

Falldown Discussion

At the July 23rd Framework Committee meeting, various falldown percentages were used to describe the reduction in the amount of timber through the planning stages leading up to the volume at offer. The purpose of this discussion is to try to come up with some common understanding of what “falldown” means and how it can best be used to inform the decision-making process.

The first place to start is in the Glossary for the 2008 Tongass Plan (Chapter 7), where “falldown” is defined as

The difference between the number of acres planned for timber harvest and those actually harvested, usually experienced as a reduction in acres. Falldown results from many factors, including unmapped unsuitable timber land, newly available information, and project-level consideration of site-specific issues and non-timber resource needs.

This is different from the MIRF (Model Implementation Reduction Factor). The MIRF reduces the timber volume, according to a formula, from the LSTA volume taking into consideration similar factors that are described as “falldown”, but does not take into consideration site-specific conditions of a particular planning area (FEIS, Appendix B, page 17).

Neither of these concepts take the analysis all the way from the LSTA volume to the offer volume. The LSTA volume is reduced by the MIRF to provide planning guidance in developing a proposed action, it does not dictate the proposed action. The proposed action likely will be less than the LSTA (reduced by the MIRF) for one or more of the following reasons:

- Planning level decisions, such as avoiding areas with extensive road construction or helicopter operations;
- Planning process time and funding constraints (not enough time or personnel to capture every possible unit in a planning area in the timeframe needed for an offer to industry); and
- Conscious planning decision to offer only a portion of a planning area in a given sale.

It is only at the creation of a unit pool that becomes the proposed action that “falldown”, as defined in the Forest Plan, kicks in. Consequently, the most proper use of “falldown” is to describe the percentage reduction from the proposed action to the sale offer.