177,670	101,440	305,700
Percent of T. Suitable Forest by Area	8.7 %	58.1 %	33.2 %	100 %

Lands determined to not be appropriate for timber production during the first analysis are classified as unsuitable and are not considered further. The remaining lands are classified as tentatively suitable for timber production and are used in the financial (section b) analysis.

36 CFR 219.14 (b) Analysis

This is a financial analysis to determine the costs and benefits for a range of timber production management intensities. The analysis is limited to the 305,700 acres of tentatively suitable lands from section (a). The analysis compares the direct costs of growing and harvesting trees, including capital expenditures required for timber production, to the anticipated receipts to the government.

Complete the financial analysis prior to formulating alternatives. Stratify tentatively suitable lands from section (a) into strata with similar costs and returns. Project costs and returns for both even and uneven-aged management intensities in both roaded and unroaded watershed associations. Identify timber production management intensities for each strata which result in the highest present net value using the following benefits and costs on a per acre basis in the analysis:

1. Direct benefits are expected gross receipts based on expected stumpage and payments in-kind from timber harvest considering future supply and demand situation for timber and upon timber production goals of the regional guide.

2. Direct costs include:

- a. Road construction, maintenance, decommissioning
- b. LTF construction, maintenance, decommissioning
- c. Logging Costs
- d. Sale Preparation Costs
- e. Sale Administration
- f. Reforestation Costs including site preparation
- g. Timber Sale Nepa Costs
- h. Timber Sale Appeal & Litigation Costs
- j. Timber Program Administration Cost
- k. Timber Sale Mitigation Costs

3. In addition to long-term yield, also consider the following costs and returns of managing the existing inventory in the financial analysis

- a. Stand Inventories
- b. Stand Data Management
- b. Silvicultural Prescriptions
- b. Precommercial Thinning
- c. Pruning

36 CFR 219.14 (c) Analysis

During the formulation of each revision alternative, a mix of land allocations will be made by assigning management area prescriptions to meet the specified management objectives of that alternative. Evaluate the tentatively suitable lands in each alternative considering the costs and benefits of alternative management intensities identified in the section (b) analysis and re-classify tentatively suitable lands as not appropriate for timber production if any of the following three conditions occur:

1. Other management objectives for the alternative limit timber production activities to the point where the minimum specific management requirements (i.e. forest-wide standards and guidelines) of 36 CFR 219.27 cannot be met. These include requirements for resource protection, riparian areas, vegetative manipulation, even-aged management, soil and water, diversity and silvicultural requirements.

2. Based upon a consideration of multiple-use objectives for the alternative, the land is proposed for resource uses that preclude timber production, such as wilderness.

3. The lands are not cost-efficient, over the planning horizon, in meeting forest objectives, which preclude timber production.

Designate lands identified as not appropriate as unsuitable in the preferred alternative. Identify lands not screened out of the above process as suitable for timber production.

Base Sale Schedule (BSS) and Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ)

For each alternative having lands identified as suitable for timber production from the section (c) analysis, calculate a base sale schedule that leads toward long-term sustained yield capacity (LTSYC) for suitable lands in each alternative. The sale schedule in the approved forest plan establishes the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) for the first decade and projected ASQ for future periods.

Forest Plan Preferred Alternative

Provide the timber sale program information for the Forest Plan (Preferred Alternative) in the format specified by Exhibits 1 through 6 of FSH 2409.13.

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