

NATIONAL TREE MARKING PAINT COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Hot Springs, Arkansas
May 12 & 13, 2004

INTRODUCTION

The tree-marking paint (TMP) meeting was held at the Clarion Hotel in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The meeting began at 8:30 am, Wednesday, May 12th.

Bob Monk, Committee Chair, summarized the meeting agenda and welcomed new participants. Andrea Harrison, Denise Elsbernd, and Randy Schober of GSA attended. Byron Brown and Gary Baber, Region 8, filled the Procurement role in the absence of Gail Strickland. Michael McVeigh (NFFE representative), Region 1 representative (retired), and Rod Sallee (WO FM representative) were unable to attend. Randy Terrill and Sherman Drew represented NCP Coatings. John Thompson and Mark Epstein represented Lighthouse for the Blind (LHB). A copy of the attendance list can be obtained by contacting Bob Monk.

COMPANY MEETINGS

NCP Coatings, the current supplier of TMP, was the only company that had representation at the meeting. Because of the proprietary nature of this portion of the meeting notes are not included in this record.

LHB mentioned a customer satisfaction questionnaire that was sent out recently. They invite all users of their products (not just paint) to provide input.

WASHINGTON OFFICE UPDATE

Dick Fitzgerald presented information about current events at the Washington Office (WO) related to forest management. Topics included splitting of Forest/Range Management into two component management areas, vacancies at the WO level, stewardship contracts, 2400-6T contract changes, new 2400-13 and 2400-13T contracts, and "designation by prescription".

OIL-BASED REUSE/COLLECTION

Bob Monk presented a review of the oil-based TMP reuse effort. As of November, 2003 all the oil-based TMP had been mixed. This completed the contract with NCP Coatings. As of December, 2003 all of the TMP was shipped and the second collection site (Brooklyn, MS) was closed. Approximately 125,000 gallons of mixed paint was disposed of through donations or sales.

CURRENT CONTRACT PAINTS

Waterborne TMP has been available for several years. Prior to the end of 2003 a new paint was made available. This "rain resistant" paint was developed to overcome inherent "wash-off" problems in the waterborne paint. The rain resistant paint is available in bulk and aerosol containers. Six colors are available. Red is not included.

Approximately 110,000 gallons of paint have been ordered in the past year (90% waterborne and 10% rain resistant). Orders by color are approximately 40% blue, 35% orange, 10% yellow, 10% green, and 5% (white, black and red combined). Prices for the waterborne paint were stable with no price increase in 2003. Prices for fall 2004 are anticipated to rise due to raw materials and shipping costs.

There has been concern over the price of paint, particularly the rain resistant type. With much of the marking being done in small trees, the proportional price of paint to volume removed is getting higher. Several strategies for reducing the amount or cost of paint being used were mentioned. This included the type of designation, method of application, and units of issue that are ordered (buying in the larger bulk containers or minimizing the use of aerosol). The cost basis of the paint was looked at. The final cost includes manufacturing (NCP Coatings), packaging and shipping (LHB), and product management (GSA). The GSA role includes managing the contract with LHB, receiving and processing orders, and handling quality and shipping issues. The current GSA markup for this process is 16%.

Andrea Harrison, GSA, outlined the GSA procedure for handling TMP and some of the additional responsibilities they have based on the security requirements for TMP handling. They have encountered higher numbers of errors due to the Forest Service change to a revised ordering system that took effect last February. Many of the errors are related to the requirement for a DRN number. Andrea stated that the markup may change (potentially a drop to 15%) but an evaluation of the actual cost done recently indicated that it is closer to 23% to 27%.

Byron Brown and Gary Baber, Region 8 Acquisitions Management, explained what the DRN number is and how it is used in the ordering system.

Denise Elsbernd, GSA, stated that paint could be included in the GSA Advantage catalogue. Is this desirable? The consensus was that we do not want the paint to be listed in the catalogue.

Bob Monk stated that the GSA has been providing excellent service. Though there is no complaint with the service provided it is incumbent upon the Forest Service to determine whether this service can be done in-house at a lesser cost. This presumes that it can be done and that people are available to do the work. Based on discussion at the meeting, Byron Brown will make a recommendation to Washington Office Acquisitions.

Health concerns – there was a report from a crew of headaches while using the waterborne citrus paint. This is the only officially reported occurrence. The waterborne citrus paint is an optional paint to the regular waterborne paint. The crew indicated that they would not be using any more of this paint. There is a hotline number for MSDS (1-866-588-7659) for all products we use. It is recommended to have the NSN and product information available when requesting a MSDS.

Performance of waterborne paint – there have not been many performance complaints in the past year. Most relate to problems reported in the past including weak tracer results in some of the older waterborne paint. This problem has been fixed for the newer issued paint. Another recurring problem is with fading when applied to aspen (smooth) bark. Use of rain resistant paint on aspen may overcome this problem. There was also incidence of lumpy paint. This is in older paint that had

been stored. Extra shaking may solve this issue. A reminder to paint users is to check the quality of new paint batches when they are received so that any quality problems can be dealt with immediately. Poor quality paint can be replaced within 12 months after receipt.

Performance of rain resistant paint – The main concerns with this paint are related to the aerosol containers. Spray tips are a problem in that they sometimes do not attach well. Because the paint is under higher pressure than the old aerosols the paint is evacuated faster and consequently fewer trees are marked per can. Mark Epstein, LHB, presented two new aerosol tips that he is testing. Samples will be sent out for evaluation in the field. New tips will stay attached to the can better and somewhat restrict the flow of paint so that paint application will be more efficient. Aerosol cans with new tips will be available after field testing is complete and the supply of the current tips is used up.

Aerosol use notes: 1. Some of the CO₂ propellant goes into solution in the paint. Shaking the can releases the CO₂ gas, increasing the pressure (similar to a can of soda). Conversely, not shaking the can may keep the pressure lower resulting in less paint expelled. This may aid in more marking per can. 2. Marking wet bark – rain resistant paint can be used in wetter conditions than the waterborne paint. However, marking trees when there is a film of water on the bark can cause problems with adherence. Use of aerosol rain resistant paint is a better choice when wet bark conditions exist. This is due to the presence of acetone in the aerosol that is not present in the bulk variety. 3. Reminder – it is recommended that the can not be turned upside down to clear the tip between uses. This will quickly expel the CO₂ and may result in loss of all propellant.

There was a discussion about the batch numbers on the can. LHB had requested to be able to put the batch numbers on the bottom of the cans to reduce printing costs of the specially designed labels for TMP. The numbers are small and there is a problem being able to read them on the aerosol cans. Mark (LHB) explained that there is a coating on the bottom of some of the cans (from can production process) that sometimes makes it difficult to read the batch numbers. Mark indicated that they could put the batch numbers on the labels (as was done in the past) but we would get the “generic” labels that LHB prints in-house. It was agreed that we would switch back to the generic labels with batch numbers on them as soon as the current inventory of labels was used up.

TEST SITES

Each representative with a test site (Regions 3, 6, 8, and 9) reported on the conditions of NCP Coatings paint at the test sites. The official rain resistant paint was applied in fall/early winter of 2003. Colors and tracer results for this paint are all acceptable. There were some concerns with the viscosity of the paint during application at the test sites. This information was relayed to Randy Terrill, NCP Coatings, at time of application. Since that time the viscosity has been improved.

Developmental samples of rain resistant paint were also applied at the sites in fall 2001. These samples are also acceptable for tracer and color.

Waterborne paint was applied at the sites in fall 1999. Yellow and orange show signs of fading. Evaluation indicates that they are marginal on some species or in some areas. Fading is worse on

rough barked species and where sun is more intense. As reported previously, older samples of waterborne paints have problems with detection of the field tracer. Tracer is still detectable with enhancement techniques including the use of acetone (finger nail polish remover) to soften the paint and blotting with a white tissue (provides color contrast).

PRODUCTION MARKING WITH AEROSOL

Currently there is policy in place within the Forest Service to not use aerosol cans for production marking. This policy was developed when the old oil-based paint was being used. The propellants and solvent used in the old paint posed a potential health risk with continued heavy use. To minimize risk, use was limited to short term or intermittent use such as sale administration. During development of the rain resistant paint a pollution prevention policy was put in place (to implement an Executive Order) that limited the use of aerosol cans. Since this new paint uses CO₂ as a propellant and has a citrus based solvent, an exception was granted to the pollution prevention restriction on the use of aerosol. The previous existing policy was incorporated into this exception, also not allowing production marking with aerosol. The new aerosol does not have the health issues of the old paint, nor does it contain the chemicals of concern that the pollution policy was developed to control.

It was recommended that the policy relating to the use of aerosol paint be modified to allow production marking. This would allow field personnel to make local decisions on aerosol use based on economics, efficiency, and employee needs. Dick Fitzgerald will pursue a policy change to the Forest Service Handbook.

PAINT CLEANUP

It is more difficult to clean equipment after the use of rain resistant paint than the waterborne paint. This is particularly true of the backpack sprayers. Several methods have been tried with varying success. LHB indicated that they will look at formulations for a cleaner. NCP Coatings suggested a 50/50 mix of Pinesol and water. LHB indicated that they sell a Pinesol type product available through GSA. Whatever is used should minimize or eliminate the need for hazardous waste disposal of used cleaning material.

EQUIPMENT

Bob Monk presented information about development of backpack paint sprayers. The paint sprayers, pressurized by CO₂, have been available for several months and were distributed to each Region (approximately 5 each). The sprayers were generally well accepted but field use showed there were some concerns with the spray wands (dripping) and availability of CO₂. Additional units will be distributed soon to be tested with a different nozzle and a rechargeable air compressor as an alternative to the CO₂.

AERIAL MARKING

Frank Duran, Region 6, presented information about an aerial spray marking (helicopter) project in Oregon. This is the first Forest Service use of the system presented at last year's meeting by Keven Ireland of UAP Timberland. The system works well for boundary layout of large areas. The system is expensive but can paint and map units very quickly. It would be most useful on steep ground,

where employee safety is a significant concern, or where layout time is a limiting factor (such as in this project with fire salvage on a large area of steep ground).

The paint used with this system is different than the TMP currently used. NCP Coatings volunteered to work with the system owners to see if the paint we currently use could be modified to be compatible with their system.

GUEST SPEAKER

Al Newman, Forest Supervisor, Ouachita National Forest gave an overview of local forest management and local concerns with TMP (cost, tracer, batch numbers, etc). These are some of the issues being discussed at the meeting.

RED PAINT/COLOR POLICY

A question was raised by Walt Smith, BLM as to whether red rain resistant paint could be purchased, particularly aerosol. It was previously decided not to make red in the rain resistant type since it was the lowest quantity ordered and it is available in the waterborne. It was also mentioned that the national color scheme for TMP restricted timber sale/cutting unit boundary marking to orange TMP (a Forest Service, but not BLM, policy). An additional color, possibly red, would make field work more flexible.

Dick Fitzgerald stated that the use of red as a timber sale unit boundary was not desirable because of potential conflicts with property boundary identification (also red). It was suggested, and agreed, that white could be used if an additional color was necessary for identifying timber sale unit boundaries. Use of white will provide more flexibility though it may not be useful on some species (white/light bark) or conditions. It was decided for the Forest Service that red would remain available in waterborne but that it would not be available in rain resistant. Dick Fitzgerald will facilitate a revision of the policy in the Forest Service Handbook to allow the use of white for timber sale/cutting unit boundaries.

BLM, not having the same policy restrictions, still finds it desirable to have rain resistant aerosol available in red. NCP Coatings indicated that the minimum batch size is 300 gallons (approximately 3500 cans). Walt Smith, BLM, will check to see if that quantity is needed.

All tree marking activities related to timber sales requires the use of official tree-marking paint with tracer. Painting of trees for non-timber sale activities such as property boundaries and research work does not require the use of official tree-marking paint. However, if the official tree-marking paint is used all required security rocedures must be adhered to.

PAINT SECURITY

Dave Johns, Region 5, presented information on changes to the TMP accountability form allowing for separate accounting of TMP retained in vehicles. This required an extra column on the form. The form available on the SDTDC website is the most current.

It was requested that the "#VALUE" displayed in the calculation fields be removed so that the form can be printed out and used. Several people indicated that they had tried to do that but had not

been able to. Bob Simonson indicated that he would attempt to make that change. There was also a request to label the tabs of the worksheets to indicate the appropriate contents.

SHIPPING

There have been several shipping delays because of unapproved shipping addresses. It was decided to update the list. Bob Monk will verify that the list he has is the proper one and then send the appropriate portions to each Regional Representative who will then update the information for their Region. Old addresses will be deleted. Phone numbers need to be verified as the proper contact number including 24 hour notice for delivery.

Other problems with delivery are related to delivery on weekends or delivery when the proper personnel are not available to accept the shipment. Shipments are supposed to be delivered Monday through Friday and a 24 hour notice of delivery can be requested on the Form 633. This requires extra processing by GSA. It was suggested that ALL shipments have the 24 hours advance notice of delivery. There is usually an extra cost for this service from the transportation company. It was felt that this additional cost was worth it for the added security it would provide. After the address list is updated, LHB will add the 24 hour notice of delivery (and M-F) requirement to all orders. They will try this for approximately 2 months to establish a cost.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Safety Officer – no safety representative has been to the last two meetings. It is agreed that a national level safety officer is invited. Also invite the Regional Safety Officer in the Region where the meeting is held.

JHA – Dave Johns will provide a revision of the JHA that includes a reference to transportation of paint in vehicles. This will replace the current JHA on the website.

Equipment Cleaning – Gerry Ryszka requested that a proposal presented for consideration by the FM Steering Committee be adopted. The proposal was for TMP equipment cleaning and is particularly important to get a product to remove dried paint.

TMP Test Sites – To maintain uniformity of evaluation of results from the paint test sites it was recommended that the tech committee (4 Regional Reps and Chairperson) jointly review the test site at least once every 4 or 5 years. This should be done prior to the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The 2005 meeting will be held in Wyoming in Region 4, tentatively the week of May 23rd. Dates need to be checked to make sure that the meeting is held outside the high use season to assure space availability. Jackson Hole will be reviewed as a potential meeting location. Jeff Laub, Region 4 representative will check use season and recommend final meeting dates.