

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976

[Public Law 94–588; Approved Oct. 22, 1976]

[As Amended Through P.L. 113–79, Enacted February 7, 2014]

AN ACT To amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the “National Forest Management Act of 1976”.¹

* * * * *

TIMBER SALES ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS

SEC. 14. [16 U.S.C. 472a] (a) For the purpose of achieving the policies set forth in the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (74 Stat. 215; 16 U.S.C. 528–531) and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (88 Stat. 476; 16 U.S.C. 1601–1610), the Secretary of Agriculture, under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, may sell, at not less than appraised value, trees, portions of trees, or forest products located on National Forest System lands.

(b) All advertised timber sales shall be designated on maps, and a prospectus shall be available to the public and interested potential bidders.

(c) The length and other terms of the contract shall be designed to promote orderly harvesting consistent with the principles set out in section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended. Unless there is a finding by the Secretary of Agriculture that better utilization of the various forest resources (consistent with the provisions of the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960) will result, sales contracts shall be for a period not to exceed ten years: *Provided*, That such period may be adjusted at the discretion of the Secretary to provide additional time due to time delays caused by an act of an agent of the United States or by other circumstances beyond the control of the purchaser. The Secretary shall require the purchaser to file as soon as practicable after execution of a contract for any advertised sale with a term of two years or more, a plan of operation, which shall be subject to concurrence by the Secretary. The Secretary shall not extend any contract period with an original term of two years or more unless he finds (A) that the purchaser has diligently performed in accordance with an approved plan of operation or (B)

¹Most of this Act consisted of amendments to the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974.

that the substantial overriding public interest justifies the extension.

(d) The Secretary of Agriculture shall advertise all sales unless he determines that extraordinary conditions exist, as defined by regulation, or that the appraised value of the sale is less than \$10,000. If, upon proper offering, no satisfactory bid is received for a sale, or the bidder fails to complete the purchase, the sale may be offered and sold without further advertisement.

(e)(1) In the sale of trees, portions of trees, or forest products from National Forest System lands (hereinafter referred to in this subsection as "national forest materials"), the Secretary of Agriculture shall select the bidding method or methods which—

- (A) insure open and fair competition;
- (B) insure that the Federal Government receive not less than the appraised value as required by subsection (a) of this section;
- (C) consider the economic stability of communities whose economies are dependent on such national forest materials, or achieve such other objectives as the Secretary deems necessary; and
- (D) are consistent with the objectives of this Act and other Federal statutes.

The Secretary shall select or alter the bidding method or methods as he determines necessary to achieve the objectives stated in clauses (A), (B), (C), and (D) of this paragraph.

(2) In those instances when the Secretary selects oral auction as the bidding method for the sale of any national forest materials, he shall require that all prospective purchasers submit written sealed qualifying bids. Only prospective purchasers whose written sealed qualifying bids are equal to or in excess of the appraised value of such national forest materials may participate in the oral bidding process.

(3) The Secretary shall monitor bidding patterns involved in the sale of national forest materials. If the Secretary has a reasonable belief that collusive bidding practices may be occurring, then—

- (A) he shall report any such instances of possible collusive bidding or suspected collusive bidding practices to the Attorney General of the United States with any and all supporting data;
- (B) he may alter the bidding methods used within the affected area; and
- (C) he shall take such other action as he deems necessary to eliminate such practices within the affected area.

(f) The Secretary of Agriculture, under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, is authorized to dispose of, by sale or otherwise, trees, portions of trees, or other forest products related to research and demonstration projects.

(g) DESIGNATION AND SUPERVISION OF HARVESTING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Designation, including marking when necessary, designation by description, or designation by prescription, and supervision of harvesting of trees, portions of trees, or forest products shall be conducted by persons employed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—Persons employed by the Secretary of Agriculture under paragraph (1)—

(A) shall have no personal interest in the purchase or harvest of the products; and

(B) shall not be directly or indirectly in the employment of the purchaser of the products.

(3) METHODS FOR DESIGNATION.—Designation by prescription and designation by description shall be considered valid methods for designation, and may be supervised by use of post-harvest cruise, sample weight scaling, or other methods determined by the Secretary of Agriculture to be appropriate.

(h) The Secretary of Agriculture shall develop utilization standards methods of measurement, and harvesting practices for the removal of trees, portions of trees, or forest products to provide for the optimum practical use of the wood material. Such standards, methods, and practices shall reflect consideration of opportunities to promote more effective wood utilization, regional conditions, and species characteristics and shall be compatible with multiple use resource management objectives in the affected area. To accomplish the purpose of this subsection in situations involving salvage of insect-infested, dead, damaged, or down timber, and to remove associated trees for stand improvement, the Secretary is authorized to require the purchasers of such timber to make monetary deposits, as a part of the payment for the timber, to be deposited in a designated fund from which sums are to be used, to cover the cost to the United States for design, engineering, and supervision of the construction of needed roads and the cost for Forest Service sale preparation and supervision of the harvesting of such timber. Deposits of money pursuant to this subsection are to be available until expended to cover the cost to the United States of accomplishing the purposes for which deposited: *Provided*, That such deposits shall not be considered as moneys received from the national forests within the meaning of sections 500 and 501 of title 16, United States Code: *And provided further*, That sums found to be in excess of the cost of accomplishing the purposes for which deposited on any national forest shall be transferred to miscellaneous receipts in the Treasury of the United States.

(i)(1) For sales of timber which include a provision for purchaser credit for construction of permanent roads with an estimated cost in excess of \$20,000, the Secretary of Agriculture shall promulgate regulations requiring that the notice of sale afford timber purchasers qualifying as “small business concerns” under the Small Business Act, as amended, and the regulations issued thereunder, an estimate of the cost and the right, when submitting a bid, to elect that the Secretary build the proposed road.

(2) If the purchaser makes such an election, the price subsequently paid for the timber shall include all of the estimated cost of the road. In the notice of sale, the Secretary of Agriculture shall set a date when such road shall be completed which shall be applicable to either construction by the purchaser or the Secretary, depending on the election. To accomplish requested work, the Secretary is authorized to use from any receipts from the sale of timber a sum equal to the estimate for timber purchaser credits, and such additional sums as may be appropriated for the construction of roads, such funds to be available until expended, to construct a road that meets the standards specified in the notice of sale.

Sec. 14 **NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976** **14-6**

(3) The provisions of this subsection shall become effective on October 1, 1976.