

for the grazing fee, and a bid deposit of 10 percent of the total amount of the bid.

(e) *Qualifications and Deposit Refunds.* Upon opening applicants bids, the authorized officer shall determine whether each bidder meets the qualifications to hold a permit as set forth in Subpart A of this part; and shall refund the deposit to any applicant who is not qualified or who does not offer the high bid.

(f) *Permit Issuance.* The authorized officer shall issue the grazing permit to the qualified high bidder, except as provided in paragraphs (f)(1) and (2) of this section. The successful bidder receives the privilege of obtaining or renewing a grazing permit and is billed for the occupancy offered and forage sold.

(1) *Priority for Reissuance.* On allotments where a current permit is expiring and competition has been held on a new grazing permit, the current grazing permittee shall have priority for retaining the permit. Accordingly, an applicant who holds the permit on the allotment under bid, who has a satisfactory record of performance under that permit, and who is not the higher bidder for the future grazing privileges in the specified allotment shall be offered the opportunity to match the high bid and thereby retain the permit. Should there be more than one existing permittee in the allotment under bid, each shall be offered the option of meeting the high bid; if only one current permittee opts to meet the high bid, the remaining allowable grazing use, if any, shall be awarded to the initial high bidder.

(2) *Identical Bids.* In cases of identical bids, the selection of the successful applicant shall be made through a drawing.

(g) *Computation of Successful Bidder's Annual Fee—(1) Annual Fee Basis.* The highest bid received shall establish the base grazing value in the initial year of the grazing permit for each allotment offered. The annual grazing fee shall equal the base grazing value, adjusted by the current period's hay price index for the relevant subregion as described in § 222.53(c)(1), and (c)(3), less the value of any agency required range improvements. This hay price index shall be based on 3-year average hay prices and

annually reflect the percent change in the cost of alternative livestock feed.

(2) *Grazing Fee Credits for Range Improvements.* Any requirements for permittee construction or development of range improvements shall be identified through an agreement and incorporated into the grazing permit, with credits for such improvements to be allowed toward the annual grazing fee. Fee credits shall be allowed only for range improvements which the Forest Service requires an individual permittee to construct or develop on a specific allotment to meet the management direction and prescriptions in the relevant forest land and resource management plan and allotment management plan. These improvements must involve costs which the permittee would not ordinarily incur under the grazing permit, must be of tangible public benefit, and must enhance management of vegetation for resource protection, soil productivity, riparian, watershed, and wetland values, wildlife and fishery habitat, or outdoor recreation values. Maintenance of range improvements specified in allotment management planning documents or the grazing permit, and other costs incurred by the permittee in the ordinary course of permitted livestock grazing, do not qualify for grazing fee credits.

(h) *No Bids Received.* If qualified sealed bids are not received, the authorized officer reserves the right to conduct an oral auction using the minimum bid price established under paragraph (b) of this section or to establish grazing fees through noncompetitive grazing fee procedures specified in § 222.53 of this subpart.

[55 FR 2651, Jan. 26, 1990]

PART 223—SALE AND DISPOSAL OF NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TIMBER

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AUTHORITY: 90 Stat. 2958, 16 U.S.C. 472a; 98 Stat. 2213, 16 U.S.C. 618, 104 Stat. 714-726, 16 U.S.C. 620-620j, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 42 FR 28252, June 2, 1977, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 49 FR 2760-2761, Jan. 23, 1984.

Subpart A—General Provisions**§ 223.1 Authority to sell timber.**

Trees, portions of trees, and other forest products on National Forest System lands may be sold for the purpose of achieving the policies set forth in

the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, as amended (74 Stat. 215; 16 U.S.C. 528-531), and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended (88 Stat. 476; as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1600-1614), and the Program thereunder.

§ 223.2 Disposal of timber for administrative use.

Trees, portions of trees, or other forest products in any amount on National Forest System lands may be disposed of for administrative use, by sale or without charge, as may be most advantageous to the United States, subject to the maximum cut fixed in accordance with established policies for management of the National Forests. Such administrative use shall be limited to the following conditions and purposes:

(a) For construction, maintenance or repair of roads, bridges, trails, telephone lines, fences, recreation areas or other improvements of value for the protection or the administration of Federal lands.

(b) For fuel in Federal camps, buildings and recreation areas.

(c) For research and demonstration projects.

(d) For use in disaster relief work conducted by public agencies.

(e) For disposal when removal is desirable to protect or enhance multiple-use values in a particular area.

§ 223.3 Sale of seized material.

Seized material (trees, portions of trees or other forest products cut in trespass from National Forest System lands) may be sold to the highest bidder under specific authorization from the Regional Forester. If advertisement is impractical, sales of material with an appraised value of less than \$10,000 will be made on informal bids.

§ 223.4 Exchange of trees or portions of trees.

Trees or portions of trees may be exchanged for land under laws authorizing the exchange of National Forest timber. Cutting of exchange timber must comply with the purposes cited in § 223.1.

(42 Stat. 465, 16 U.S.C. 485; 43 Stat. 1215, 16 U.S.C. 516)