

**POLICY GUIDELINES FOR EXTRACTION AND UTILIZATION OF UN-ECONOMICAL SALVAGE TIMBER LOTS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO HPSFDC LTD.**

**1. Background**

The Government of Himachal Pradesh constituted Himachal Pradesh State Forest Development Corporation Limited (HPSFDC Ltd.) on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1974 as its sole agency to carry out extraction and marketing of timber and resin/rosin from Government Forests on scientific lines by adopting suitable modern techniques. Apart from working in timber and resin on commercial lines, one of the objectives behind constitution of HPSFDC Ltd. was to prevent the illegal removal of trees and illicit tapping of resin in the Government forests. Previously the Forest Department had been carrying out extraction operations and trade of timber and resin. The trade in timber and resin obtained from Govt. Forests has been nationalized under the HP Forest Produce (Regulation of Trade) Act, 1982.

The lots of salvage trees (*dry standing, fallen and uprooted trees*) and of green trees in those cases in which approval of competent authorities under Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and Forest Rights Act, 2006 has been obtained are handed over to the HPSFDC Ltd. for extraction and marketing. HPSFDC Ltd. pays royalty to the Forest Department as per rates approved by the Government from time to time.

**2. Annual extraction and marketing of timber by HPSFDC Ltd.**

HPSFDC Ltd. normally receives about 2.00 lakh m<sup>3</sup> standing volume from the Forest Department annually. Out of standing volume of 2.00 lakh m<sup>3</sup>, converted volume of about 80000 to 90000 m<sup>3</sup> is obtained for sale. The converted



timber is sold in monthly open auctions in Himkashth Sale Depots. The timber is mainly of coniferous species including *Deodar, Kail, Fir, Spruce and Chil.*

### **3. Commercial viability of Timber lots**

Commercial viability of timber lots depends on various factors such as the type of species, number of trees marked (standing volume), lead from forest to road side depots, modes of transportation and market potential of timber extracted from a particular species. Generally Deodar and Kail lots of sizeable volume are considered profitable for HPSFDC Ltd. as working cost compared to Fir/Spruce is less and timber sells at better rates in the market. Fir and Spruce are naturally occurring in high lying far flung areas and thus exorbitant costs are involved their extraction and transportation. These are loss making lots. Extraction of scattered individual/small number of salvage trees which are not accessible by road having standing volume below 50 m<sup>3</sup> involve high costs and hence considered economically not viable. Generally such lots are not acceptable to the Forest Corporation.

Therefore, HPSFDC Ltd. being a commercial organization is not able to work such un-economical trees/lots. As a result such trees/lots remain unexploited. This leads to non-utilization of timber from such trees/lots and such trees are decaying in the forests causing huge revenue loss to the State exchequer. Sometimes such salvage trees are illegally removed.

### **4. Advantages to the Forest Corporation/State**

The following advantages to the Forest Corporation/State are envisaged.

- (a) The timber from salvage trees (un-economical lots) which normally decay in the forests shall be available to the Forest Department at no costs and for other departments at reduced rates for use in the





Government civil works. The extraction costs shall be borne by the respective Departments.

- (b) The Corporation shall be saved from the losses which accrue on working of un-economical lots. Also the manpower with the Forest Corporation particularly Charanies and Dhullanies shall be deployed gainfully.
- (c) The State Govt. shall earn royalty on such un-economical lots which are otherwise left out and are decaying in the forest areas causing revenue loss to the State exchequer.
- (d) The removal of salvage trees shall create space for the natural/artificial regeneration which will benefit in the improvement of tree cover.
- (e) The illegal removal of such trees shall be prevented.
- (f) Employment will be generated in the form of man days.

#### **5. Guidelines for utilization of un-economical trees/lots unacceptable to the HPSFDC Ltd.**

Non-utilization of un-economical salvage timber lots/trees has always remained a cause of concern and this issue has been raised at many forums through various channels. In order to gainfully utilize the timber from such trees/lots, the following options are proposed.

##### **(a) Utilization by the other Government Departments**

Various State Government Departments such as PWD, I&PH, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj etc. are responsible for execution of developmental activities requiring timber and fuel wood at the construction sites across the State. It shall be prudent to mark available salvage trees in nearby forests in favour of such Government departments as per their need to gainfully utilize timber obtained from such un-economical lots. Such



marking should be done by the concerned officer of the Forest Department in consultation with concerned Government Department for those Government works which are under execution or likely to be executed within the jurisdiction of a Forest Division. Marking of trees shall be done by the concerned Block Officer in the presence of representative of the Government Department going to use the timber. Forest Corporation staff may associate, if there is a dispute. The concerned Government Department shall pay 50% of the approved royalty rates to the Forest Department in addition to bearing the costs of extraction. No charges shall be payable to the Forest Corporation. The extraction of marked salvage trees shall be automatically allowed by the HPSFDC Ltd through the contractor(s) of concerned HPPWD / other Govt. Department(s) who are registered as Labour Supply Mate (LSM) with the HPSFDC Ltd. The LSM(s) shall bear the cost of extraction as the extracted timber will be utilized in the work(s) awarded to them by the concerned Government Departments. The extraction shall be done under close supervision of the concerned Block Officer and timber so extracted shall be properly accounted for in the departmental records and shall be further transferred to the concerned Government Department(s) through LSM(s) after affixing proper passing hammer mark for its further utilization. The concerned officers/officials of the Government department shall be duty bound to ensure that timber extracted is utilized for the awarded work and no misutilization is allowed. Misutilization of timber shall tantamount to violation of Forest laws and will be dealt sternly.

**b) Utilization by the Forest Department**

The Forest Department is also engaged in carrying out various developmental activities for better Forest management including creation of infrastructure. As per the current norms/practice, seized timber and timber



obtained from salvage trees are utilized only for construction of offices and residential accommodation of field staff.

Therefore, the department will be allowed to utilize the timber received from such un-economical lots for various works namely Forest Rest Houses/Inspection Huts, Transit accommodation, Building works in the Forest Training Centres, Community Centres, Interpretation Centres, Zoo enclosures and enrichment, Eco-tourism assets, Small Wooden Bridges in forest areas, Residential accommodations for the field staff, ministerial staff and the officers. The department can mark such salvage trees as per their need and extract timber to further utilize it for aforesaid infrastructure. The timber shall be utilized at no costs except the expenditure required to be incurred for extraction. The extraction shall be done departmentally under close supervision of concerned Block Officer and timber so extracted shall be properly accounted for in the departmental records i.e. Timber Form 7 to be further utilized as per the laid down norms. Such timber shall also be properly hammer marked to prevent misutilization.

**(c) Utilization by the Right Holders**

As per the current Timber Distribution (TD) Rights policy, no green trees are allowed to be given to the local right holders. Only salvage trees are allowed under TD rights for use in construction of new residential house or cowshed and for their maintenance. It shall be the duty of the concerned Range Officer to assess genuine demand of right holders in a Range for grant of salvage trees under TD before such trees are extracted for the departmental use. It shall be ensured that sufficient number of salvage trees is left to meet with demand of the right holders in accordance with TD Rights policy. Right holders who offer their assistance in fighting forest fires be given priority in granting timber under TD policy. Salvage trees normally yield less timber due to decay or disease etc and more than one tree should be considered for grant in TD so that the timber yield equals the timber yield



from trees to be allotted to the right holder so that the right holders readily accept fallen trees in lieu of standing trees.

**(d) Utilization of salvage timber in the Furniture Workshops of Forest Department and HPSFDC Ltd.**

Currently a workshop at Shamshi under Parbati Forest Division is operative which supplies furniture within the Forest Department particularly to meet requirements of Forest Rest Houses/Inspection Huts, Offices etc. Timber obtained from un-economical salvage lots in and around Parbati Forest Division shall be utilized to make furniture for departmental use in this workshop and costs at the rate of 25% of the royalty rates applicable shall be charged. Extraction shall be done departmentally and costs shall be borne by the Department to be charged to the factory. The timber extracted and used in this workshop shall be properly accounted for in the departmental Timber forms. Similarly the Forest Corporation shall also be allowed to work on un-economical lots for the purposes of making furniture and the costs at the rate of 25% of the royalty rates applicable shall be charged. Extraction costs shall be borne by the Forest Corporation itself.

**(e) Working of un-economical lots through *Charanies / Dhullanies* of HPSFDC Ltd.**

The HPSFDC Ltd. has recently established a separate cadre of *Charanies / Dhullanies* currently having strength of 80. Their main duty is extraction of timber. To gainfully utilize their services, the HPSFDC Ltd shall allocate targets to them for extraction of timber from un-economical lots in such a manner that these persons are gainfully utilized and timber is extracted.

**6. Ban on removal of salvage trees lying in Protected Areas**

There are three categories of Protected Areas (PAs) notified as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in Himachal Pradesh. These categories include



National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Conservation Reserves. As per the orders of the Hon`ble Supreme Court, no removal of biomass including salvage trees is allowed in the PAs. The department shall ensure that no biomass including Salvage trees are extracted from the PAs for the aforesaid purposes or any other commercial purpose.

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