

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Eldorado National Forest

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Workshop Scheduled To Explain New Way Contractors Can Help Reduce Fire Hazards in National Forests

Placerville, California..... The USDA Forest Service is hosting a workshop on May 5 in Pollock Pines to explain how ‘stewardship contracting’ can be used by contractors to help improve community and forest wildfire protection. The workshop begins at 9:30 AM in the Camino-Pollock Pines Community Center at 2675 Sanders Drive. Potential contract bidders will especially benefit from attending the workshop.

Stewardship contracting is a new more cost efficient way to thin dense and high fire hazard areas of the National Forest. The new authority, enacted into law in 2003, allows the Forest Service to exchange goods for services.

“Stewardship contracting enables us to reduce fire hazards on more acres of land with less direct cost to taxpayers”, says Eldorado National Forest Supervisor John Berry. “We can exchange the value of small diameter saleable trees for the costs of chipping brush and removing non-valuable fire hazard trees.”

Berry says additional contracting and administration cost savings occur in when a single contract is developed that includes both fuels reduction work and timber removal.

“The new contracting authority comes with more responsibility for the Forest Service to collaborate with local communities and interested parties,” says Berry. “The Act envisions that local communities will be more involved in management of their national forests and it allows us to give a selection preference to contractors from the local area.”

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The Forest Service plans to use stewardship contracting to supplement work currently underway on the Independence Fuelbreak near Pollock Pines. This project is located adjacent to residential areas along Forbay Road and involves thinning the forest and removing brush on both private and National Forest lands.

“Stewardship contracting is another tool we will be using to protect communities, old growth trees, and wildlife in the National Forest,” said Berry. “This is a new process and we enter into it with caution.”

The USDA Forest Service is dedicated to “Caring for the Land and Serving People”. Fuels reduction is part of the Forest Service’s commitment to creating ‘Forests with a Future.’