

NATIONAL TREE MARKING PAINT COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Jackson, Wyoming
May 25 and 26, 2005

INTRODUCTION

The tree-marking paint (TMP) meeting was held at the Inn at Jackson Hole, Teton Village, Wyoming. The meeting began at 8:30 am, Wednesday, May 25th.

The meeting was chaired by Bob Monk who summarized the meeting goals and welcomed the participants. There were a few new attendees due to personnel changes and the topics to be discussed. Randy Schober, Rita Velilla, and Margaret Conroy represented GSA. Steve Marsh, Michael Van Dyck, and Kelly Koeppel are new members of the committee. Jeff Horgenson filled in for Gerald Ryszka who could not attend this year. Tom Maffei (Region 1 representative), Michael McVeigh (NFFE representative) and Sam Williams (FPL 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 Simonson at San Dimas Technology and Development Center (SDTDC).

ROLE OF THE TMP COMMITTEE

Because there were several new attendees at the meeting the roles and interactions of San Dimas Technology and Development Center, Lighthouse for the Blind, JWOD, and NCP Coatings were explained.

A Powerpoint presentation used by NCP Coatings and a video used by LHB to explain their individual roles will be included on the SDTDC website. These presentations include very good overviews of how the paint is manufactured, tested, packaged, inspected, and shipped.

COMPANY MEETINGS

NCP Coatings, the current manufacturer of TMP for the Forest Service, was the only paint company that was represented at the meeting. Because of the proprietary nature of this portion of the meeting, notes are not included in this record.

Sherman Drew, NCP Coatings, made a brief presentation of a backpack paint sprayer that their company was evaluating for use with paint.

WASHINGTON OFFICE UPDATE

Dick Fitzgerald presented an update of information at the Washington Office level related to forest management. Topics included staffing changes, a brief history of what caused the need for various types of TMP, current court cases and possible impacts to the timber program, an update on stewardship contracts, the cost of marking trees vs. the cost of paint, and an update on roadless area management.

OLD BUSINESS

The previous meeting notes were briefly reviewed. It was again suggested that a WO Health/Safety representative be present at the meeting. The representative has not attended the last 2 meetings because of priorities/funding/agenda needs. Health/Safety has personnel available for telephone conference if needed. For future meetings the WO Health/Safety office will be contacted for possible agenda items and sent a copy of the draft agenda. The local Regional Safety Officer will be invited to the meeting. If significant health or safety issues are to be discussed a representative should be encouraged to attend the meeting.

CURRENT CONTRACT PAINT

A total of approximately 90,000 gallons of TMP was purchased by the Forest Service. The quantities by color were reviewed. Very little red paint has been ordered and the need for this color was discussed. It is allocated for identification of property boundary lines. Tree-marking paint with tracer is not necessary for property boundary line marking.

Do personnel assigned to Research need to use the official tree-marking paint? They do not need to use tree-marking paint if their use of paint on trees is outside timber sale areas. Within timber sale areas, use needs to be coordinated with timber sale preparation/administration personnel. Not requiring TMP use mitigates a security concern over tracking (accounting for) the paint. Because Research use of paint is minimal there is not a significant health concern.

CREDIT CARD ORDERING

The ability to use credit cards for ordering TMP has become a significant issue over the past year. The Forest Service (and the federal government in general) has significantly changed its procurement procedures over the last few years. It is much easier to purchase supplies using a credit card. However, due to the need for TMP security, it has not been feasible to order the paint using credit cards. The WO procurement office has been working with GSA to establish a procedure to assure TMP security while using credit cards for ordering. Two possible methods were discussed that could facilitate ordering using credit cards (specifics are not given in these notes for security reasons). With proper security procedures it is possible to order TMP using credit cards. Forest Service Procurement (Kelly Koeppe) and GSA (Margaret Conroy) will continue to develop a credit card ordering procedure. They will coordinate with Bob Monk. Bob Monk will forward a list of authorized ordering units to Kelly Koeppe following the meeting (this was completed prior to posting of these notes). The authorized ordering list will be posted on the SDTDC website (internet) with restricted access. The regional representatives and WO procurement will be given access and they will be the only ones able to update the list. WO procurement will provide updates to GSA.

PAINT PRICES

Paint prices were discussed. There was a question about which price was correct. There was a discrepancy between pricing on various websites (GSA Advantage, SDTDC site, and Global Supply). The differences were small but caused problems when ordering. GSA representatives agreed to check the differences and correct errors. GSA will also determine if the TMP can be isolated on the GSA Advantage website so that unauthorized personnel cannot access or purchase the paint without being on the authorized ordering list. Paint prices on the SDTDC website are correct. These

prices are updated by GSA near the end of the year. The latest prices were posted in December 2004.

UNAUTHORIZED PAINT

Only TMP (with tracer) specifically made for the Forest Service and BLM is authorized for use on timber sales. However, when searching for TMP on GSA's or other websites, other tree-marking paint is available for sale. This can cause some confusion to new employees ordering TMP. In the past non Forest Service paint has been ordered that cannot be used. This wastes money and time. WO Forest management will issue a policy letter reminding field personnel that only paint specifically manufactured for the Forest Service can be used on Forest Service timber sales.

TEST SITE STATUS

Tree-marking paint test site status was reviewed. Due to personnel changes the Region 9 site was not checked. The Region 3, 6 and 8 sites showed that the paint was generally holding up well. There was some weakness in the early (1999) waterborne paint tracer. This was previously noticed and since March 2000 the amount of tracer was quadrupled. There has been some fading of some colors particularly in Region 3. This is on the south side of the trees and is sunlight related. Even though there is some fading it is still identifiable with the original colors. The newer rain resistant paint appears to be holding up very well.

RAIN RESISTANT PAINT

There have been some performance problems related to the use of the rain resistant paint (RR) at lower temperatures. Apparently the viscosity increases and makes the paint difficult to pump through the hand guns. The RR is not formulated for use at very low temperatures as is the waterborne paint. Though some of the complaints are for use above the minimum 20 degree temperature many of them are at temperatures closer to zero. Some of the use is probably due to employees not being fully aware of the temperature constraints of the RR paint use. There should be no attempts to thin RR paint to improve viscosity at lower temperatures. Field personnel do not have access to the citrus solvent and other thinning agents should not be used. Alternatives to using RR paint in hand guns at low temperatures are: 1. When use will be minor consider using aerosol paint. 2. If larger marking jobs are anticipated in cold weather and RR paint is needed consider using the backpack sprayer. Both of these choices will negate the issue of trigger pull. Bob Monk will draft an informational letter for TMP users specifically identifying temperature information. NCP Coatings representative stated that they will attempt to improve the viscosity at the lower temperatures.

OTHER PERFORMANCE ISSUES

A field unit reported that they received cans of orange aerosol that were brownish in color. Batch number information and a sample can should be sent to LHB for evaluation.

The newest aerosol tips seem to be generally working well. These tips are seated prior to shipping. There have been some problems where the tips are not properly seated. Samples of these should be sent to LHB for review. They need to see examples of the problems so that they can make

improvements. LHB is continuing to look for tips that meet our needs and are easy for their employees to use prior to shipping. The current tips are an improvement over the previous tips.

The delivery rate of paint from the aerosol cans seems to be high. It would be desirable to lower the delivery rate so that more trees can be marked per can. LHB will look at improving delivery rates (tip aperture, can pressure etc.).

SECURITY

Timber Sale Accountability Reviews indicates that there has been an improvement in TMP security. Inventory sheets are well maintained. However, if a laptop is used for inventory records backup (hardcopies) of the sheets should be available in a separate location. A copy of the district reconciliation audit is satisfactory for this purpose.

The paint inventory forms will be modified to make them easier to print and use. Updated versions will replace the old versions on the SDTDC website.

SHIPPING

Previous problems with getting quicker shipments to Region 10 (Alaska) have been resolved thanks to a system set up between the Region and LHB. LHB's willingness to accommodate Forest Service needs is appreciated. The posted price list does not identify Alaska in the shipping zone information. Alaska needs to be added to zone 8-10.

Occasionally there is some damage to paint shipments such as crushed or leaking cans. Even though this could be refused at the receiving location this is not a good idea. Refusing the damaged material could cause problems with security. If paint is refused and compensated for it would become the property of the shipper. The shipper should not be able to keep paint because disposal or use would be unknown. Damaged shipments should be reported to the Regional Reps and LHB. Some minor damage may have to be accepted. Significant damage may require a claim with the shipper but damaged goods should not be returned to the shipper.

There was a report of mixed batch numbers within the same box. LHB will label boxes with both batch numbers if this type of packaging is necessary in the future.

HEALTH/SAFETY

There have been few health related comments about the current TMP. There has been a report of headaches on one unit with extended use of the citrus solvent paints. There have also been a few complaints about the strong smell of the paint (smells like oranges). Since the citrus solvent paints are an alternative to the waterborne paint the users that expressed the concerns have opted to use the waterborne paint only.

TEST SITES

Two of the four Regional Representatives with test sites have retired. New people have been assigned to evaluate the sites. It was recognized as desirable to establish consistency in evaluating the sites. The four Regional Representatives with paint sites, along with the SDTDC Paint Project

Leader will meet at one of the paint sites and develop evaluation consistency. The manufacturer's representative will be invited to offer advice based on the specification requirements.

EQUIPMENT

The beefy backpacks have been fully developed for use with CO₂. There have been several shipped to each Region. An alternative compressed air option is being evaluated. A different trigger system is also being evaluated. SDTDC requests comments on each of these alternatives—what works best, under what circumstances, any recommended improvements, etc.

Some comments and improvement suggestions have been received. The backpack sprayer is generally well received as an alternative to the hand gun system. Some comments include: dripping tip (due to wand), concern for weight, and uncomfortable for smaller people. The newer trigger system will avoid the dripping. Weight may be reduced by using the compressed air option (don't need CO₂ tank and regulator). A smaller tank can be reviewed for weight and comfort concerns. However there are some issues with the size of the tank access for filling and cleaning. There was a suggestion to review adapting pellet gun CO₂ cartridges to reduce weight.

SDTDC will compile information/comments on the backpack sprayers including options for wand use, tank size, CO₂ vs. compressed air, etc. Local modifications to meet local needs will be encouraged.

CLEAN UP

Cleanup of the beefy backpack was discussed. Waterborne paint can easily be cleaned up with water. Rain Resistant paint cannot be cleaned up with water and citrus solvent is not commercially available in small quantities. The paint manufacturer recommends a 50/50 mix of Pine-sol and water. This will do an adequate job. Walt Smith (BLM Representative) uses a product (soy based) manufactured by a company in Oregon. If interested in trying this, contact Walt for further information.

AEROSOL CAN DISPOSAL

Several questions have arisen over the disposal of aerosol cans. State and local requirements vary on the handling of wastes. The Forest Service issued a Pollution Prevention Policy letter in October 2002 (this letter is on the SDTDC website). This letter identifies the acceptable way of handling aerosol cans. Concern has been expressed about the cost of purchasing the proper equipment identified in the letter for processing aerosol can waste. It is necessary to properly dispose of hazardous waste and the policy should be followed. If a field unit generates enough aerosol cans meeting hazardous waste guidelines (completely empty cans are not a hazardous waste) they either need to purchase the proper handling equipment or contract with a local certified hazardous waste handler. Coordination with the unit's hazmat officer is advised.

FUTURE NEEDS

A request was made to establish another color for use in identifying timber sale boundaries. Under the current policy only orange can be used for boundary identification. White was suggested as an alternative. Also suggested was a new color—maybe pink.

After discussion it was decided that red paint would be dropped as a color after current supplies are used exhausted (as identified previously very little red is purchased and it is not required for timber sales). Pink paint would be added to the approved colors. The pink would then be the secondary boundary marking color. White will be allowed for boundary identification. The WO will put out a letter identifying the use of white for boundaries. After the pink color is available as the secondary boundary color white will become a tertiary boundary color. The national color policy will need revision.

NCP Coatings agreed to make up samples of pink paint and do accelerated weathering testing. The pink will also be available in waterborne in quarts and gallons. The pink will be available in RR in quarts and aerosol.

New NSN numbers will be necessary for each size and type. It will also be necessary to supplement the paint specification.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The SDTDC TMP web page was modified recently. The changes were viewed by the committee as an improvement. During the meeting several suggestions were made to include additional information on the site. Bob Simonson agreed to facilitate the changes.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was discussed. Is there a need to meet in one year? Can the meeting be shortened?

Two years was felt to be too long between meetings. Meeting in the fall (18 months) is very difficult because of field work. It was decided to leave it at one year. The length of the meeting is determined by the issues/topics to be discussed. It was decided let the agenda determine the length of the meeting.

The meeting is rotated around the various Regions. Region 5 was selected for the next meeting. The meeting will be planned for the Eureka, CA area the week of May 15th.

The meeting adjourned at noon, Thursday, May 26, 2005