

2013 Tree Marking Paint Committee Meeting

May 21 – 23, 2013
Charleston, SC

Attendees

- Dave Haston, SDTDC
- Ed Messerlie, SDTDC
- Dick Fitzgerald, WO-FM
- Kelly Koeppe, WO-AQM (called In)
- Jacob Somerset, R2
- Kim Newbauer, R3
- Jim McRae, R4
- Dan Merritt, R5
- Mary Yonce, R8
- Ken Dinsmore, R10
- Teresa Streuli, NFFE
- Lindsey Babcock, BLM (called in)
- Bill Hensley, BLM (called In)
- Richard Schultz, BLM (called in)
- Randy Terrill, NCP Coatings
- Sherman Drew, NCP Coatings
- John Thompson, Lighthouse for the Blind (LHB)
- Dave Robson, Lighthouse for the Blind (LHB)
- Rick Myatt, MLM International
- Rolf Schietsel, Motip Dupli

Introduction

Dave Haston of the San Dimas Technology and Development Center (SDTDC) and Mary Yonce (R8) started the meeting with a general welcome. Appreciation was expressed to Mary Yonce for coordinating the field trip to the Region 8 tree marking paint (TMP) test location on the Francis Marion National Forest.

SDTDC Update – Ed Messerlie

Ed gave a brief summary of the mission of the San Dimas Technology and Development Center. He mentioned that SDTDC was originally tasked with the development of fire equipment. SDTDC and the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) are tasked with developing technology solutions to problems encountered within the Forest Service. The two technology development centers were established to pool expertise in developing solutions, instead of Regions and units working independently to develop their own solutions. The two facilities are currently under the direction of one center director.

SDTDC is currently involved with numerous projects across the agency. Some of the projects include defining policy for UAS (Unmanned Survey Systems), fire protection devices for bulldozers and engines, mapping technology inside of logging equipment to measure pre and post treatments, specifications for low volume forest roads, maintaining over 80 fire equipment specifications, drop testing of aircraft for wildland firefighting and testing check-in/out policy.

WO-FM Update – Dick Fitzgerald

Dick discussed the history of the tree marking paint and how/why, the committee was originally formed. He also mentioned that people are becoming more concerned with the cost of tree marking paint. However, a reduction of paint usage changes the workload from pre-sale to sale administration. It was recognized that people need to be educated (at all levels in the FS) about the importance of using a quality product that is safe for the employees and the contractors that use it and the true costs of marking trees versus not marking trees.

Industry Update

The Washington Office is looking at the cost of laying out timber sales and how the NEPA process can be improved to become more efficient. Over the last several years, the amount of infrastructure (mills) has decreased making the accomplishment of vegetation treatments more difficult. The use of paper is greatly declining as technology is rapidly advancing. The economics of the biomass market is very difficult in many locations due to other less expensive and “green” options such as solar, natural gas, and wood pellets. Intermountain Resources defaulting on numerous timber sales across mostly Region 2 has caused huge problems within the Region.

Company Presentations

Motip Dupli - Rick Myatt/Rolf Schietsel

This was the first time the company has come to the paint meeting and was attending as a fact-finding mission to see if they would be able to supply paint for tree marking. They are a chemical manufacturing company and have a vast product line including tree-marking paint, which is widely used in Europe. It is a family owned operation and has been in business for 55 years. They are currently number one in the European market. They have a research and development laboratory and are currently registered with the EPA and the California Air Resources Board. They realize that the standards in the US and Europe are different and they must still meet the standards and specifications set forth for our tree marking paint in order to be a possible supplier in the future. Sample aerosol cans in a variety of colors were provided for evaluation.

LHB Industries – John Thompson/Dave Robison

John shared the history of AbilityOne (formally JWOD). In addition to packaging tree marking paint, LHB also provides numerous military spec. items. The mission of LHB is to assist individuals who are legally blind in order to maintain dignity and independence by making employment, education, and support services available. For every \$1.00 of materials purchased from LHB by the Government, \$3.33 is returned to the Government in the form of decreased transfer payments.

The LHB started producing aerosol paint in 1986. Tree making paint is sold to the Forest Service under the Ability One Program (Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act). Tree marking paint provides for the equivalent of six FTE blind employees.

John discussed the amount of paint sold per color and mentioned the types or colors with a lower demand (Type B). Even with sequestration this year, John said the amount of paint sold is about average of what it currently is at this time of the year. Orders are usually shipped within one week. LHB recognizes that shipping and advanced notice is still an issue but they are continually trying to improve and work with the shipper. They have a solid working relationship with their primary shipper but lose control when a third party (joint line carrier) delivers the paint. A third party trucking company delivers paint to the remote locations of many of the district offices. John indicated that LHB is working with their delivery companies to address delivery issues. These companies are instructed to not leave freight unattended, and they are required to provide 24-hour advance notice prior to delivery. Customers should inform LHB promptly about any delivery issues.

The current LHB system does not have a way of storing and retaining credit card information. LHB will be continuing to implement a new system that is compatible with the existing ordering system and will allow credit cards to be charged at the time of shipment. This system is still under development.

LHB is the only company on the Qualified Products List (QPL) for tree marking paint so they are the only company currently qualified to provide tree-marking paint to the government.

NCP Coatings – Sherman Drew/Randy Terrill

Sherman Drew shared with the committee that NCP Coatings has been involved with tree marking paint production since the transition from lead-based tree marking paint. He added that NCP Coatings is a small veteran owned company. He feels that there is a lack of understanding from Forest leaders as to the importance and history of tree marking paint. Sherman thinks the paint committee is an integral part of keeping the history and its importance alive. Price changes are determined by changes in the producer price index (PPI). The goal is to hold current pricing for FY2014.

Randy Terrill presented an overview of NCP including paint production, development, availability, testing, and their continued dedication to meeting the needs of their customers. Randy discussed the hybrid paint timeline (2007-2013) and the process of how it became available for use. Field-testing on a hybrid paint type started in 2008. Randy indicated that orange and blue water cleanup make up the majority (two thirds) of the tree marking paint they produce. This stays consistent year in and year out. He emphasized that product success is dependent on selecting the right product for the job.

Randy appreciates having a face-to-face meeting each year to know their customer and be able to deal with issues or concerns from the committee. He also mentioned that they have had zero non-compliance issues on their last six ISO audits. NCP is continually trying to improve products and keep prices as low as they can. NCP and LHB both change prices based on PPI. NCP has multiple sources for raw materials in order to deliver the product at the lowest possible cost to the government.

Randy mentioned that he thinks the bark composition (species, hard/soft wood, burnt trees, etc.) could be a major factor of how paint stays on the trees (durability).

Status of Action Items from 2012 Meeting:

Completed Action Items:

- LHB shipping cost estimator updated.
- Annual certification (formulation) received from NCP Coatings and LHB Industries.
- Hybrid paint ordered from LHB for employee exposure study.
- Type B questionnaire provided to regional reps
- Briefing paper submitted to WO-FM Director (3/20/13) for decision to discontinue Type B.
- Exposure testing performed on Lassen NF, report received from Federal Occupational Health.
- Procedure for missing and/or damaged paint updated on TMP website.
- Shipping label updated by LHB, directs carrier to notify LHB immediately if there is missing or damaged paint during shipment.
- Phase-in of new orange and pink type A formulation (in process)
- Paint selection matrix guide posted on website
- Specification updated
- QPL updated

Pending Action Items:

- Security audit of NCP Coatings and LHB Industries

Law Enforcement Issues

No issues. No one attended for LE&I.

Acquisitions Management

WO – Kelly Koeppe (called-In)

Kelly informed the committee that credit card and Activity Address Code (AAC) lists are updated monthly (usually between the 1st and the 7th). If it is urgent to add a new person to the list then Kelly is willing to add people to the system throughout the month. She mentioned that things are running smoothly on her end. If AAC #'s and/or addresses need to be updated then Kelly can do that. BLM does not use AAC#s but instead uses a site number for their code.

We recently converted to a new financial system (FMFI). There were some issues validating job codes but they are working through that process.

Ordering System and Shipping Issues:

Windows 7 and Internet Explorer 8 are causing ordering issues. Some workarounds include using "Chrome" or "Firefox" browsers. Another workaround in Internet Explorer 8 is to reset the settings and then immediately go into the ordering portal to purchase TMP. LHB is working on new ecommerce

software for billing. Currently, when an order comes into LHB they manually put it on hold so the credit card is not charged. Once the paint is shipped then they charge the credit card. The new ecommerce software is supposed to charge the credit card once the order has been shipped.

Type B Paint

There is very little use in the Type B paint. From March 2012 to March 2013 there were six orders total: five from the BLM and one from the FS (Region 3). All units that placed the six orders were contacted and the respective regional reps verified that other paint types would meet the unit's needs and that they would not need to order Type B paint in the future. A briefing paper recommended to WO-FM that we discontinue Type B paint. The Type B paint will remain in the specification and NCP/LHB is willing to produce it in the future if needed. Teresa will check with the union to confirm that this approach is supported.

Health and Safety

There was no participation by FS WO Health and Safety for the third straight year. Tim Radtke (DOI Health and Safety) was unable to attend this year but has been involved on an as-needed basis.

Committee members were reminded that there is a place on the TMP website to report health and safety concerns, but reports of health and safety issues will be accepted via other means. The BLM and all Regions of the FS did not receive any formal complaints or concerns regarding safety of the TMP.

Regional Reports

Region 1 (No Attendee)

Region 2 (Jacob Somerset)

General Paint Performance

There are no major paint performance issues. A minor performance issue is fading of the pink paint.

Other

There are currently four Long Term Stewardship Contracts (LTSC) in the Region affecting five National Forests. The Medicine Bow-Routt NF and White River NF LTSC's were awarded in November of 2012. With budget limitations, meeting the contractual obligations will be a challenge. The Saratoga mill was purchased from Intermountain Resources in receivership. The Montrose Mill (Intermountain Resources) is no longer in receivership and was sold to Neiman Enterprises, which own three sawmills in the Black Hills. Neither the Saratoga nor Montrose mill started production with a timber portfolio. Forests are attempting to meet demand for timber sales for both mills with zero volume under contract. Mountain Pine beetle and Spruce beetle are significantly affecting most Forests in the Region. The Timber Theft Prevention Plan is being updated for the Region. There are numerous pre-sale and sale administration vacancies in the Region, exacerbating the challenge of meeting the LTSCs, traditional industry, and new industry needs. The SOPI for completing timber sale mutual cancellations within Region 2 is virtually complete.

Region 3 (Kim Newbauer)

General Paint Performance

There are not any major paint issues to report but have reasserted that there is considerable fading of Type A Orange paint.

Paint Test Site

Region 3 no longer documents paint applied prior to 2005 as it meets the most strict interpretation of the spec prior to spec revision (paint must be acceptable for a minimum of eight years.). This would be the last year the paint applied to the test site in 2005 was inspected.

Generally speaking, paint applied in 2005 (Type C blue, yellow, green and black; Type A pink, orange; Type D pink, white and red) has reached its life expectancy of eight years. In regards to color fade, with this year's inspection the majority of the colors applied in 2005 were at or quickly approaching an unsatisfactory rating for a timber contract. Paint on the north sides of the trees were, in most cases, still satisfactory, but fading considerably. On the south side, the large majority were unsatisfactory, almost always on the south stump. For tracer, most colors were still reacting, but reaction time was slow and in some cases, primarily black and green, even with a tissue the tracer was reacting very slowly or not at all whether on bark ridges or in crevasses. In general, it seems these colors have met the specification as currently written. If it were still eight-year duration, several of the colors would be barely or not satisfactory.

Paint applied in 2008 (Hybrid Butterscotch Yellow and Fire Orange, Orange, Blue, Yellow and Pink). The butterscotch yellow and fire orange are still holding well from a color fade standpoint, but tracer is slow to react and faint, especially on south stump marks. Yellow is barely reacting on the south stump. For the regular hybrids, color fade is satisfactory on all of them, but on the tracer test, they are all slow and weak in response, especially the Blue and Pink. All stump marks, north and south, have a slow reaction time. Pink and Blue have very poor to no reaction on the south side stump in both ridges and crevasses. It was still satisfactory last year so meets the four-year duration spec. After that, it seems to lose its integrity quickly.

Hybrid orange used in a production mark and applied in October 2010: This paint is beginning to fade slightly. One stump mark observed was really bad, but the rest were slight. Half of the unit was marked with hybrid and half with Type A water cleanup so the marks could be observed side by side. Currently for both color fade and tracer reaction is satisfactory. The main issues are bark sloughing and possibly more color fade on the yellow pines. In all cases, south side stump marks are fading more and reacting more slowly with the tracer. Even with this slight change, all marks are still satisfactory for 2.5 years through 3 winters for the hybrid production mark.

Other

The Region is lacking industry. There is one portable mill that is trying to become functional again. The White Mountain Stewardship is terminating. There is concern that the small industry created by this stewardship might not be able to survive. The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) has issued its first task order and is expected to start in the near future. There needs to be studies done to allow for weight scale on the contract. There is talk that they may be using a lot of designation by description on their task orders. The contractor is building a mill in Winslow, AZ. Recently the biomass mill in the Region went out of business but was purchased so there is the hope that it will be up and running in the near future.

Region 4 (Jim McRae)

General Paint Performance

There are not any major paint performance issues but they are noticing some fading of color.

Other

The Region is lacking numerous positions in their RO. Trying to get some assistance from other Regions to consolidate some positions to meet demands and be more efficient. The Region has been doing a lot of Stewardship contracts and agreements. Region 4 is a pilot region for the Integrated Resource Restoration Program.

Region 5 (Dan Merritt)

General Paint Performance

The issue is more with selecting the correct paint for the application than the product not being effective. They are noticing that some of the aerosol cans are coming plugged with paint in the applicator. Perhaps this is an issue with the installing the applicator or caps during assembly at LHB.

Paint Test Site

The R5 tree marking paint test plot is sampled on a bi-annual basis. This report is from the 4/25/2013 visit.

History: Eighteen trees with waterborne, rain-resistant, and enhanced formula NCP tree marking paint were established 5½ years ago (10/25/2007). An additional eight enhanced formula trees were added one year later (10/27/2008).

Tracer: This year most colors tested well for the tracer element and were instantly obvious. The exceptions being:

- 1) Fire Orange; tissue or white paper blot no longer works! Tracer failure!
- 2) Orange & Blue Waterborne tracer response was very light but acceptable.
- 3) Pink hybrid (EF); fade to white and tracer test issues.

Fade: For most colors, the fade was acceptable. However, the water-borne colors that are south facing may not be satisfactory by the 10/2013 inspection (blue and orange). The exception being the green waterborne; it is holding color & tracer testing better than expected.

The 5½-year-old hybrid (EF) paints (Fire Orange & Butterscotch) and the 4½-year-old hybrid (EF) paints (yellow, orange, and blue) continue to look good. They are definitely better at retaining color than the waterborne did when it reached the 4½-year test. The pink hybrid is fading to white. There is evidence from our regional timber projects that the pink waterborne tends to turn white after a few (2-3) years and has a very weak response to the tracer test. On the Pink Hybrid (EF) tracer testing only responds in the bark crevices, not on the sun exposed (fade to white) areas. Unfortunately, there is not any pink waterborne to compare on our test plot.

Pink is not widely accepted in this region. However, it is proving to work well in the dense and shaded mixed conifer or true fir stands. Orange for leave tree and blue for cut tree continue to dominate most R5 purchases of tree marking paint.

Other

There is significant amount of retirement across the Region. They are having HR issues; not being able to get PD's for jobs they are trying to advertise. There is shortage of scalers and contracting officers in the Region. The Quincy Library Group is done at this time and was affecting three National Forests. They had been receiving special funding from the Region. There have been a number of very large wildfires throughout the Region. They have been doing destructive sampling to sample and check for deterioration. There has been a slowdown in the demand for biomass material. Several biomass plants have gone out of business recently. There is a lack of infrastructure within the Region. Roughly, 85% of the mills are gone.

Region 6 (Frank Duran)

Paint Test Site

The paint test site has been inaccessible due to snow. A test site visit will be scheduled for June.

Other

Safety issues are a major concern in the Region. There is roughly \$4.5 million in workers comp each year. There are about 40-50 safety violations in offices around the Region when being audited for safety. The Region is struggling to keep mills going. The RO is moving about five blocks to their new location in Portland this coming August. The Region is working on filling numerous pre-sale positions and continuing to train these folks.

Region 8 (Mary Yonce)

General Test Site Information

Many hardwood trees on the test site have moss growing on them. In some cases, the moss has entirely grown over a TMP spot. While the paint is still visible under the moss, it does affect the color and visibility. In general, white tree marking paint on hardwood trees (water oak) is very hard to distinguish. The bark on the pine trees tends to flake off in rather large pieces as the tree grows and is taking some of the paint with it. There have been weak tracer tests on the Type A paint.

Paint Test Site

Paint types A and C applied in 2006 are aging well. The tracer is reactive on the pine but somewhat slow to react on hardwood trees. A tissue blot aids in detection of tracer on hardwoods.

Paint type D applied in 2006 performing satisfactorily overall.

Hybrid paint applied in 2008 is performing fairly well. Tracer is slow to react on hardwood trees and usually requires a tissue blot. Both pink and blue are fading on the pine. This fade issue could be a factor of multiple tracer checks over the years on the same spot.

Other

There are several vacancies in the Regional Office timber shop. There are also numerous vacancies throughout the Region. There is a critical need for qualified timber personnel (CO's, FSR's, pre-sale, etc.). Budgets have decreased across the Region. Most forests are using a designation by species and diameter for thinning in their pine stands. FS Cruiser is not working well in the Region on many of their newer hand-held data recorders. A fix for these issues is due in the near future.

Region 9 (No Attendee)

Paint Test Site

Information was not available at the time of the meeting.

Region 10 (Ken Dinsmore)

General Paint Performance

There were no real paint issues to report. Rain resistant (Type C and D) paints are used exclusively in the region. There is an issue of some aerosol cans being full of paint but will not discharge the product. Perhaps the problem could be a leak in the applicator so the cans lose pressure and are not able to spray.

Other

There have been about 60 retirements in the Region within the last year. This is about 10% of the employees in the Region. The budgets in the Region are reducing. They are currently working on the roadmap to reduce these budgets by 2017. They have a 120 million bd. ft. timber sale with over 500 units needing to be prepped this field season. Approximately 50% of the volume produced is being exported out of the state. This is keeping the loggers in business but is not helping the infrastructure in

the Region. The Region is struggling with some issues and concerns in providing products to native tribes in the Region. There has been a case of a black bear being interested and ingesting the paint off several trees sprayed with rain resistant (citrus solvent) tree marking paint.

BLM (Bill Hensley)

General Paint Performance

No major issues reported.

Other

Bill: They have worked to clean up their database for tree marking paint. They are losing a lot of people in various positions. The cost of paint is an issue for their agency due to their limited budgets. They are thus trying to do more designation by species to save on the paint costs. They realize this shifts the workload burden from pre-sale to sale administration. They are putting out numerous salvage sale plans due to the effects of the Mountain Pine beetle.

Lindsey: They are dealing with a few large ongoing lawsuits. There are finding significant infrastructure issues with numerous mills closing down.

WO-FM Update (Dick Fitzgerald)

There are numerous vacancies in the Washington Office. They are trying to bring in detailers to fill behind the positions temporarily. The FS has moved out of the Yates building for several months while it is remodeled. About 400 people moved out and they anticipate moving in about 700. There are numerous retirements happening across the agency. The FS did get an exception allowing it to keep its logo (shield) on vehicles and not have to use the USDA logo. No other agency received this exception. The Forest Service fared well overall in the budget as other agencies where hit much harder. The budget outlook for FY 14 looks similar to FY 13. The WO wants to increase the target from 2.6 billion bd. ft. sold to 3.0 billion bd. ft. sold the next couple of years. On September 30 of this year, the authority for stewardship expires. The FS and BLM are dealing with regulations and trying to extend the authority permanently. The WO is trying to finalize a lot of direction; permits, federally recognized Tribes (over 600) and SBA set aside (currently does not apply to stewardship contracts). The WO is trying to set up a task force for dealing with weight scaling (particularly in R9).

Employee Exposure Testing (Dave Haston, Dan Merritt)

Dave and Dan presented the background and testing results of the tracer paint exposer test. The test was done with Type A (Hybrid, now EF) Orange TMP. It was done in California on the Lassen NF on the Eagle Lake Ranger District. The test was for three continuous 10-hour days testing six people. Dave provided the results from Federal Occupational Health. These results were also provided to the crew of markers being tested. The air monitoring for exposure to users was well below the standard set forth by the applicable occupational exposure limits.

Action Items:

- Document the history of tree marking paint and the paint committee – **SDTDC**
- Put a document on the tree marking website explaining the requirements for becoming a paint supplier and how to get on the Qualified Product List (QPL) for employees and potential contractors – **SDTDC**
- Contact the Forest Products Lab in Wisconsin to see if they can provide analysis of different types of bark – **SDTDC**
- Provide a decision on Type B TMP, based on briefing paper submitted – **WO-FM**
- Perform security audit of NCP Coatings and LHB facilities – **Coordinate with SDTDC**
- Post the new paint specification and updated QPL on the Tree Marking Website– **SDTDC** (complete)
- Designate the Region 5 site as an official test site – **Dick Fitzgerald** (complete)
- Reapply paint on the official test sites – **Regional Representatives from R3, R5,R6, R8 and R9**
- Provide a briefing paper regarding the cost of Tree Marking Paint – **SDTDC**
- Put the Video of the Citrus TMP and brown bear on the website – **SDTDC**

Next Meeting

There was discussion regarding the need for face-to-face meetings in the future. The committee and contractor felt that a meeting next year was needed. Accordingly, the proposed location for the 2014 meeting is Portland, Oregon where we will visit the Region 6 test site. **The meeting is tentatively scheduled for the week of June 2, 2014.**