



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

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Route To:

Subject: 2003 Sale Activity Level and Project Activity Level Determinations

To: Forest Supervisors

The existing fuel buildup and forest health decline warrant an improved approach to reducing the risk of an unwanted ignitions on our National Forests in California. Fire and Aviation, Acquisition, and Natural Resource Management Staffs have designed the Project Activity Level (PAL) as the replacement for Sale Activity Level (SAL) as it applies to land management activities in the Region.

PAL is derived from a matrix using the Energy Release Component (ERC) and Ignition Component (IC) outputs from the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) processor within the Weather Information Management System (WIMS). WIMS receives weather observations from Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) which are used to calculate ERC and IC. PAL uses ERC to better represent large fuel moistures and weather from the previous 30-45 days to reduce significant fluctuations in activity levels on a daily basis. No manual fuel moisture measurements are necessary in PAL determinations.

RAWS data telemetry relies on proprietary satellite access; contractors are limited in their ability to meet NFDRS requirements due to satellite access. Therefore, contractors are not able to reasonably acquire the needed NFDRS weather stations and long term daily data needed for PAL decisions.

SAL precautions will remain in effect for those forests in which timber sale or other contracts have SAL requirements. Follow direction in the June 12, 2003 Regional direction on SAL determination.

Effective immediately on all forests, all procurement contracts advertised or solicited for award after July 31, 2003, will utilize the PAL to identify what emergency fire precautions apply to contract activities. All Forests must furnish both PAL and SAL daily indices for applicable contracts beginning August 1, 2003.

The Region has selected the Klamath, Lassen, and Stanislaus National Forests to provide comparison data between PAL and SAL.

The analysis results will be formally reported to Fire and Aviation Management and shared among affected staffs, with all Forests in this region, and with both timber sale purchasers and affected procurement contractors. The FAM and NRM staff will use this data to further validate and make any needed modifications to PAL system and report to me on or before February 15, 2004, for a decision to fully implement PAL on all timber sale contracts in CY 2004.



To determine the applicable PAL a Forest may select any one or a combination of RAWS within the fire danger rating area within which contract operations will be conducted. The Forest will apply the 1978 version of NFDRS Fuel Model “G” exclusively to determine PAL.

Each PAL describes limitations or requirements to which a contract activity must conform. Each PAL is identified by the letter “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, or “E” and is fully described in the enclosed draft regional timber sale contract special provision C (T) 7.22 – Emergency Fire Precautions (xx/xx). This provision provides that the contracting officer (CO) may also agree to additional regionally specified emergency fire precautions to allow certain operations under PAL “C” and “D” that are described in the enclosed draft agreement. When conditions fall within the PAL “Ev” range a unit line officer may consult with the unit fire management officer and CO to determine if site-specific conditions warrant a variance permitting operations and determine the specified emergency precautions needed. Procurement COs may use the sale contract provision and agreement language to incorporate similar requirements in procurement contracts.

Please direct questions to Ray Hermit (707-562-8926), Chris Click (707-562-8685), Tom Cable (530-252-6630), or Miley Sutherland (530-252-6621).

/s/ Kent P. Connaughton (for)
JACK A. BLACKWELL
Regional Forester

cc: Doug Lee, Miley Sutherland, Ray Quintanar, Ray Hermit, Tom Locker, Tom Cable, Chris Fontana, Russell A Gripp, Beth Little, Brent Handley, Stephen Bishop