

Annual Report to the Board of Forestry: 2019 Forest Practices Act Effectiveness

Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry



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DNR Division of Forestry

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I. OVERVIEW

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry (DOF) is pleased to submit its annual report on the Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) and regulations to the Board of Forestry. DOF is the lead agency for implementation of the Forest Resources and Practices Act. Primary activities include coordinating interagency review of Detailed Plans of Operation (DPOs) for activities on private, municipal, and trust land; field inspections, implementation monitoring, and enforcement actions on these lands; and incorporating the standards of the Act and regulations into state timber sales. Forest practices related work on federal land is conducted by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Habitat Division based on their authorities for water quality and fish habitat protection.

Notable activities, conditions, and trends.

The State forest practices program budget was static this year, and the Governor's FY20 budget for forest practices remains level.

- Forest operations increased on non-state land throughout Southeast but decreased slightly in the Mat-Su, and Kodiak-Afognak archipelago. Given the current level of forest activity, DOF provided sufficient field presence to ensure that FRPA was effective in protecting water quality and fish habitat in 2019.
- Southern Southeast forest practices inspections decreased slightly on state operations this year and increased on non-state operations compared to last year.
- Compliance monitoring scores decreased slightly in Region I and increased in Region II and III, and remain strong in all three regions.
- DOF sold 15.9 MMBF of timber, an increase from last year.
- DOF continued three major cooperative efforts with the US Forest Service – Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) in Interior Alaska, a cost-share agreement covering young-growth inventory and work force development in Southeast Alaska, and a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreement to provide forest management services on national forest land.
 - The 30 MMBF young-growth timber sale on Kosciusko Island was the first sale sold under the GNA in the Tongass National Forest, and is currently being harvested.
 - The second GNA sale in the Tongass, the ~16MMBF Vallenar Timber Sale, was awarded in February, 2019.
 - A third agreement with the USFS involves spruce beetle mitigation in the Chugach National Forest.

II. FOREST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTATION ON PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL, AND TRUST LAND

A. Summary of forest practices activities

Notifications and inspections. In 2019, DOF received and reviewed 43 new harvest Detailed Plans of Operation (DPOs), 12 new reforestation/timber stand improvement DPOs, one new road closure/maintenance DPO, and 15 renewals for private, municipal, and state trust lands. (See Appendix

A, p. 26 and Figure 1, p. 25).¹ New DPOs covered 6,208 acres and 59.22 miles of new forest road. The division conducted 26 inspections on private, municipal and trust land and 32 inspections on state timber sales.

DPOs reviewed, acreage notified and inspections on non-state land operations increased from 2018 to 2019. Most of the FRPA activity on private land occurred in the Southeast Area on Sealaska operations associated with their recently-acquired land selections, University timber sale activity in Edna Bay and the beginning of a new operation on Mental Health Trust land at Naukati and continued operations on their land at Icy Bay. Southeast inspections on state land during 2019 was half of 2018 but still active, with operations winding down at North Hollis and commencing at Gravina. Future sales were being prepared at Thorne Bay, Sumez Island, Kosciusko and Whale Pass. Significant new road construction activity on Gravina Island began in 2017 and contributed open access to the western northern and western portion of the island.

Notifications and acreage notified decreased in the Kodiak-Afognak area, as did inspections. There was a slight increase in FRPA activity on non-state land in Regions II and III, with a total of five DPOs in the two regions. Inspections in Region III on both private land and State land increased slightly from 2018 to 2019.

Variations. For the first time in many years, there were no requests for variation for harvesting in riparian buffers in 2019.

Enforcement. No violations were issued in 2019. (Enforcement actions are summarized in Appendix B, p. 25.)

B. Monitoring

Compliance monitoring. During 2019, DOF conducted compliance monitoring on all FRPA inspections. A rating of 5 means the BMP was consistently and effectively implemented where applicable; a rating of 1 means the BMP was rarely implemented where applicable or was implemented ineffectively. The data shows solid implementation rates in all regions (see Table 1, next page). Overall, Region I averaged 4.5 out of 5.0 on the ratings, Region II averaged 4.5, and Region III scored 4.7. In Region I, 90% of all scores exceeded 4.0, as did 93.5% and 94% in Regions II and III.

¹ Note: FRPA data is reported on a calendar year basis because 11AAC95.220 requires Region I DPOs to be submitted by calendar year. Data on state forest management (e.g., state timber sale volumes) are reported by fiscal year to be consistent with state budget documents.

Table 1. Calendar year 2019 compliance monitoring scoresheet counts, number of BMP ratings, BMP mean scores, and overall BMP implementation percentage by region and state

Region	# Score sheets/Inspections		# BMP ratings	Mean score for all BMPs	Percentage of all BMPs rated ≥ 4
	State	Private/Other Public			
Region I	13	19	531	4.5	90%
Region II	6	3	62	4.5	93.5%
Region III	13	4	221	4.7	94%
Total	32	26	814	4.6	91%

Region I compliance was good, although there were individual BMPs which required corrective action. In Southeast, those BMPs were related to road drainage and adequate number of drainage structures. Improvements were noted from 2018 to 2019 in the BMPs associated with yarding near surface waters and classification of surface waters. Operators were quick to rectify all deficiencies as they were discovered. Active road maintenance and BMPs related to timber harvest were excellent. One training session was held in Southeast. Operations at Afognak and Kodiak were good regarding most BMPs. BMPs related to bridges will improve with the addition of bull rails and securing filter fabric on log stringers. Region II had some activity with nine inspections: a three-fold increase from 2018. Compliance was good in most categories. Low ratings were noted in road drainage and road maintenance on one operation in the Mat-Su. There were no issues of note on the Kenai. Region III had 100% compliance in 2017 for the first time ever but dropped to 82% for 2018 and up to 94% for 2019. The interior experienced drier weather in 2019 compared to 2018, which contributed to higher scores. Attention was given to the Delta road system in the TVSF during 2019 with an added lift to 2000 feet of road in West Delta. Good grading and overall maintenance was noted throughout the TVSF. Previous years' work on the Cache Creek bridge and Standard Creek road system are holding up well. High quality work has been the norm with logging contractors as well as the DOF equipment operator. One ice bridge crossing was successful. As usual, the TVSF road system receives heavy public use.

Effectiveness monitoring and road condition surveys.

DOF works with agencies and affected interests to prioritize effectiveness monitoring of the Forest Resources and Practices Act, and related research needs. The interagency Effectiveness Monitoring Working Group was reconstituted, and representatives from DOF, U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Sealaska Corporation met in October to discuss projects and priorities. While there is much less funding available for new research projects than in previous years, the group agreed on several high priority projects, some of which have good prospects for funding and opportunities for agency collaboration. The group agreed to meet every six months to exchange information and progress reports.

2020 Effectiveness Monitoring Proposals

- Road condition surveys, east Icy Bay. Lead: Joel Nudelman, DOF.
- Windthrow prediction in SE Alaska. Lead: Greg Albrecht, ADFG.
- Reforestation projects in Interior Alaska. Lead: Jeremy Douse, DOF.
 - Variant for Forest Vegetation Simulator. Monitoring silvicultural prescriptions.
 - Evaluating success of non-native species plantations.

- Site preparation techniques for reforestation.
- Fish passage mapping, incorporating federal and state data. Lead: Neil Stichert, USFS and Joel Nudelman, DOF.

Road condition surveys and remediation. No road condition surveys were conducted in 2019. The previous survey was in 2017, when DOF, with the assistance of ADFG, performed a road condition survey on 2.5 miles of forest road in the Southeast State Forest on Wrangell Island. This is a former U.S. Forest Service road with non-compliance issues under FRPA. As a result of the survey, DOF contracted for the road to be closed in 2018, with crossing structures removed and natural drainage re-established. This road closure is adjacent to the Pat Creek stream restoration project, which was completed in 2019. This project, managed by the Southeast Watershed Coalition, was engineered to add large woody debris to create resting pools, shade cover and slowing of stream velocity. This stream reach lacked mature trees along the creek for large woody debris recruitment. This area was harvested in the 1970s, prior to State ownership and FRPA.

C. Reforestation

Reforestation exemptions. Harvests that are significantly composed of dead or dying trees may request an exemption from the FRPA reforestation requirements. DOF received one new request for a reforestation exemption in 2019, which was approved for 159 acres.

D. Training

Landowner/operator training. Training for landowners and operators is provided by DOF area office and regional office staff. Sessions vary from formal classroom presentations to more informal “tailgate” sessions conducted during field inspections. DOF also provides training in the form of DPO reviews and inspection reports that recommend ways to conduct operations to implement the BMPs. In 2019, DOF conducted one FRPA training session in Southeast with an attendance total of 4 people. No compliance monitoring sessions were held.

FRPA 101. The Division of Forestry has completed a series of FRPA training modules using PowerPoint. The full series has 20 modules covering Purpose, Applicability, DPOs, Stream Classification, riparian standards, road construction and maintenance, stream crossings, reforestation, timber harvesting, inspections and compliance monitoring, enforcement, mass wasting, prosecution coordination, and hearing officer duties.

Most of the FRPA training materials are on the public Division of Forestry website: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/forestpractices>, and have already been accessed by a variety of users with questions about FRPA. The modules for FRPA enforcement, prosecution coordination, and hearing officer training are on the internal Division of Forestry website, and available for Division employees as needed.

III. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY ON STATE LAND

A. Statewide summary

State timber sales. FY19 timber sale offerings on state land are summarized by area in Table 2, below. In FY19, DOF sold 31 sales on 874 acres of land for a total of approximately 16 million board feet. Compared to FY18, timber sale volume sold increased statewide. After an extended period of difficult

recruitment efforts in Southern Southeast, two Forester II vacancies were filled, and then became vacant again as the new employees left for “lifestyle” reasons.

Table 2. FY19 Timber Sales Sold on State Land.

Note: Some sales are offered in cords, green tons or cubic feet rather than board feet. For comparison in this chart, all volumes have been converted to thousand board feet (MBF). Therefore, the total volumes are approximate.

Area	Number of Sales	Acres Sold in New Sales	Volume Sold - Units Converted to MBF
SSE	3	416.25	13,438.64
NSE	4	53.00	233.64
KKS	4	43.00	152.33
MSS	0	0.00	0.00
Coastal Total	11	512.25	13,824.61
FAS	7	48.20	376.09
DAS	9	205.90	1,494.61
TAS	4	107.50	294.74
CRS	0	0.00	0.00
Northern Total	20	361.60	2,165.44
State Total	31	873.85	15,990.06

Reforestation and stand improvement. Regeneration of harvested or naturally disturbed areas is an essential part of forest management on state land. In areas where planting is desirable, the DOF collects cones for seed extraction, contracts for seedling production, and plants seedlings to improve reforestation. In many areas, natural regeneration, with or without scarification, provides sufficient regeneration to meet reforestation standards. In 2019, the DOF did not survey for regeneration. Five acres were pre-commercially thinned and 40 acres were pruned in the Haines State Forest in 2019. There were 39,700 seedlings planted on 130 acres in the Fairbanks area during 2019.

B. FY19 Resource management activity by area
Northern Region Forest Management.

The Division of Forestry supports and develops new opportunities and maintains the flow of timber to sustain the industry in Interior Alaska. DOF also supports local value-added wood processors and jobs in its timber sale program. The division continues to identify and offer timber damaged by insects, floods, fires, and windstorms for salvage and sale. These sales are available for purchase in the Fairbanks, Delta, Tok, and Copper River areas, with access for harvesting year-round.

The saw log demand remains stable while the firewood and biomass industry in Interior Alaska has declined slightly due to lower oil prices. The biomass mills in North Pole and Tok continue to produce wood pellets and pellet logs, which they distribute statewide. The Fairbanks-Delta office produces the highest revenue and volume in the state outside of Southern Southeast Alaska. It historically provides

70% or more of timber in the Interior. Volume offered in previous fiscal years but not sold remains for sale over the counter at each area office.

Most saw log spruce goes to three mills operating in the interior: Northland Wood in Fairbanks, Logging and Milling Associates in Dry Creek, and Young's Timber Inc. in Tok. Pole and pulp timber go to Superior Pellet Fuels, the largest purchaser in the Interior, and newly opened Tok Biofuels, which has been producing compressed fire logs for nearly a year.

The division and other agencies provide information to communities on the benefits of burning dry, well-seasoned wood. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has warned Fairbanks and North Pole of the ongoing danger to human health caused by high levels of particulate matter from burning wood.

Fairbanks & Delta Area. Commercial timber continues to be sustainably harvested throughout the Fairbanks and Delta areas and there are over 70 active timber contracts with 25+ operators on state land. Demand for saw logs remains stable and Northland Wood Products remains the primary purchaser, processing approximately three million board feet annually. Superior Pellet Fuels leads in the purchase of pole timber and fuelwood, producing about 3,000 tons of pellets annually.

Personal use firewood sales have stabilized in the last few years. In 2019, Fairbanks Area sold 209 permits for a total of 769 cords and Delta Area sold 29 permits for a total of 105 cords. Regeneration surveys continue nearly every spring in the Fairbanks-Delta Area but did not take place in 2019. 39,700 seedlings were planted in 2019.

Road work and maintenance are an ongoing need in the Fairbanks-Delta Area. Operators and Forestry staff work on road projects annually to ensure access to the state forest. In 2019 the Cache Creek bridge abutments were replaced, approaches were modified, and rip rap was installed to reduce scour in the future. The Area plans to repair the Fortune Creek bridge next year and upgrade Standard Creek roads through an RSA with ADF&G. In Delta a new material site was developed on the west side of the Delta River to support road upgrades on the Delta West and Delta Creek forest roads.

Fairbanks Fires: 49 fires, 53,703 acres

The 21,309-acre Shovel Creek Fire was the biggest of the season in the Fairbanks Area and required three incident management teams but there were plenty of other incidents that occupied Area personnel through late July when season-ending rains came. For the season, a total of 49 fires burned 53,703 acres, with most of the acreage burning in the Shovel Creek and Nugget Creek fires.

Delta Fires: 16 fires, 18,527 acres

The Delta Area was snow-free by mid-March, producing very high fire danger early in the season, evidenced by the start of the Oregon Lakes Fire on military land on April 30, one of the earliest project fires in Alaska's fire history. The Delta Area had the fewest number of fires of any DOF Area but one of those fires kept the Area busy for the better part of two months. A total of 18,527 acres burned.

Tok & Copper River Area. The Tok-Copper River Area encompasses approximately 30 million acres in the eastern Tanana Valley and Copper River Basin, comprised of state, private, federal, and native corporation lands. Offices in Tok and Glennallen support initial attack wildland fire response for the region and manage state timber sales.

Nick Carter was hired as Tok Area Forester and started work on May 30. During the first few months he was engaged in the above average fire season, but as the fire season slowed, he turned to timber sales and to learning the policies and procedures of the division.

The highest demand for raw materials from state lands remains fuel wood, followed by logs and biomass in the Tok area. There have been sporadic requests for house logs and saw timber in the Copper River area, but fuel wood is the top requested resource there as well. Demand for fuel wood, logs, and biomass remains consistent in the Tok Area. Nine operators have 14 active sales and most of the volume harvested in 2019 was fire and blowdown salvage. Six active operators harvested primarily fire-killed spruce for fuel wood with some value-added products in the Tok area. The value-added products were primarily for cabin kits.

The Tok Area Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales was revised and adopted this year. The Alaska Gateway School District purchased one of the hazardous fuel reduction sales included in the schedule. The sale was originally offered at auction but not sold, then offered over the counter where the district purchased it to ensure a continuous supply of chips for the school's boiler. Previously, chips came from hazardous fuels reduction grants and other private sources, which are sporadic with no guarantee of an ongoing supply. The school district plans to harvest 20 acres a year from the sale and evaluate this option for future resource needs.

Area staff responded to interest in timber sales and personal use firewood in the McCarthy area and visited last summer. DOF will work with individuals and other DNR divisions to accommodate these requests per state policy. Tok Biofuels began producing densified wood logs in the summer of 2019 and is expected to need an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 tons annually.

Tok Area fires: 21 fires, 41,339 acres

The Tok Area had the second-fewest fires among DOF Areas, and most of that acreage was from two fires – the 20,081-acre McArthur Creek Fire and the 14,913-acre Boundary River Fire.

Copper River fires: 28 fires, 17,581 acres

Like most DOF Areas, the early spring brought an early start to a busy fire season for the Valdez/Copper River Area. The first significant fire of the season was the 3.5-acre Moose Creek Fire, reported on April 30 along the Tazlina River about two miles southwest of Glennallen. It was relatively quiet in the Copper River Basin for the mid-summer before heating up due to extremely dry conditions, temperatures in the 90s, and lightning activity. The active, late-season burning at elevations of more than 4,500 feet surprised fire managers but was indicative of the extremely dry conditions that allowed fires to burn well into September.

Coastal Region Forest Management.

Southeast Area. The Southeast Area covers the Alaska panhandle from Icy Bay to Ketchikan. Most of the timber volume and revenue from forested land in Alaska is harvested on public and private land in this Area. The Area manages the Southeast and Haines state forests and administers the Alaska Forest Practices Act on extensive private holdings within its jurisdiction.

The division completed the field work for inventorying the Southeast State Forest in 2019. The work was funded by a U.S. Forest Service State & Private Forestry grant through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement.

Most of the timber harvest activity on state land occurred early in the year on Prince of Wales Island associated with the Viking Mill in Klawock. The Area administered one large timber sale near Hollis and several smaller sales on the northern part of the island. Local small mill uses of the Haines Forest timber remained strong.

DOF sold a 16-million board foot joint timber sale under the Good Neighbor Authority with the U.S. Forest Service on Gravina Island near Ketchikan. The sale, a combination of young and old growth timber, was made possible due to the access provided by the Vallenar Bay Road, which the state financed.

Declining activity and increased anxiety in the industry was reflected in the decrease in Forest Practices notifications on public and private land as export markets weakened. For most of the year uncertainty associated with tariffs implemented by China depressed the market. This encouraged other suppliers in the Pacific Rim to displace U.S. suppliers and forced a surplus of third-party material into other markets, driving prices down.

The tariff directly affected the economics of hemlock and spruce. The most dramatic adjustment was in the young growth spruce market that was seeing growth prior to the end of 2018. Timber sales containing red cedar remained in relatively high demand.

Southeast Area fires

The Southeast Area had another dry summer that led to drought conditions. There was noticeable mortality in the forest associated with the cumulative environmental stress. A higher number of fires than normal was reported in this traditionally wet and fire-resistant area of the state.

Mat-Su and Southwest Area. This Area includes the Mat-Su, Anchorage, and western Prince William Sound (14.6 million acres) and Southwest Alaska (85.4 million acres) for a total of 100 million acres, making it the largest administrative district managed by DOF. The Area is managed from Forestry's Palmer office and a seasonal office in McGrath. The Anchorage Bowl, including Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and Eagle River, encompasses the largest wildland-urban interface in the state, while lands in Southwest Alaska are among the least populated and most remote.

There are currently two active state commercial timber sales and operators on a total of 105 acres in the Mat-Su. The area office sold a 45-acre sale this spring, 310 cords of personal-use firewood through online permits, and 64 negotiated personal use contracts for remote landowners in the Mat-Su Valley and Southwest Alaska.

A spruce beetle epidemic has caused significant white spruce die-off throughout the Mat-Su Valley. Spruce beetles killed most of the mature white spruce from Anchorage to the foothills of Denali. The Area Office responded by making more beetle-killed spruce available to the public for firewood and saw timber, and by planning for wildland fuels mitigation projects in coming years. The division also

galvanized the many landowners under an All-Lands, All Hands working group to mitigate growing threats caused by forest fuels and hazardous trees.

Two popular State Park Campgrounds, Byers Lake and South Rolly, were closed in 2019 due to the danger to users posed by the dead and decaying trees. The Division assisted State Parks by providing funding and fire crews for several fuel reduction projects to get the campgrounds reopened as soon as possible.

Mat-Su Fuel Reduction

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area: Work began on May 23 and continued as fire danger allowed through the fire season and into December. Mat-Su Area wildland fire & resource technicians and Gannett Glacier Initial Attack and Pioneer Peak Interagency Hotshot crews removed hazardous trees and burned slash for a total of 46 days, felling approximately 800 trees and disposing of 176.3 tons of biomass. Mitigation work focused on the South Rolly Campground loops, Redshirt Lake public use trail, and along Nancy Lake Parkway.

State Parks Hazardous Tree Mitigation: The Mat-Su office used funds provided by the U.S. Forest Service to work with Alaska State Parks to prioritize areas for treatment and began work to reduce hazardous fuels and beetle killed spruce in three campgrounds. Contractors worked in Byers Lake, South Rolly and Montana Creek, and Mat-Su fire staff worked in Byers Lake and South Rolly before and after the busy fire season. They cut spruce and piled and burned slash in both campgrounds and at the Veterans Memorial near Byers Lake. The wood was offered for free to the public for firewood, likely contributing to the slightly reduced numbers of personal use firewood permits sold compared to last year.

For the year, state fire technicians at Byers Lake logged 390 work hours, burned 110 piles of slash (28.6 tons of biomass), and removed an additional five hazard trees from the Byers Lake Public Use Cabin #3.

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Prescribed Burn

Ignition operations on the base were completed between April 29 and May 4, although they could have begun 30 days earlier due to an unseasonably dry spring; the ranges were snow-free by March 30. Seven ranges, totaling 1,554 acres, were burned. Before the burn, representatives from all agencies attended an unexploded ordnance briefing. DOF facilitated the 72-hour, 24-hour, and day-of notifications and issued a public service announcement distributed on base by JBER Fire & Emergency Services.

DOF provided two type 6 engines staffed with firefighters, a utility terrain vehicle equipped with a fire suppression tank, suppression pumps, fuel, and other equipment. A DOF public information officer coordinated with the JBER public affairs officer. Having unified information staff on site to facilitate media needs and interviews allowed operations to continue without interruption. No accidents or injuries were reported, and training was provided for 10 JBER fire and emergency services personnel.

Mat-Su Fires: 124 fires, 5,209 acres

The Mat-Su Area had the most fires and the fewest acres burned of any DOF Area during the 2019 season. However, the area may have seen the most action. In addition to the devastating McKinley Fire, the Area managed several other high-profile incidents in the wildland urban interface, including the Deshka Landing, Malaspina, M.L.K., Montana Creek, and Rainy Pass fires.

The fire season began early, with the first fire on April 3. Spring was drier than average and fire weather indices built well into September, reaching record highs in the Build Up Index and Drought Code indices. The McKinley Fire, the largest in the Mat-Su Area in 2019, started on August 17 near Mile 91 of the Parks Highway. The fire grew rapidly, and evacuation notices were issued for residents in the immediate area. Despite valiant efforts by firefighters, the McKinley Fire destroyed 52 primary homes, three commercial buildings, and 84 outbuildings on the second day of the fire, making it Alaska's second-most destructive wildfire behind the Miller's Reach 2 Fire of 1996.

Kenai & Kodiak Area. This Area includes the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Archipelago, totaling approximately 10 million acres. The Area supports initial attack wildland fire response and manages state timber sales and the Forest Practices program in Regions 1 and 2.

The Kenai-Kodiak Area sold four timber sales in the past year. Timber is marketed as firewood, round logs for dimensional milling, and house logs. Multiple small mill operators on the Kenai Peninsula rely on timber harvest on state lands as a material source, producing dimensional lumber, cabin kits, and dunnage. Five Detailed Plans of Operations (DPOs) were submitted by operators for a total of 988 acres of proposed harvest in Region 2 (Kenai Peninsula).

Firewood demand from the public remains high and land management agencies coordinate to provide public access for gathering firewood. The state maintains eight miles of forest roads on the Kenai Peninsula, providing access for the public, future commercial timber sales, and personal use firewood gathering.

Timber operators in Region 1 on Afognak Island harvested approximately 35 million board feet in the past year and operations are ongoing. The division processed two DPO's totaling 353 acres of proposed harvest, and two DPO's totaling 757 acres for pre-commercial thinning activities. The Area office makes field inspections on Kodiak and Afognak islands ensuring reforestation and ongoing operations meet the requirements of the Forest Practices Act.

Kenai Fuels Treatment

Funny River State Park Recreation Site: DOF seasonal staff worked on a grant-funded project to remove black spruce within frequently used State Park units on the central Kenai Peninsula. Work consisted of felling to a spacing of approximately 10 feet between trees and removing lower limbs. Slash was chipped and burned to improve access to developed sites for wildland fire response.

Izaak Walton State Park Recreation Site: This mitigation project focused on removing hazardous trees killed by spruce beetles in high traffic areas to increase safety for the public and reduce the fire hazard around the boat launch, campsites, and parking areas. Four wildland fire and resource technicians worked with State Parks employees throughout November.

Cooper Landing Quartz Creek Project: Late in the fall, three wildland fire and resource technicians worked for two weeks on a fuel reduction project designed by DOF's Forest Stewardship Program. The project focused on thinning and pruning lower limbs of mountain hemlock in a shaded fuel break southeast of Cooper Landing.

Kenai-Kodiak Fires: 72 fires, 168,318 acres

The Swan Lake Fire may have garnered the most headlines of any fire in Alaska, and even in the U.S., but other fires on the Kenai Peninsula required considerable attention, including the Tustumena Lake, North Fork, and Caribou Lake fires. April saw both above average temperatures and numbers of wildland fire starts with the first fire igniting on Kodiak Island on April 2. The Kenai Peninsula experienced record levels of rainfall in May, followed in June, July, August, and September by record setting hot and dry weather, resulting in record level extremes in fire indices. The 167,164-acre Swan Lake Fire accounted for most of the Area's total acreage burned. It was one of 10 fires started by lightning that passed through the northern Kenai Peninsula on June 5. Because of their proximity to homes and other values at risk, those other fires, including the 100-acre Tustumena Lake Fire, were deemed higher priority fires than the Swan Lake Fire and received initial attack responses. All those fires were successfully suppressed with no homes damaged or destroyed.

The Swan Lake Fire, meanwhile, started in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge about eight miles northeast of Sterling and seven miles north of the Sterling Highway. With the fire in a Limited Fire Management Option Area, the initial decision was to allow the fire to take its natural course but to monitor closely and plan for suppression strategies. On the third day, the decision was made to assemble a Type 3 incident management team to carry out strategic suppression actions on the western and southern portions of the fire, closest to values at risk. As the fire grew, many teams were brought in to assist with suppression efforts lasting from June 5 through October 2, making it the longest-recorded, staffed wildland fire in Alaska history. No structures were lost due to the Swan Lake Fire and the only significant damage to infrastructure was a stretch of powerlines and power poles spanning about five miles, near Jean Lake, on the southeastern side of the fire.

C. Forest inventory

Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program of the U.S. Forest Service provides information to assess America's forests. In interior Alaska the Division of Forestry has partnered with the USFS to install and measure plots through a Joint Venture Agreement. As the nation's continuous forest census, the program projects how forests are likely to appear 10 to 40 years from now. This is especially important in Alaska where significant changes in temperature, permafrost, and plants are occurring. A suite of information is sampled at each plot including trees, soils, plants, and woody debris. The plots are re-measured at 10-year intervals.

State field crews have successfully conducted the Interior FIA program for four years and have met all USFS quality control metrics. For purposes of planning, data analysis, and logistics, Interior Alaska has been divided into five inventory units. The Tanana Valley unit was completed in 2018 and now work is focused on the Susitna-Copper Unit. It is expected that this unit will be completed in mid-2020 when work will transition to the Southwest Unit. Here logistics and planning will be more complex as all the field hubs will be located off the road system. In 2019, staffing included six non-permanent crew leads, 14 non-permanent crew members, two permanent coordinators and two non-permanent assistant crew leaders. Most plots required a helicopter to access.

Tongass Young Growth Inventory

A second inventory project is funded by a Challenge Cost Share Agreement between the U.S. Forest Service's State & Private Forestry and DOF. State crews have completed field work for this multi-year

project and successfully inventoried 30,000 acres of second growth timber on the Tongass National Forest. In 2019 DOF used funds in southern Southeast to install 1,247 plots on state forest and general use lands ranging from Petersburg to Ketchikan and on Prince of Wales Island. A four-person crew accessed sites by boat and road and sampled stands across all timber types including old growth and young growth. The compiled dataset provides volume by species, sort and grade by individual sampled stand and strata. Current second growth timber volumes were processed through software to project future growth.

DOF will use the inventory data to develop a more refined Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales and to assist in old growth management. Reconnaissance of future timber sales will be more targeted with a focus on volume metrics, quality, and operability. A web mapping application will be created that holds the new data and will be available to industry and the public to query the timber resources within this area of Southeast Alaska.

D. Beach Log Salvage and Log Brands

The Southeast Area office issued five beach log salvage licenses in Southern southeast and sold 15 log brands, including renewals.

E. Forest Planning

The Division of Forestry reviews and comments on a wide range of state and federal agency land-use plans to help ensure the division and the public have continued access to forest resources on state lands. In addition, DOF works to encourage the salvage of timber when forested land is cleared for rights-of-way or other purposes and provides stipulations for protecting forest health.

State Forest Action Plan

DOF began work on the new State Forest Action Plan in late 2019 and it is due to be completed in June 2020. The first State Forest Action Plan was completed in 2010 and revised in 2016. A current plan is required by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, as amended by the 2008 Farm Bill, for continued federal funding of cooperative forestry and cooperative fire programs.

The State Forest Action Plan provides a statewide, all lands assessment of forest conditions and trends, identifies threats to forest resources, sets forward a strategy to address those threats, and delineates the priority landscape on which to focus that strategy. This effort pulls together DOF staff and other key stakeholders to develop an Alaska-focused strategy to meet the national state and private forestry priorities to conserve working forest landscapes, protect forests from harm, and enhance public benefits from trees and forests.

IV. FEDERAL LAND ACTIVITY

Tongass timber sales. Data on 2019 Tongass Timber Sales is summarized in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Alaska Region Timber Volume History (MMBF)

Fiscal Year ^[3]	Allowable Sale Quantity		Offer ^[1]			Sold ^[2]			Harvest ²		
	Tongass NF	Chugach NF	Tongass NF	Chugach NF	R10	Tongass NF	Chugach NF	R10	Tongass NF	Chugach NF	R10
1994	450	11	277	1	278	269	3	272	276	7	282
1995	450	11	290	6	296	261	4	265	221	2	223
1996	450	11	266	2	268	227	3	230	120	3	123
1997	450	11	162	15	177	202	10	212	107	2	109
1998	267	11	187	0	187	24	0	24	120	1	121
1999	267/187/187 ^[4]	11	115	1	116	61	0	62	146	0	146
2000	187	11	85	0	85	170	0	171	147	0	147
2001	187/267	11	68	0	68	50	0	50	48	0	48
2002	267	11	57	0	57	24	0	24	34	0	34
2003	267	0	89	0	89	36	0	37	51	0	51
2004	267	0	73	0	73	87	0	87	46	0	46
2005	267	0	110	0	110	65	0	65	50	0	50
2006	267	0	24	0	24	85	0	85	43	0	43
2007	267	0	32	1	33	30	1	31	19	0	19
2008	267	0	42	0	42	5	0	5	28	0	28
2009	267	0	36	0	36	10	0	10	28	0	28
2010	267	0	46	0	46	46	0	46	36	0	36
2011	267	0	44	0	46	44	0	44	33	0	33
2012	267	0	53	0	53	53	0	53	21	0	21
2013	267	0	115	0	115	16	0	16	36	0	36
2014	267	0	105	0	105	105	0	105	39	0	39
2015	267	0	43	1	44	48	1	49	57	0	57
2016	267	0	44	0	44	14	0	14	45	1	46
2017	267	0	31	0	31	31	0	31	20	0	20
2018	267	0	34	0	34	9	0	9	20	0	20
2019	267	0	28	0	28	5	0	5	11	0	11

[1] Source: Periodic Timber Sale Accomplishment Report (PTSAR). Trace volumes round to zero.

[2] Source: Timber Cut and Sold Report (ATSA). Trace volumes round to zero.

[3] Fiscal Year: October 1 to September 30

[4] A May 1997, Tongass Plan revision, set the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) at 267 MMBF; an April 1999, Record of Decision, at 187 MMBF; a March 2001, US District Court, District of Alaska, vacation of the 1999 ROD at 267 MMBF, and the January, 2008, Land and Resource Management Plan at 267 MMBF

B. Good Neighbor Authority

The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program, created in 2014, allows the US Forest Service (USFS) to enter into cooperative agreements or contracts with states to perform watershed restoration and forest

management services on National Forest System lands. The Alaska Region of the USFS (Region 10) and the Division of Forestry entered a GNA master agreement in November 2016.

Tongass National Forest Good Neighbor Authority Projects. The 30 MMBF Kosciusko GNA timber sale contract was executed on September 19, 2017 as the first GNA supplemental project agreement under the master agreement. Alcan is the purchaser. That contract is set to end on December 31, 2023 and it remains on schedule.

- Timber sale unit layout continues with collaboration between purchaser, State Sale Administrator, and Forest Service Specialists. Harvest operations began on the Unit 3 on August 23, 2019. Due to the trade tariffs in the China market, Sealaska Timber Corporation (STC) terminated its Kosciusko operations. Alcan Timber was operating the STC sale and sought relief to continue operations. Alcan Timber, the purchaser, requested a reduction of the contractual stumpage rate for spruce to the advertised rates of \$36.67/mbf due to tariffs imposed by China on June 1, 2019. The tariffs are the act of a foreign government, were not foreseeable at the time purchaser entered into this contract and are beyond the control of purchaser. The contract was amended to lower stumpage rates to advertised and base rates. Stumpage rates until the tariffs are lifted will be \$37.67/ MBF on young growth spruce, and \$2/ MBF on young growth hemlock.
- Hauling of timber from Unit 3 began the week of September 16 and continued through November 3, 2019. Volumes were 157.56 MBF of Hemlock and 1,502.49 MBF of Spruce Totaling 1,659.05 MBF. Total revenue generated was \$55,374.76.

The DOF entered into a supplemental project agreement on the Tongass National Forest to manage another GNA timber sale (Vallenar) that has been combined with a timber sale on the Southeast State Forest for a total of about 16 MMBF (13 MMBF old growth and young growth in the SE State Forest + 3 MMBF young growth in the Tongass National Forest). The Vallenar GNA Timber Sale was awarded in February, 2019. No additional activity occurred on the Vallenar timber sale during 2019.

Chugach National Forest Good Neighbor Authority Project. On August 29, 2018, the DOF and the USFS entered their third GNA supplemental project agreement in Alaska and their first for the Chugach National Forest. This agreement will begin spruce beetle mitigation work in the Chugach; this is not a timber sale, but a forest health improvement project.

DOF crews will use chain saws to thin spruce trees to improve the health of the remaining trees and to help prevent beetles from infesting high-value areas within the Kenai Peninsula zone of the Chugach. The Granite Creek area is the first location identified for forest health protection and enhancement. Additional priority sites at high risk for beetle infestation in the forest may be identified and added for restoration and protection as funding allows. Under the three-year project, the Chugach will provide \$95,000 to DOF to perform the forest health improvement work. In addition to benefitting forest health, it will provide funding for firefighters during the shoulder seasons and slow fire seasons. Furthermore, it can provide crew training opportunities and extend seasonal employment for firefighters.

There was no activity on this project during 2019 due to the magnitude and duration of the Alaska wildfire season. No crews were available to do the work.

C. Alaska Roadless Rule. The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) is a national regulation that establishes prohibitions on road construction, road reconstruction, and timber harvesting on 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands throughout the U.S. According to the USFS, the intent of the 2001 Roadless Rule is to “provide lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the National Forest System in the context of multiple-use management.” The State of Alaska believes that this rule limits opportunities for Alaskans that live and work in the Tongass National Forest. As such, the State of Alaska, along with Alaska’s Congressional Delegation, has worked over the consecutive terms of six governors (one Democratic, one Independent, and four Republican) to exempt the Tongass from the Roadless Rule. In January 2018, the State petitioned USDA Secretary Sonny Purdue for rulemaking to exempt the Tongass from the Roadless Rule in the interest of the socioeconomic well-being of its residents. Following acceptance of the State’s petition, the State and the USDA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), in which the State agreed to assist the USDA, as a cooperating agency, in developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Through Administrative Order 299, the State established the Alaska Roadless Rule Citizen Advisory Committee to provide an opportunity for Southeast Alaskans to advise the State on the future management of Inventoried Roadless Areas in the Tongass. The Committee was charged with providing recommendations to assist the State in fulfilling its role as a cooperating agency under the MOU.

On October 18, 2019, the USDA published a Draft EIS and Proposed Alaska Roadless Rule for concurrent 60-day public review and comment periods. The State supports the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) that proposes exempting the Tongass from the Roadless Rule, as it is the most responsive action alternative to the State’s petition and would allow the U.S. Forest Service greater flexibility to implement local solutions to address local challenges affecting the communities, residents, and industries that rely on the Tongass. State personnel are currently reviewing the published documents and developing comprehensive comments for submission to the USDA for their consideration in the rulemaking process. Additionally, the State’s contracted facilitator for the Committee, Meridian Institute, is reviewing the Draft EIS to assess how the State’s earlier comments to the USDA have been incorporated. Meridian Institute is also conducting one-on-one interviews with Committee members to further assist the State in its continuing role as a cooperating agency in the NEPA process.

Meridian Institute did not reconvene the Citizen Advisory Committee in person due to the ongoing Roadless Rule negotiations in Alaska. The synthesis of Committee member comments was an effective alternative to share the individual views of the group with the State. Meridian finished building a comprehensive new website to house all public documents related to the Tongass Roadless Rule Citizens Advisory Committee: tongasslandmgmt.org/roadless-rule-citizens-advisory-committee.

The USFS agreement also provided for funding for the Alaska Forest Association (AFA) to analyze the impacts of the different alternatives on the forestry industry. AFA analyzed Geographic Information System data provided by USFS, developed spreadsheets by Alaska Roadless Rule alternative, prepared area maps by roadless alternative, developed available acres of timber by alternative, and provided the State of Alaska with a final report on the availability and economic viability of the timber resources for each alternative in the DEIS for the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking project.

D. Challenge Cost Share Grants.

Challenge Cost Share Agreement Grant 1

In 2013, the Secretary of Agriculture issued Memorandum 1044-09, addressing sustainable forestry in Southeast Alaska and directing the Tongass National Forest “to speed the transition away from old-growth timber harvesting and towards a forest industry that utilizes second growth – or young growth – forests.” The Secretary emphasized that the transition must take place “in a way that preserves a viable timber industry that provides jobs and opportunities for residents of Southeast Alaska.” DOF and the U.S. Forest Service are working collaboratively with communities and other partners through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement signed in June 2015, to improve existing young growth information and increase economic opportunities for local communities in both the short- and long-term. DOF is the lead partner in this effort coordinating over \$5 million in federally funded activities.

Calendar year 2019 was the last field season for work on this five-year project. The project is on schedule for a June 30, 2020 close out.

In 2019 DOF staff:

- Completed field sampling of stands within the Southern Southeast State Forest and completed 125 stands containing 1,247 plots.
- Prepared GIS display and data reports for Young Growth Symposium held in Ketchikan.
- Updated timber type map with re-typed old growth polygons.
- Post stratified old growth cruise data.
- Updated web mapping application for plot tree attribute and stand volume display.
- Processed site tree data and calculated site index by stand and strata.
- Continued growth projection analysis of second growth stands.

Challenge Cost Share Agreement 2

In recent years timber sale offerings and timber sales in Southeast Alaska have declined drastically. For example, in the mid 1990’s Federal timber volume offered averaged approximately 250mmbf per year, by 2017 it had dropped to 24mmbf per year. This has put the survival of southeast Alaska wood product industries at risk of failing. The reduction in timber sales and resulting low industry output has contributed to an erosion of basic forestry layout expertise for both industry and forest management agencies. Woods and field personnel have moved out of southeast Alaska to fulfill their professional expectations and livelihood elsewhere.

Historically the U.S. Forest Service and the State of Alaska have managed removal of their timber resource by utilizing numerous logging systems. Ground-based tractor, rubber-tired skidders, and recently in the smaller diameter young-growth stands the use of harvesters. Cable systems including hi-lead and the more sophisticated sky-line configurations have in the past been successfully utilized. Typically for those areas isolated from a road system some aerial method, either helicopter or balloon was used.

The U.S. Forest Service, currently engaged in two large landscape analysis projects, has identified approximately 14,000 acres of uneven-age old growth timber located outside the capabilities of conventional ground-base and cable logging systems. The State and other land managers have similar situations where a helicopter could be utilized to access these isolated areas. Among these landowners it has become collectively recognized that all-lands will require an all-hands approach to provide an

adequate supply of economically viable timber. The need for a coordinated, collaborative plan to train agency field crews and to strategically locate economical sales is paramount. It would be preferable to have coordinated actions across ownerships. This would address the current reality of our constrained timber sale layout crew field knowledge, our challenging sustainable timber supply, and our dwindling industry capacity.

Recently Southeast Alaska lost its sole helicopter contractor, Columbia Helicopters, Incorporated. Their recent business decision to no longer conduct helicopter logging operations in southeast Alaska puts local land managers in jeopardy of not being able to treat isolated timber stands. Also, at risk is the inability to employ a helicopter for future Stewardship and Good Neighbor Agreement restoration projects. It is vital to access these inaccessible uneven-aged old growth tracts of timber. The reality is that this volume is needed by the local timber industry to help transition into the future young growth program.

With inherently high operating costs associated with helicopter logging future timber offerings will need to offer conventional logging along with helicopter volume. It has been estimated that at least 8-12mmbf per year over a 10-15-year period would be necessary to keep a helicopter in southeast Alaska. Unfortunately, the field knowledge and skill sets needed to maintain such a program appears to be incomplete. Recognizing that these knowledge gaps exist, and then subsequently following up with appropriate training opportunities would be essential in building long term practical field capacity within the agencies.

The purpose of the agreement is to document the cooperation between the parties to develop a more technically skilled local workforce to accomplish a variety of forest management field tasks. Some of these tasks will be associated with locating, designing, understanding and incorporating economic considerations into timber sale project design and implementation. Economic old growth 'bridge' timber is necessary during the next 15 years to sustain regional timber harvesting and manufacturing business during the transition to young growth management. There is, for example, a pressing need for agency pre-sale field personnel to advance their ability in designing economically viable helicopter logging units. This will be accomplished by offering opportunities to share knowledge through training cadres. These cadres will be made up of agency, industry, and partners having the appropriate expertise to address current deficiencies. The cadres will identify and teach necessary field skills to help stem the loss of critical on-the-ground pre-sale layout and logging expertise that is currently scarce in both agency's workforce. Practical agency knowledge of helicopter and cable logging systems associated with remote Southeast Alaska needs to be further developed.

The timber industry currently engaged in the harvest of both old and young growth forests throughout southeast Alaska has the expertise to address these needs. They can assist in identifying gaps in needed skill sets and assist in the appropriate on the ground training. It is the desire of the U.S. Forest Service to reimburse ADOF for the U.S. Forest Service's share of actual expenses incurred, not to exceed \$1,500,000.00 over the five-year life of the agreement.

Among landowners and the Forest Service it has become collectively recognized that a more concentrated and focused training program would improve timber output by providing more economical timber sales.

V. SPECIAL PROJECTS

A. Statutory changes. In 2018, the Alaska State Legislature updated the Wildland Fire Protection statutes for the first time since their inception in 1961. HB 355 officially took effect starting on January 1, 2019, and DOF's Wildland Fire Prevention Office completed the accompanying regulations and compliance components in June of 2019.

The "Human Caused Wildfire Reduction Act," House Bill 355, provided the Division of Forestry with the tools necessary to decrease the number of uncontrolled, human-caused wildland fires on state, municipal and private lands that fall under its jurisdictional authority. The result will reduce risk to human life, loss of homes, and property damage. Mitigating these threats will reduce fire suppression costs and increase safety from wildland fire for all Alaskans.

As its name implies, the primary objective of HB 355 is to reduce the number of human-caused wildfires in the wildland urban interface. Currently, more than 80 percent of the wildland fires that occur in Alaska on state protected lands are caused by humans as a result of unattended campfires, escaped brush piles, unextinguished land clearing fires, improper use of fireworks, and a host of other fire-related activities that are easily preventable.

In addition to updating the state's wildland fire statutes and regulations, HB 355 authorizes DOF to issue tickets, up to \$500, for non-criminal, minor burning violations. It also authorizes designated DOF personnel to cite individuals for more serious criminal violations of the revised forest protection laws, which may include cost recovery for a fire, extensive fines, and the possibility of jail time.

B. Regulatory changes: Wildland Fire

The wildland fire regulations were rewritten to comply with the updated wildland fire prevention and enforcement statutes (AS 41.15) adopted in 2018. The regulations were adopted and became effective on June 2, 2019. These changes include:

- Adding specific burn permit requirements and responsibilities of permit holders;
- Expanding the Division of Forestry's authority to deny, suspend, or revoke burn permits;
- Updating regulations to include the internet for notifications;
- Clearly specifying permitted burning under Air Quality Control regulations; and
- Adding definitions of an "approved burning device," "burn barrel," and "forested land."

The bail schedule for non-criminal minor offense violations was also adopted and became effective on June 2, 2019, giving DOF the ability to issue tickets for violations without taking the offender to court. The bail schedule sets out the offenses and how much is charged for each. While the regulations set up a structure for charging fines for offenses, fines are not expected to generate a meaningful amount of additional revenue. The purpose of the new regulations and bail schedule is to create a more efficient fire prevention program, reducing the number of wildland fires and saving fire suppression costs.

Table 4. Bail Schedule: Wildland Fire Prevention

Statute/Regulation	Description of Offense	Bail
AS 41.15.070	Discarding burning materials on forested land	\$300
AS 41.15.090(a)	Failure to clear ground of flammable materials before starting a fire	\$100
AS 41.15.090(b)	After starting a fire in or near forested land, failure to totally extinguish the fire	\$500
AS 41.15.100	Setting a fire on forested land without the consent of the owner or lawful occupant	\$250
11 AAC 95.412(a)	Failure to obtain burn permit	\$100
11 AAC 95.412(b)(1)&(2)	Failure to possess/display permit at burn site	\$100
11 AAC 95.414	Failure to comply with small scale burn permit	\$100
11 AAC 95.416	Failure to comply with large scale burn permit	\$250
11 AAC 95.450(c)	Burning during emergency burn closure	\$500
11 AAC 95.470	Burning materials that produce black, obnoxious, or toxic smoke	\$250

To educate cooperators, shareholders and the public about the new changes to wildland fire protection statutes and regulations, the Division of Forestry is launching a statewide public education campaign entitled, “Take time to LEARN before you burn.” A desired result will be a 10% annual reduction in human-caused fires over the next four years, particularly in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas where human-caused fires can have the most devastating impacts.

The “Take time to LEARN before you burn” campaign will actively market the slogan statewide through a variety of print, radio and social media outlets. Community meetings and workshops will be held in fire service areas, presenting the statute and regulation changes and explaining how they promote and enhance wildland fire safety and forest health programs.

As part of the Division’s commitment to ensure a consistent roll-out of information and application of the law enforcement aspects of the new changes, DOF has initially trained, equipped and commissioned nine limited-jurisdiction peace officers, referred to as Fire Prevention Officers (FPOs). These FPOs are experienced wildland fire fighters with law enforcement duties limited to the authorities and duties assigned to them by the DOF under AS 41.15. They are registered with the Alaska court system and trained in the specific wildland fire enforcement aspects of AS 41.15, adopted regulations and enforcement options. They are authorized to issue both non-criminal and misdemeanor citations, and are required to refer felony violations to the law enforcement agency having jurisdictional oversight: typically, local law enforcement agencies or the Alaska State Troopers. The FPOs are currently operating out of DOF offices in Soldotna, Palmer, Fairbanks, Delta and Tok on a seasonal basis. DOF anticipates training and equipping additional FPOs over the next two seasons to supplement those already in the field.

C. Recreation & Forestry Partnership

Rosie Creek forestry roads and recreation partnership: The Board of Forestry launched an initiative to partner working forests with recreation interests. While recreation and timber proponents are sometimes at odds, the access that forest management provides can offer many benefits to outdoor

recreationists, including mountain bikers, skiers, runners, snow machiners, dog mushers, ATV users, and more. DOF identified the scenic Rosie Creek forestry roads within the Tanana Valley State Forest as a good location for a pilot project and submitted a grant proposal to DNR's Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR). If awarded, the grant would fund road maintenance, improved parking and trailhead access, a map and information kiosk, directional and land ownership signs along the narrow and scenic forestry roads, and a link to an online GPS map of the road system. DOF held agency and public meetings to determine the scope of the project and to insure buy-in from the local community. If DPOR awards the grant to the project, DOF will work with the Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation to complete the work.

D. Board of Forestry Update: Wildland Fire

The Alaska Board of Forestry meets three times a year, and once a year meets in person and takes a fieldtrip to gain a deeper understanding of important forestry issues around the state. This year's late-August fieldtrip took them to the wildland fires burning in Willow, and the Board felt that the information they learned about fire safety, preparedness, and policy should be shared broadly. The Board prepared a document for sharing with decision-makers and the public in January 2020 called "Board of Forestry Update: Wildland Fire." The document intends to take advantage of the increased awareness of fire danger throughout Alaska after an unusually hot and smoky summer of fire, encouraging Alaskans to act on many fronts to reduce the threat of wildland fires.

To reduce the risk of wildland fire in the future, the document encourages Alaskans to:

- Be Firewise. The most important thing individuals can do is to create defensible space around their communities, homes and property, following Firewise principles.
- Learn before you burn. The Division of Forestry has begun a multi-year statewide public education campaign promoting several wildland fire prevention-focused programs, including DOF's new burn permits, Firewise, Ready-Set-Go evacuation guides, forest stewardship, spruce bark beetle impact mitigation, and newly adopted laws and regulations.
- Build fuel breaks. The State of Alaska should create fuel breaks in key locations near communities at risk from fire. Fuel breaks have been proven to be highly effective and economical compared to the cost of fire suppression and property damage.

The complete document can be found on the Division of Forestry's Board of Forestry web page, here: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/alaskaboardforestry/>.

VI. BUDGET AND STAFFING

A. FY20 total funding

FY20 funding for core FRPA work remained at the same low level as FY19. Figure 2, below, shows the decline in funding over the last ten years. This funding for core forest practices work applies to forest practices field work, clerical support, and program management. DOF staff coordinate forest practices work among the resource agencies, review notifications, conduct field inspections and compliance monitoring, and enforcement actions, perform compliance monitoring, provide training, and lead review and development of FRPA standards and regulations on all non-federal land. Since FY12, all funding for core forest practices work has been from the state General Fund.

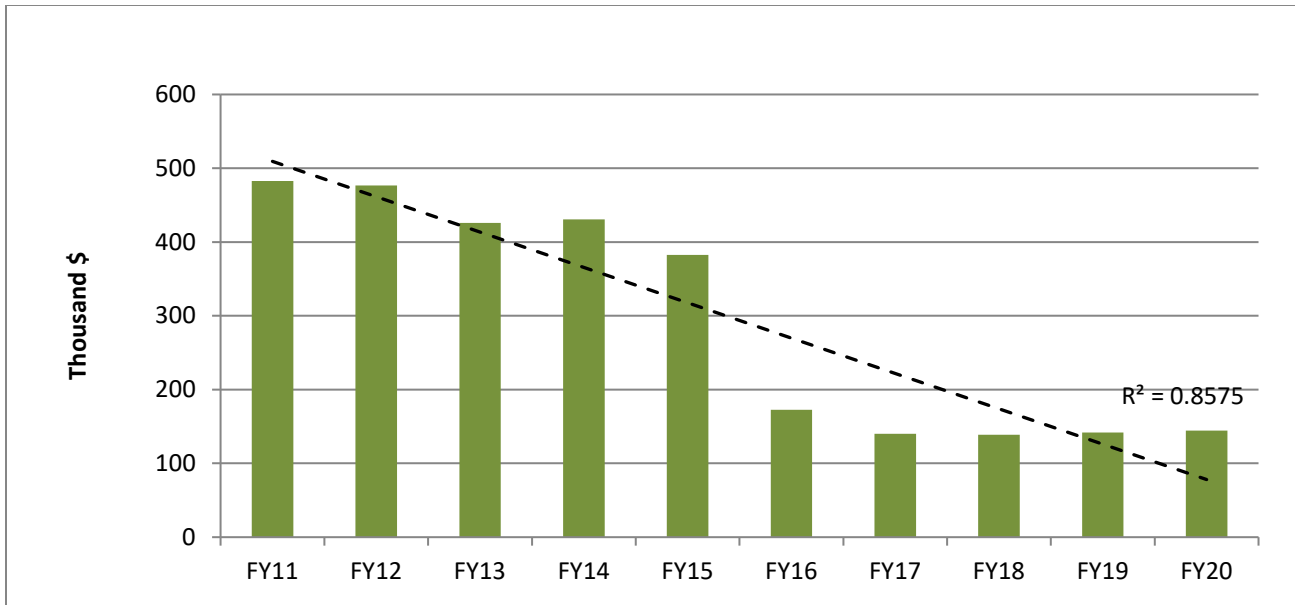


Figure 1. Funding for core FRPA work, FY11-FY20, adjusted for inflation to \$1994

B. Projected FRPA activity

In Southeast, activity will likely remain active but restrained in scope on state, private and trust lands. Sealaska has operations occurring at three locations and the Mental Health Land Trust has an operator on their newly acquired exchange lands near Naukati. The University of Alaska has one active operation on Gravina Island. The DOF has sold all state timber offered to date in Southeast and projects its operations to be active in most of 2020. The Good Neighbor Authority project on federal land on Kosciusko Island provided additional activity to the State at the end of 2019. Continued tariffs and the associated market redirection away from US wood, specifically spruce, has curtailed definitive plans for operating on young growth timber in Southeast Alaska on all ownerships for the foreseeable future. Purchasers have voiced anxiety due to these market uncertainties and the shifting market to cheaper wood sources in Europe. A limited experience level in the workforce at most levels of the industry continues to constrain outlook and functionality. Consequently, the DOF views FRPA training as a continued priority regardless of industry activity level.

- The Division of Forestry conducted limited forest practices inspections on Kodiak and Afognak Islands due to the duration of the 2019 fire season. Active harvest operations on Afognak Island will continue into 2020 and beyond. Depending on fire activity and weather delays the Division typically makes six Forest Practices Inspections from March to November each year.
- FRPA activity in the Mat-Su is projected to remain stable in 2020. There is potential/expressed interest in both Mat-Su and State timber sales in the lower Susitna Valley / Fish Creek area. If this interest becomes reality, or if there is renewed interest in the Borough's Chijuk sale, there would be increased FRPA activity in the Mat-Su.

FY20 projected funding. The Governor's proposed FY20 budget for FRPA implementation is flat for FY20.

C. Staff and organizational changes

In 2019, the Northern and Coastal Regional Foresters resigned. Both positions were in the recruitment phase at the end of the year with selections expected in January 2020.

During 2019, DOF

- Promoted Norm McDonald from Mat-Su/SW Area FMO (Fire Management Officer) to Fire Program Manager and Chief of Fire.
- Hired Josh Hightower as Assistant Urban & Community Forester.
- Hired Ashley List as Forest Planner and Federal Programs Manager.
- Hired Nick Carter as the Tok/Copper River Area Forester.
- Hired Danette Berkovitz as Admin Officer I in Anchorage.
- Hired Michael Burkhead as Procurement Specialist III in Anchorage.
- Promoted Phil Blydenburgh from Assistant Mat-Su/SW FMO to Mat-Su/SW FMO.
- One Forester II was rehired, but later resigned from Ketchikan.
- Two Forester II vacancies were being recruited, with possible selections in early 2020.

Recruiting to fill vacant positions remains challenging. A combination of issues is leading to low numbers of applicants and low job acceptance rates when an offer is made. The Lower 48 economy is good relative to Alaska's. The pool of experienced field foresters and fire management officers is tighter due to demographics in the potential workforce. Tier IV benefits are not competitive relative to other employers. Applicants are hesitant to accept employment offers due to the current contraction of the state budget and workforce.

VII. STATEMENT OF FRPA EFFECTIVENESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO CORRECT PROCEDURAL OR SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS

Overall, the FRPA was effective in protecting water quality and fish habitat, while providing for continued timber and fishing industry opportunities. DOF maintained sufficient field presence to implement the Act, and to conduct compliance monitoring on the low level of FRPA activity in 2019. DOF conducted 26 field inspections on private, municipal, and trust land this year, and issued no notices of violation. Strong results from the compliance score sheets in all three regions indicate a high degree of compliance with the Act, and show continued success in preventing problems through DPO review, training, and field consultations with the operators. DEC listed no impaired waters under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act due to forestry activities on private, state, or other public lands regulated by the FRPA.

At current levels of funding, the effectiveness of the Act depends on a low level of current activity, experienced landowners and operators, and a high level of compliance. Potential increases in state timber sales and activity on new Sealaska and Mental Health Trust land are likely to increase FRPA activity. If the level of FRPA activity increases, if new operators that require additional training begin work, or if violations increase, effectiveness will be compromised at current staffing levels.

VIII. RESEARCH AND MONITORING PRIORITIES FOR 2020

The priority for 2020 is continued compliance monitoring in all three FRPA Regions and compliance monitoring training for new agency staff. For effectiveness monitoring, the interagency Effectiveness Monitoring Working Group was reconstituted and met in October to discuss projects and priorities. The

group agreed on several high priority projects, and will meet every six months to exchange information and progress reports.

2020 Effectiveness Monitoring Priorities

- Road condition surveys, east Icy Bay.
- Windthrow prediction in SE Alaska.
- Reforestation projects in Interior Alaska.
 - Variant for Forest Vegetation Simulator. Monitoring silvicultural prescriptions.
 - Evaluating success of non-native species plantations.
 - Site preparation techniques for reforestation.
- Fish passage mapping, incorporating federal and state data.

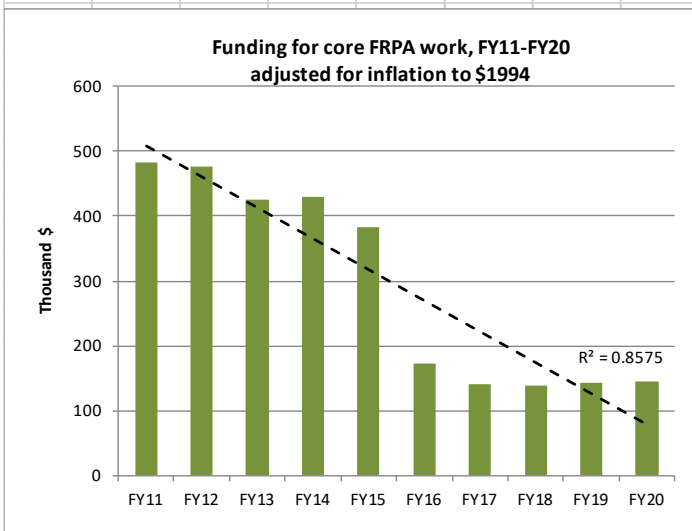
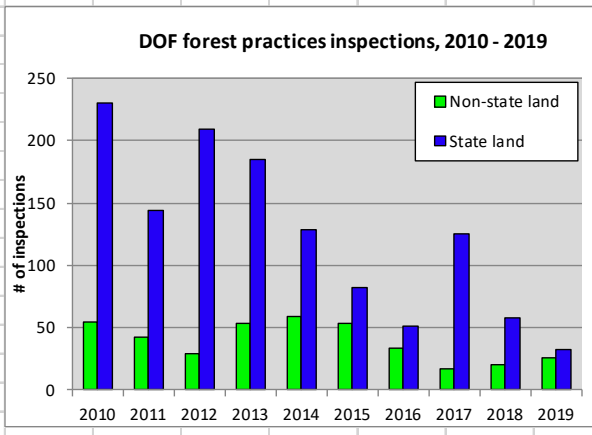
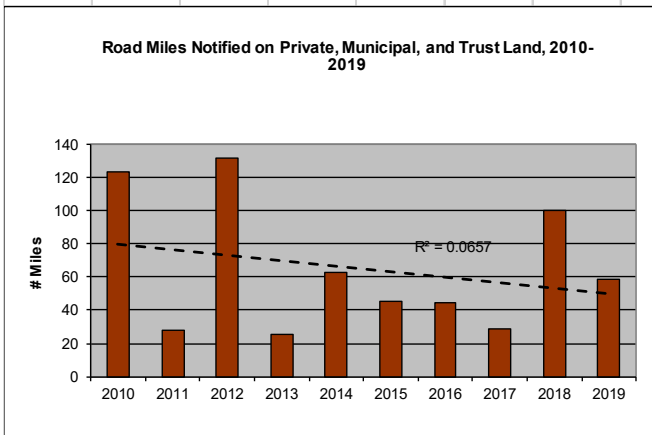
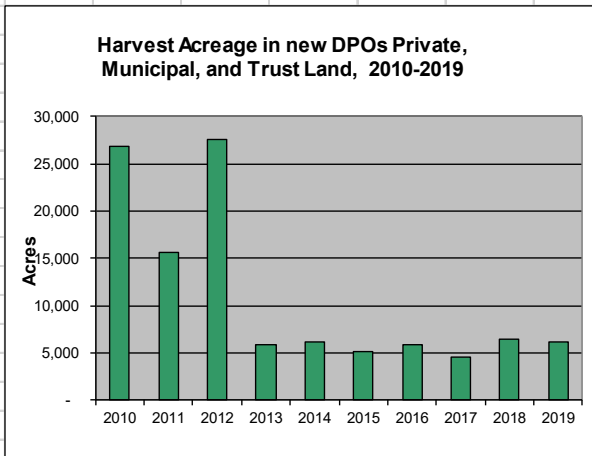
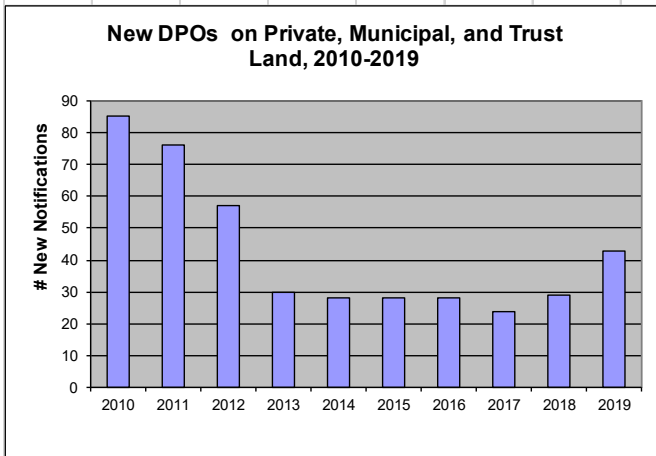
IX. ADDITIONAL TASKS AND INITIATIVES FOR 2020

In addition to ongoing FRPA implementation and enforcement work, and the items listed in section VII and VIII, specific DOF tasks for 2020 include the following:

- Recruit and train to fill staff vacancies as they occur.
- Implement Challenge Cost Share Agreements for young-growth inventory and work force development in Southeast.
- Implement Good Neighbor Agreements to provide forest management services on National Forest.
- Explore further opportunities for forestry & recreation partnerships on State Forest lands.
- Continue Forest Inventory and Analysis work in Interior Alaska.
- Train DOF staff on scoring and completing BMP compliance score sheets for every FRPA inspection on private or State land, and provide FRPA training to other agencies and operators.
- Consider long-term timber sale contracts in Southeast Alaska.

Figure 1.

Key Forest Practices Indicators, 2010-2019



Funding for core work has included state General Fund and CIP receipts, federal Section 319 and Section 6217 funding. Core work includes DPO reviews, inspections, compliance monitoring, reporting, enforcement, and FRPA reviews and updates. Special projects such as road condition surveys or effectiveness monitoring projects depend on additional funding. In FY19 all funding for core work was from the state General Fund.

APPENDIX A.

2010-2019 FRPA ACTIVITIES ON PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL, AND TRUST LAND

NOTE: Forest practices actions are reported on a calendar year basis

Number of New Notifications (DPOs) for commercial operations

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	61	54	32	14	14	16	19	19	14	24
NSE	8	6	3	3	0	0	0	1	10	13
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0
Kenai-Kodiak	15	11	13	7	8	6	7	2	3	5
COASTAL	84	71	48	26	24	23	26	22	28	42
Fairbanks	1	0	5	4	4	5	2	2	1	1
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	1	5	9	4	4	5	2	2	1	1
TOTAL	85	76	57	30	28	28	28	24	29	43

Number of Notification Renewals

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	24	27	9	11	12	11	10	20	13	7
NSE	1	0	1	1	3	1	1	0	0	1
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Kenai-Kodiak	2	6	4	8	4	0	4	4	7	5
COASTAL	27	33	14	21	20	14	16	26	21	14
Fairbanks	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Tok	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0		0
Copper R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
NORTHERN	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	4	0
TOTAL	27	33	14	21	25	14	16	26	25	14

Harvest Acreage in New Notifications Received

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	17,532	5,577	8,373	4,717	1,724	1,820	3,341	3,758	2,479	4,376
NSE	1,740	2,241	6,379	40	0	0	0	0	863	961
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	131	154	160	0	0	1,646	0
Kenai-Kodiak	7,389	4,684	8,918	836	3826	2,831	2,387	691	1,460	841
COASTAL	26,661	12,502	23,670	5,724	5,704	4,811	5,728	4,449	6,448	6,178
Fairbanks	168	0	161	174	269	299	128	79	29	29
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Tok	0	2,940	3,685	0	208	0	0	0		0
Copper R.	0	205	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
NORTHERN	168	3,145	3,846	174	477	299	128	79	29	29
TOTAL	26,829	15,647	27,516	5,897	6,181	5,110	5,856	4,528	6,477	6,207

Road Miles Notified

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	55	28	15	15	16	18	28	20	22	36
NSE	0	10	16	0.3	0	0	0	1	36	14
Mat-Su/SW	0	61	64	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
Kenai-Kodiak	66	0	0	6	44	25	15	6	31	6
COASTAL	122	99	95	21	60	43	43	27	98	56
Fairbanks	3	0	6	4	2	2	2	2	3	3
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	27	31	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	3	28	37	4	3	2	2	2	3	3
TOTAL	124	127	132	26	63	45	45	29	100	59

FRPA Inspections Conducted on forest operations on private, municipal, and trust land - DOF

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	37	18	6	20	31	24	11	9	9	10
NSE	1	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	1	8
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	0	5	5	1	1	1	0
Kenai-Kodiak	17	21	21	29	20	21	16	7	6	4
COASTAL	55	41	28	52	59	50	28	17	17	22
Fairbanks	0	0	0	2	0	3	4	0	3	4
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	0	1	1	2	0	3	4	0	3	4
TOTAL	55	42	29	54	59	53	32	17	20	26

Note: Inspections include regular FRPA inspections + variation inspections + reforestation inspections

# FRPA Inspections Conducted on forest operations on private, municipal, and trust land - ADF&G										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Fairbanks	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anchorage	9	16	12	15	15	15	11	10	3	1
Prince of Wales	25	14	19	8	8	7	10	4	7	5
Juneau/Douglas	7	4	2	6	2	1	2	1	0	3
Kenai	0	3	10	1	2	1	0	1	0	0
Mat-Su	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
TOTAL	41	38	43	31	27	24	23	17	12	9

Note: For data on other ADF&G forestry-related field work, including fish habitat inspections under AS 16.05.841 and .871, road condition surveys, and other effectiveness monitoring, see ADF&G annual report text.

Note: This table does not include field work for the SE Road Condition Survey.

Note: The number of inspections is different than the number of field days spent by the agencies. Some inspections, such as those at Icy Bay, take more than a single day. In other cases, multiple operations can be inspected on a single day. An inspection is counted for each inspection report that is filed. Each report covers a single operating area. .

# FRPA Inspections Conducted on forest operations on private, municipal, and trust land - DEC										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SE Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SC Region	14	10	12	18	18	3	3	0	0	0
Interior Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	14	10	12	18	18	3	3	0	0	0

# FRPA Inspections Conducted on forest operations on STATE land - DOF										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	15	26	27	16	19	21	4	78	24	8
NSE	15	8	7	9	8	11	6	3	8	5
Mat-Su/SW	21	52	70	13	6	4	12	13	1	1
Kenai-Kodiak	19	29	24	9	18	8	1	3	0	5
COASTAL	70	115	128	47	51	44	23	97	33	19
Fairbanks	40	27	21	82	30	19	12	16	20	8
Delta	21	25	18	26	24	10	5	7	5	2
Tok	20	7	7	2	16	6	11	5	0	3
Copper R.	23	39	10	0	7	3	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	104	98	56	110	77	38	28	28	25	13
TOTAL	174	213	184	157	128	82	51	125	58	32

Note: Inspections include regular FRPA inspections + variation inspections + reforestation inspections

# FRPA Inspections Conducted on forest operations on STATE land - ADF&G										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Fairbanks	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Anchorage	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0
Prince of Wales	0	2	3	0	7	1	1	3	1	3
Juneau/Douglas	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Kenai	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mat-Su	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	3	8	6	1	25	3	1	5	2	3

Note: For data on other ADF&G forestry-related field work, including fish habitat inspections under AS 16.05.841 and .871, road condition surveys, and other effectiveness monitoring, see ADF&G annual report text.

# FRPA Inspections Conducted on forest operations on STATE land - DEC										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SE Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SC Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interior Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: This table does not include field work for the SE Road Condition Survey.

Note: The number of inspections is different than the number of field days spent by the agencies. Some inspections, such as those at Icy Bay, take more than a single day. In other cases, multiple operations can be inspected on a single day. An inspection is counted for each inspection report that is filed. Each report covers a single operating area.

# field days spent on FRPA Inspections on all non-federal land - DOF										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	52	19	29	33	50	33	10	85	38	7
NSE	16	6	3	2	11	13	9	4	9	0
Mat-Su/SW	21	23	39	11	17	10	19	10	18	1
Kenai-Kodiak	36	109	71	51	44	53	38	25	20	20
COASTAL	125	157	142	97	122	109	76	124	85	28
Fairbanks	40	34	31	59	30	65	64	15	20	99
Delta	21	33	18	15	24	0	20	4	12	18
Tok	20	2	7	14	16	7	13	3	0	0
Copper R.	23	76	11	0	19	1	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	104	145	67	88	89	73	97	22	32	117
TOTAL	229	223	209	185	211	182	173	146	117	145

# field days spent on FRPA Inspections on all non-federal land - ADF&G										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Fairbanks	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Anchorage	9	23	36	15	15	15	11	10	3	1
Prince of Wales	25	14	22	8	15	14	11	7	8	8
Juneau/Douglas	9	6	20	6	2	1	2	3	0	10
Kenai	1	2	13	2	4	1	0	1	0	0
Mat-Su	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
TOTAL	44	48	91	32	36	32	24	22	14	19

# field days spent on FRPA Inspections on all non-federal land - DEC										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SE Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SC Region	21	20	36	18	13	3	2	0	0	0
Interior Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	21	20	36	18	13	3	2	0	0	0

# Variation requests received										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	2	1	1	4	5	3	3	2	2	0
NSE	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
MS/SW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	2	3	3	1	1	6	2	0	0	0
COASTAL	4	4	4	6	6	9	5	2	2	0
Fairbanks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	4	4	4	6	6	9	5	2	2	0

Variation Trees Reviewed (approved, denied, and other)* in site-specific variations

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	14	6	46	312	202	266	304	56	2	0
NSE	0	0	0	243	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	160	294	678	41	80	458	4,353	0	0	0
COASTAL	174	300	724	596	282	724	4,657	56	2	0
Fairbanks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	174	300	724	596	282	724	4,657	56	2	0

*Variation trees reviewed covers all trees inspected on site in site-specific variations. This includes trees approved or denied for harvest, plus "other" trees such as those that are withdrawn from the variation request or that are found to be outside the riparian buffer. It does not include trees harvested in small streamside zones under 11 AAC 95.240

**Variations in the Tok Area were for groups of small trees rather than individual large trees. See report text for description.

Variation Trees Approved

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	14	6	46	272	195	239	286	48	2	0
NSE	0	0	0	237	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	160	295	640	38	64	450	4,327	0	0	0
COASTAL	174	301	686	547	259	689	4,613	48	2	0
Fairbanks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	174	301	686	547	259	689	4,613	48	2	0
% approved	100%	100%	95%	92%	92%	95%	99%	86%	100%	#DIV/0!

FRPA Notices of Violation Issued

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0
NSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
COASTAL	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0
Fairbanks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0

Acres Reviewed for Reforestation Exemptions

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	0	0	1,201	114	0	67	0	60	0	159
COASTAL	0	0	1,201	114	0	67	0	60	0	159
Fairbanks	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	40	1,201	114	0	67	0	60	0	159

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF 2018 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

CARRY-OVER ACTIONS INITIATED PRIOR TO 2018

NONE

ACTIONS INITIATED IN 2018

AS 41.17.136 Directives

NONE

AS 41.17 Charging documents for violations

Case #	Date initiated	Location	Issued by	Date of compliance
NONE				

AS 41.17.131 Stop Work Orders

NONE