Bitterroot National Forest 10-Year Integrated Resource Service Contract-Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity

7/10/2025 Industry Engagement Meeting Contract Office Notes

Estimating 2-4 task orders to be posted when Request For Proposals (RFP) is solicited.

Planned Initial Task Orders to be included with the RFP:

- Spoon McCoy, 50/50 ground/steep slope. Approved for tethered operations
- Sharrott Salvage, 100% ground based
- Square Tin, 100% ground based, 7.8 miles of reconstruction
- Fred Burr, 70/30 ground/steep slope

- Q. Will all skyline ground allow for tethered operations?
    - A. Over 60% slope most likely will not. Case by case basis also dependent on soil/ground conditions and the recommendation of soils specialist.

- Q. What is the time to have task orders completed?
    - A. Typically a timber sale would have a 3–5-year period of performance so any orders for implementation would likely have similar periods of performance. Orders for preparatory work may be less than 1 year.

- Q. Are limited operating periods (LOPs) known? Hard to schedule with them
    - A. LOPs are not all identified at this time for the entire project area. LOPs will be identified at the task order level.

- Q. What is the litigation situation and how will that affect this project?
    - A. Decision is not yet signed, should be soon. Likely to be litigated but there is injunctive relief with the emergency action determination (EAD) the decision is under.

- Q. How will product value be appraised?
    - A. Timber shall be ran through our appraisal system, base rates will be used as a starting point.

- Q. Where are you planning products to go?
    - A. Products can go anywhere; one objective of this effort is to provide a minimum guarantee of sawtimber that would permit investments to increasing mill capacity.

- Q. What does the budget/funding situation look like?
    - A. We cannot speculate on that. We do have a lead on some larger funding to get project the kicked off but it is not secured yet.

- Q. Who will administer?
    - A. The contract will be run through an acquisitions CO with the Stewardship Branch. The local timber shop and forest personnel will facilitate the on-the-ground operations and be the point of contact for day-to-day contract administration.

- Q. What are the minimum thresholds for acceptance of work?
    - A. Acceptance of work criteria in each task order. All work will be reviewed by Forest Service Contract Administrators and evaluated per contract specifications with recommendations made to accept or reject work. Contracting Officer will have final say on approval or rejection of work. Specifications will be located both in parent contract and individual task orders.

- Q. Emergency Situation Determination (ESD) vs Emergency Action Determination (EAD), why are we using EAD?
    - A. Due to how far along the Forest is when the new direction came out we are staying with the EAD. We started this process years before the new direction came out. We do not anticipate losing flexibility from ESD.

- Q. Are we using the Northern Rockies Stewardship BPA for any work on this?
    - A. This will be a separate contract with a different scope of work than the Northern Rockies BPA.

- Q. What is the priority of non-commercial work?
    - A. we are leaving in as an option but non-commercial will be a lower priority than commercial work. Will be done dependent on funding. Going to try to focus on areas close to communities first, goal is to move this landscape from its current state and into a maintenance stage. Non-commercial treatments would be used to set things up for prescribed fire which could be used to maintain the landscape long term as it is a very cost-efficient way to treat acres.

- Q. From Forest Service: Is there a way that we can incentivize things to encourage accelerated completion work? And if a contractor is poor or non-performing, are we stuck with that contractor or can we terminate?
    - A. We are required to use performance-based acquisitions and can consider using incentives or disincentives to speed up performance. There will be termination clauses included as well in any contract, termination for cause and termination for convenience. both may be used in the case of poor performance.

- Q. Will noxious weed and stump spraying be included in this?

    - A. Yes, along all routes and yes stump spraying on Ponderosa Pine stumps 12” or greater diameter.

- Q. From Forest Service The Forest Service appraises stump treatments at $1.00 a stump and this has not changed in years, is that still realistic?
    - A. That is low in our opinion

- Q. Will weight scales be required?
    - A. Smaller areas/sales may be tree measurement. Larger areas will likely be scaled. FS will continue to discuss, possible that a load count agreement may be used to negate the need for certified weight scaling.

- Q. From the Forest Service - We are looking at doing more DxP and DxD designations, what is easier for you?
    - A. DxP with a small sample mark area around 5 acres.

- Q. From the Forest Service - Would you like to see sample marking in each unit or?
    - A. By prescription, keep it as simple as you can.

- Q. From Forest Service - Do you have GPS technology like we have on our cell phones in equipment? Virtual boundaries will be used more and more; Forest Service still plans to paint/mark important boundaries, typically along private / forest boundary or along other hard boundaries.
    - A. The capability is out there, most everyone has at least Avenza and if not, we can work with them to get them up to speed. Prefer marked boundaries to avoid a trespass situation.

- Q. How will task orders be priced if there are multiple awardees vs a single awardee?
    - A. If there are multiple awardees, pricing will be solicited amongst the awardees to get the best value. If we have a single awardee, pricing may be negotiated. We are working on how this will work in practice. One option we are looking at is an annual or tri-annual ceiling price for work items as that will help in budget planning.

- Q. Area’s that get a lot of recreational use, is there going to be a possibility of shutting down rec sites, roads, etc.?
    - A. We will be working to limit the effect on recreation. Ther may be some operations that require closing sites.
    - A. We have jurisdiction on our roads to close but not on roads managed by other agencies. Similar to the recreation answer above, we will try to limit closures of main access roads as much as possible but will do temporary and short-term closures if necessary.

- Q. How many awards/task orders will be awarded?
    - A. Depends on feedback from industry, and how much we lump things together, funding availability or stumpage value available to trade, and individual project/task order readiness. Awards to a parent contract will most likely be limited to no more than 10. Right now, there are potentially 22 task orders planned, this is subject to change.

- Q. What resources do you anticipate a contractor will need to possess to be awarded an IDIQ?
    - A. Depends on responses to RFI and what services we ultimately end up including in this IDIQ.

- Q. Litigation was mentioned earlier, what are you anticipating for litigation on this project?
    - A. Some of the projects included have been litigated already. Using the EAD, that does provide some relief from injunctions.

- Q. Will market related extension terms and conditions be included?
    - A. Not in the same sense as a traditional timber sale but we can consider extensions on a case-by-case basis.

- Q. There's a lot of TBD in the RFI about the non-commercial, what are you thinking? Will things like noxious weed spraying be included? Will stump treatments for Ponderosa Pine be included?
    - A. Part of the RFI is to gauge interest in even performing this type of work and to even include it. Noxious weed treatments related to commercial harvest will be included as will the stump treatments for Ponderosa Pine

From Field Trip Portion of Meeting:

Reviewed multiple locations and discussed prescriptions, temp spurs, logging systems, irrigation ditches, prescriptions and many other general operations type things. Below are some larger discussion points or questions.

- Q. What is contracted prep work going to look like?
    - A. We are asking industry to give us feedback/advice on their abilities or sub-contractors abilities and we will build around that.

- Q. Is this project in the WUI?
    - A. Entire project is within WUI and is aligned with the Ravalli County CWPP.

- Q. From the Forest Service -Is industry comfortable with residual basil area descriptions?

    - A. Received a mixed bag of responses throughout the field trip with some liking it and some being against it. Several folk said basal area is somewhat subjective and not well understood. If FS uses it pretty universal we would want to see some sample marking at a minimum for each different prescription type. It was recommended doing the sample marking in front of units instead of the middle or back where they have to work their way to it.
        - People did feel like they could get an eyeball for it with sample marking and early QC checks from FS making sure they are implemented correctly.
        - Another discussion was putting out a spacing with variance designation that would mimic/be close to the basal area description.
        - Have specific language for leave trees or cut trees.
        - One suggestion was using the drip line or crown

- Q. Do we have to work with SMZ type buffers around streams?
    - A. Yes we will have them. Project designed and analyzed using INFISH Buffers
        - 300' buffer fish bearing
        - 150' perennial non-fish bearing streams
        - 100' of intermittent streams
        - 50' of wetlands smaller than 1 acre
    - In the future and with new direction coming out, we will look into the need to follow INFISH.

- Q. Industry would like to be able to close down rec sites when possible when working in area
    - A. Ranger answer: will look at this on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes it will make sense, and we will have to due to operations. Sometimes we may close sites except on weekends and holidays.

- Q. Is cut to length logging required?
    - A. Coud be required as a soils mitigation in some cases. Generally, not required but may be an option in most cases.

- Q. Was regen harvest considered?
    - A. Bitterroot Front NEPA did not analyze for regen harvest.

- Q. Is this going to be a fixed price contract?
    - A. Yes, the IDIQ will be a fixed price contract and pricing from the first round of task orders will help with price analysis. Awardees will be able to provide competitive pricing at the task order level to allow for market and operational pricing flexibility. Not anticipating including a fixed price for work items from the parent, one option

we are looking at is an annual or tri-annual ceiling price for work items as that will help in budget planning.

- Q. Will we be opening the RFP again for bidders or is this only going to be opened once?
    - A. Will only open once, not planning to reopen and onboard additional awardees.

- Q. Parent RFP is best value and then task orders best price? Or will task orders still be best value (example being when operations or quality control plans submitted maybe show will treat ground in a more FS preferred manner when submitting Task Order quote)
    - A. Will be determined if we do a single award or multiple award. If we do proceed with multiple awards, we will keep things best value at the task order level and potentially apply more weight to price during evaluation of task orders.

- Q. How many awardees will there be on the parent contract?
    - A. We need to decide if we will move forward with a single award or multiple award. Not going to do unlimited. Will be no more than 6-10 (ex. up to 6 if doing only prep and commercial removal and up to 10 if we include non-commercial work). We are heavily leaning towards doing a multiple award.

- Q. Who will be CO?
    - A. Will be an acquisition CO since this will be an IRSC/IDIQ type of contract and that is required by regulations for this type of contract. We do not know who that person will be yet.

- Q. RFP process, what is the next step?
    - A. We will send out Draft RFP for industry to respond to when we have approval to proceed with soliciting. See PowerPoint PDF for anticipated timeline.

- Industry comment: Recommend selling Sharratt Salvage this fall, break it out of this IRSC if needed. Value/merchantability will reduce drastically after this season.

- Industry recommendation: Look at all restrictions that are non-statute and consider removing them if it makes sense.
    - Will also have to comply with restrictions in already analyzed NEPA .

- Forest Supervisor comment: Prefer if industry would work with private landowners that border the Bitterroot Front project to help build better fuel breaks. Not required but would be nice.

- Industry remark: Be good to have firewood option for removal of timber. Don’t want to have to do weight scaling for firewood.

    - A. A possible mechanism we could use is to make a load agreement. Agreed weight per load between both parties and we count the loads. FS will investigate.

- Industry prefers to get rid of utilization standards, get rid of tickets and pay by lump sum or by acre. Not per ton (remove weighing). It can be difficult to get every load weighed if you are delivering products to several locations.
    - A. Ranger response: We will look at what we are allowed to do with the IRSC and accountability rules.
    - FS - We will investigate more, not sure if we can do this or not with accountability rules. It is possible we could do a load count or other weight scale agreement.
        - Typical log specs 7" DBH and 16' piece for sawlog.
        - It was a recommendation to not include non-saw products as mandatory.

- Concerns were expressed about Ponderosa Pine markets and lack of outlets.