

STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS (SA) or MASTER STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT (MSA)

The Forest Service is authorized to enter into Stewardship Agreements (SA) under the authority of Section 323 of Public Law 108-7 (16 USC 2104 Note, as revised February 28, 2003, to reflect sec. 323 of J.J. Res. 2 as enrolled), the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003, amending Public Law 105-277.

This authority allows the Forest Service to enter into stewardship agreements to exchange goods for services, exchange funds for services, or a combination of the two to complete restoration activities on National Forest System lands. The stewardship authority also allows the Forest Service to enter into stewardship agreements for up to ten years.

Permitted restoration activities include:

- Road and trail maintenance or obliteration to restore or maintain water quality;
- Soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries or other resource values;
- Setting of prescribed fires to reduce wildfire hazards, improve the composition, structure, condition, and health of forest stands, or to improve wildlife habitat;
- Removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce wildfire hazards, or achieve other land management objectives;
- Watershed restoration and maintenance;
- Restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish habitat;
- Control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishment of native plant species.

In order to enter into stewardship agreements, there must be:

- Mutual interest: each party has a need for, and an interest in, the jointly agreed upon project goals & deliverables; And
- Mutual benefit: which reflects a relationship when the parties have a shared interest, contribute resources, and mutually benefit (other than monetarily) from the objective of the agreement.

The parties pool their resources to carry out the project and obtain the deliverables. While the stewardship authority does not require partner cost sharing; Forest Service policy requires a minimum 20% contribution of the total project value.

Types of stewardship agreements:

- Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) and Supplemental Project Agreements (SPA). MSA can cover a landscape, area, district, forest or region as appropriate for the project(s)
- SPAs address individual projects tiered to the MSA
- Stand-alone agreement (SA) - Individual project agreements that cover the scope of one project