MEMORANDUM

File Code: 3000-4

To: State Foresters
   Forest Service Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and SPF Leadership

Date: February 6, 2015

Re: State Forest Action Plans—Five-Year Review and Future Updates

The State and Private Forestry Board appreciates the significant work of state forestry agencies, the Forest Service, and partners in implementing the Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies, together referred to as State Forest Action Plans (FAPs). This memo provides direction on: 1) National Priorities summary section (required); 2) Five-year FAP Reviews (required); and 3) FAP Updates (optional at this time, but required 10 years following completion of initial FAPs). For your convenience, you can find additional information and resources on the Forest Service State and Private Forestry (S&PF) Redesign website: http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/index.shtml.

You may recall that State Foresters are required to review the status of their FAP five years following completion, and to update the plans at least every ten years (if not updated sooner based on state needs). The five-year mark from the original completion of the State Forest Action Plans in June 2010, is quickly approaching, so we are providing guidance for complying with the review and update requirements. Additionally, this memo provides direction pursuant to a new requirement for all states regarding national priorities for FAPs as determined by a motion passed during the NASF annual meeting in September, 2014.

National Priorities Section:

As discussed and approved during the September, 2014 NASF Annual meeting (see www.stateforesters.org/nasf-member-motion-forest-action-plans-and-national-priorities), all Forest Action Plans must contain a new section titled “National Priorities” to include the following:

1. The National Priorities section will include three sub-sections based on the national priorities identified by Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill:
   - Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses
   - Protect Forests from Threats
2. Each state, territory, and the District of Columbia have flexibility to describe actions and success stories contributing to each national priority. This can be a text-only narrative or may also include photos, graphics, and numeric measures.

3. The National Priorities section will be added to each Forest Action Plan no later than November 20, 2015, and then updated with each Forest Action Plan update in the future.

4. The National Priorities section can either be incorporated into the FAP as a new section or can be included as a separate addendum to the document.

A sample Draft National Priorities Section Update Report is attached for your information as an example of one state’s approach. States are not required to use this particular format, but may choose to do so if it meets their needs.

Reviews of State Forest Action Plans

For most states (i.e., those that have not updated their FAP since June 2010), the five-year review is required by November 20, 2015.

Each State Forester is required to: 1) review the status of the FAP (this does not entail changes to the FAP); and 2) “check in” with the appropriate regional U.S. Forest Service (FS) staff.

The following elements are recommended, should be documented briefly, and provided to the appropriate regional/NA/IITF Forest Service staff/Director:

- Provide a brief summary (list) of implementation highlights from the past five years, listed by or crosswalked to the 3 national priorities or 11 objectives (http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/nationalprioritiesandobject.pdf)
- Provide a brief summary of implementation challenges discovered over the past five years
- Identify the implementation focus for the next five years
- Identify data needs or new issues revealed since the FAP was completed (to inform future updates)
- Conduct informal “check-in” with stakeholders regarding plan implementation (appropriate format determined by state)

It is important to note that the five-year review should focus on an internal review of the FAP as well as coordinating with FS staff to identify opportunities for technical assistance. Review documentation may be brief, and FS approval is not required for the five-year review process.

Updates to State Forest Action Plans

State Forest Action Plan updates are required at least every ten years; however, minor changes and full revisions can be made by states at any time. The process for updates is outlined below:

- Significant changes or full revisions: FS review and approval based on the requirements checklist (http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/checklist.pdf) is required if the FAP is completely revised or significant changes are made, such as changes to priority areas, re-writes of complete sections, or the addition of new strategies. The State Forester will complete the top of the checklist and submit it to the appropriate FS Regional...
Forester/Area/IITF Director. Once the FS Regional Forester/Area/IITF Director reviews the FAP to ensure it meets checklist requirements, they will sign the checklist and forward it for final approval by the FS Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry, on behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture.

- **Minor changes:** If only minor changes are made, such as small text edits that are grammatical in nature, or to clarify existing strategies, then the State Forester will provide a digest of the changes made and a copy of the updated FAP document(s) to the appropriate FS Regional Forester/Area/IITF Director and NASF (for posting on www.forestactionplans.org). No further action or FS approval is required.

**Flexibility and Timeline:** The State and Private Forestry Board understands the importance of flexibility for states to format and time FAP updates to best suit state needs while also meeting federal requirements. States may choose to update their FAPs more often than every ten years, and we recognize that will place states on different 5-year review and update timelines in the future. Due dates for future five-year reviews and ten-year updates will be based on when each individual state last completed an update to their FAP (not a national timeline).

For more information, please contact:

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Enclosure: Draft National Priorities Section Update Report