

INDIAN AFFAIRS MANUAL

Part 53
Chapter 9

Forestry
Silviculture

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1.1 Purpose. This chapter documents the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) policies, standards, and responsibilities relevant to the application of silviculture on Indian forest lands.

1.2 Scope. This policy applies to all Indian Affairs (IA) offices and programs participating in the management, accountability, and protection of Indian forest lands. Other federal agencies and programs also involved in the administration of Indian forest lands are encouraged to ensure that the standards prescribed herein are met.

1.3 Policy. The IA is responsible for sustainable forest management on all Indian forest lands held in trust or restricted status by the U.S. Government through the application of sound silvicultural practices to meet the goals and objectives of Tribes and Individual Indian owners.

1.4 Authority.

A. Statutes and Regulations.

- 1) 16 U.S.C. Chapter 3, Subchapter IV, Sustained-Yield Forest Management
- 2) 16 U.S.C. § 594, Protection of timber owned by United States from fire, disease, or insect ravages
- 3) 25 U.S.C. Chapter 33 – National Indian Forest Resources Management
- 4) 25 U.S.C § 5109, Indian forestry units; rules and regulations
- 5) 43 U.S.C. § 1638, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- 6) 25 CFR 163, General Forestry Regulations

B. Guidance.

- 1) 303 Departmental Manual (DM) 2, Indian Trust Responsibilities – Principles for Managing Indian Trust Assets
- 2) 586 DM 1, Timber Management – General Policies and Responsibilities
- 3) 53 IAM 2, Forest Management Planning
- 4) 53 IAM 3, Harvest of Forest Products

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- 5) 53 IAM 5, Forest Development
- 6) 53 IAM 6, Forest Pest Management
- 7) 53 IAM 8, Inventory and Monitoring
- 8) 53 IAM 10, Woodland Management

C. Handbooks.

- 1) 53 IAM 2-H: Forest Management Planning
- 2) 53 IAM 3-H: Harvest of Forest Products Handbook
- 3) 53 IAM 5-H: Forest Development
- 4) 53 IAM 9-H: Silviculture
- 5) 53 IAM 10-H: Woodland Management

1.5 Responsibilities.

A. Director, BIA is responsible for:

- 1) developing national silvicultural policies;
- 2) developing national certified silviculturist procedures; and
- 3) aiding in the implementation of regional silvicultural program direction, oversight, and guidance.

B. BIA Regional Directors (RDs) are responsible for:

- 1) ensuring silvicultural standards and policies are met;
- 2) initiating the Silviculture Certification Position Task Book (PTB) on behalf of the qualifying candidate;
- 3) recommending qualified mentors for candidates;
- 4) engaging with candidates and evaluators periodically during the certification process;
- 5) reviewing the completed PTB and recent work with other specialists, evaluators, or silviculturists, as needed;
- 6) certifying silvicultural candidates upon successful completion of the PTB; and

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- 7) aiding in the implementation of BIA agency and Tribal silvicultural program direction, oversight, and guidance.

C. BIA Agency Superintendents are responsible for:

- 1) planning and budgeting for silvicultural program needs;
- 2) preparing, organizing, and conducting silvicultural activities;
- 3) ensuring silvicultural quality control;
- 4) maintaining agency level silvicultural data and document archives for forestry projects on Indian forest lands;
- 5) reviewing silvicultural prescriptions to ensure compliance with approved decision documents such as Forest Management Plans (FMPs), Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) documents, and NEPA documents; and
- 6) developing local guidelines to monitor effectiveness of silviculture treatments.

D. Silviculturists/Foresters are responsible for:

- 1) preparing silvicultural prescription documents and reviewing prescription documents prepared by other foresters;
- 2) ensuring that the silvicultural prescription documents properly diagnose existing stand and forest-level conditions, and generate cost effective and practical management prescriptions;
- 3) ensuring that other resource specialists are involved during the prescription development process as intended by guidelines set within the FMP and/or IRMP;
- 4) ensuring that the final silvicultural prescription document contains all the elements described in Chapter 4 of the Silviculture handbook (53 IAM 9-H); and
- 5) ensuring that final silvicultural prescription documents are maintained in accordance with the local filing structure and protocols.

1.6 Standards, Requirements, and Procedures. Project level forest treatments involving timberlands and woodlands must include the silvicultural decision-making process of examination, diagnosis, silvicultural prescription, and treatment monitoring and evaluation. More specific procedural information can be found in the companion handbook to this policy, 53 IAM 9-H: Silviculture. However, in general, the following standards and requirements apply:

A. Silvicultural Examinations. A site evaluation must be conducted prior to preparation of a silvicultural prescription and involves the collection of forest site and stand characteristic data needed to identify existing stand conditions and site capability.

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- B. Diagnosis of Treatment Needs.** Stand diagnosis follows silvicultural examination. The diagnosis considers and evaluates the existing stand conditions, site capability, and management direction relative to desired future conditions.
- C. Silvicultural Prescription.** A written statement defining the planned series of treatments designed to change current stand structure and composition to be consistent with management goals.
- D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Silvicultural Treatments.** Monitoring plans must contain metrics to evaluate the results of the silvicultural treatments. Silvicultural treatments must be evaluated to determine if the results are consistent with the FMP or a monitoring plan. Results from monitoring may indicate the need for additional management actions to satisfy the objectives of the prescription.

1.7 Certification of Silviculturist. Certification of silviculturists is not required but it is encouraged. The process associated with obtaining silviculturist certification is described in the companion handbook, 53 IAM 9-H: Silviculture.

Each RD has discretion whether to require silvicultural certification and whether additional requirements are established for certification. The certification program for silviculturists is designed to ensure that practicing silviculturists have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop adequate silvicultural prescriptions for Indian forest lands.

Approval

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Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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