



Planning and Project Implementation Update



January 2004

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

The purpose of the Chippewa Quarterly is to provide a summary of environmental analyses on the Chippewa National Forest. Issued quarterly, this is intended to complement other public involvement efforts initiated by the Forest Supervisor or District Rangers. Legal notices will continue to be published in the following local newspapers: Bemidji's *The Pioneer* for Forest Supervisor decisions; and Blackduck's *American*, *Cass Lake Times*, *Western Itasca Review*, and Walker's *The Pilot-Independent* for District Ranger decisions.

Projects are classified into one of three categories:

Environmental Analyses in Progress

This category includes projects in which public input is being or is about to be solicited. It also includes those projects that are currently under study or analysis. Environmental analyses include Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), Environmental Assessments (EA), and Categorical Exclusions (CE).

Completed Decision Documents

These projects have culminated in the preparation of completed environmental analyses and decision documents since the last issue. These decision documents include Records of Decision (ROD), Decision Notices (DN), and Decision Memos (DM). Findings of No Significant Impacts will be included in this category, also.

Proposals withdrawn or deferred

Some projects are initiated and published in this Quarterly but may be withdrawn or deferred for various reasons. These projects may or may not be picked up for completion at a later date. Project summaries include reasons for discontinuing the project.

HOW YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED

Read through the list of proposed projects. If you want to provide site-specific comments on a project, get more information, or be placed on the project mailing list, write or call the contact person listed for that project. We value your site-specific involvement. A generic statement of interest in all projects is not specific enough. It is only through site-specific input that we can be responsive to and incorporate your concerns into project development. *Project specific comments are required during the 30-day Notice and Comment period to obtain standing to appeal a project. New Appeal Regulations went into effect on June 4, 2003.*

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Appeal Period - The 45-day period after publication of a decision in which an appeal can be filed.

Categorical Exclusion (CE) - A category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. Neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required.

Comment Period - The time allowed for interested persons to provide comments to a Responsible Official on a proposed action.

Decision Memo (DM) - A concise written record of the responsible official's decision to implement an action that has been categorically excluded from documentation.

Decision Notice (DN) - A concise written record of the responsible official's decision based on an environmental assessment and a finding of no significant impact.

Environmental Assessment (EA) - A document that presents issues and concerns important to a project, alternate means of accomplishing a project, and environmental effects of each of those alternatives.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - This document is required for proposed actions that may have significant effects on the human environment. The contents are similar to an environmental assessment, and it includes some additional sections.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) - A document prepared by a federal agency presenting the reasons why an action, not otherwise excluded, will not have a significant effect on the human environment and for which an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The procedural guide for the decision making process for site-specific projects.

Proposed Action - A proposal made by the Forest Service to authorize, recommend, or implement an action on National Forest System lands to meet a specific purpose and need which is subject to public notice comment provisions.

Scoping - Includes internal and public involvement to determine the range of issues to be addressed. Scoping aids in the development of alternatives for a proposed action.

Significance - As used in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), requires consideration of both context and intensity.

Anticipated "Walk-in" Business

Requests from the public occasionally necessitate analyses be completed with a short turn-around. This may mean that decisions are made without prior announcement in this Update. As these projects come up for consideration however, they will continue to be announced by legal notices in newspapers. Examples of walk-in requests include special use roads and utility rights-of-way. Scoping efforts for these requests will be conducted as applicable.

Forest Policy on Distributing Documents

Draft and Final Environmental Assessments and Decision Notices/FONSI's and Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements and Records of Decision are routinely mailed to individuals who submit written comments to any projects. We do not routinely distribute biological assessments or biological evaluations with the previously listed documents. If you wish to receive biological evaluations or biological assessments for NEPA projects, please contact the district and/or Supervisor's Office NEPA Coordinators.

Privacy on Comments Received

Comments received in response to solicitation as part of the NEPA process, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on a proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within stated number of days.

SCHEDULE OF NEPA PROPOSED ACTIONS

Blackduck Ranger District
417 Forestry Drive
Blackduck, MN 56630
(218) 835-4291 TTY: (218) 835-4189

TRACY BECK, District Ranger
NEPA Coordinator: Leo Johnson (ljohnson@fs.fed.us)

Environmental Analyses in Progress

Project Number	Project Name	Location	Description	Scoping Status	Analysis Status	Expected Decision Date	Contact Person
B110	County Road 22 Reconstruction & Easement	T148N,R31W	Reconstruct and pave the county road. Federal Highway Administration to sign decision.	Completed	Completed	February 2004	Leo Johnson (218) 835-3107
B111	Bowstring River Bridge Replacement	T149N,R27W, Sec. 23 and 26	Easement (about 400 feet by 66 feet) and replace a narrow bridge	Completed	Analysis complete	January 2004	Chuck Wingard (218) 835-3116
B119	Rambling Woods Resource Management	T146N,R29,30,31W, T147N,R29,30,31W T148N,R30,31W T149N,R30,31W	Timber Sale, Vegetation Treatments, Prescribed Burning, Roads, Watershed; Minor Recreation Projects.	Scoping done November 2003	Analysis in progress.	February 2004	Leo Johnson (218) 835-3107
B120	Bridge Replacement	Mitt Lake Creek T150N R27 W Sec 21 Wagner Creek T149N R28W Sec. 12 Crane Creek T147N R29W Sec. 1 Swamp Creek T148N R30W Sec. 32	Replace bridge.	Scoping done April 2003	Analysis in progress.	Spring 2004	Bill Yourd (218)-335-8672
B131	Scenic Highway Reconstruction (County Roads 10 and 39)	T149N, R30W T148N, R30W T147N, R30W T146N, R30W	Reconstruct the road with wider lanes, wider shoulders, gentler ditch slopes, wider clearings, and gentler curves.	Scoping done December 2003	Analysis beginning	August 2004	Leo Johnson (218) 835-3107
B121	Shallow Pond Boat Access	T149N, R28W, Sec. 5	Construct a small, native-surface boat landing and parking lot on Shallow Pond.	Scoping done October 2003	Analysis beginning	Unknown	Chuck Wingard (218) 835-3116
B122	Sugarbush Township Road Easement	T147N, R31W	Easements for existing township roads.	Planned for March 2004	Not begun yet.	December 2004	Chuck Wingard (218) 835-3116
B123	Olson Road	T146N, R31W, Sec. 4	Access to private land - construct new road.	Scoping done October 2003	Analysis in progress.	June 2004	Chuck Wingard (218) 835-3116
B124	Ardenhurst Township Road Easements	T150N, R28W	Issue easements to the township for township roads crossing NFS lands in Ardenhurst Township.	Scoping done November 2003	Analysis in Progress	March 2004	Chuck Wingard (218) 835-3116
B125	Fish Cribs in North and South Twin Lakes	T148N, R31W, Sec. 34/35	Refurbishing brush in existing fish habitat locations	Scoping done November 2003	Part of Rambling Woods project	February 2004	Jeff Allison (218) 835-4291
B126	Fisheries Habitat Improvement	T147N, R28W, Sec. 4	Tree drops along lakeshore	Scoping done December 2003	To begin in January 2004	March 2004	Jeff Allison (218) 835-4291
B127	Stream Habitat Improvement (Third River)	T147N, R28W	Underplant conifers on islands in Third River flowage and associated TSI. Possible coop. with DNR.	Scoping done December 2003	To begin in February 2004	June 2004	Jeff Allison (218) 835-4291
B128	Bowstring River bank stabilization and Recreational Fishing	T149N, R27W, Sec. 26	Stabilize the banks on the river at Shogren Dam site.	Scoping done December 2003	To begin in April 2004	August 2004	Jeff Allison (218) 835-4291
B129	Dunbar Lake Access	T148N, R28W, Sec. 9	Road reconstruction and construction of a small parking lot. Coop. project with DNR.	Scoping done December 2003	To begin in June 2004	October 2004	Jeff Allison (218) 835-4291

Blackduck Continued: Environmental Analyses in Progress

Project Number	Project Name	Location	Description	Scoping Status	Analysis Status	Expected Decision Date	Contact Person
B130	Stream Bank Stabilization and Aesthetics (Popple River)	Various	Planting conifers and shrubs along streambanks to stabilize the soil, restore stream morphology, and minimize beaver impacts. Planting along FR 2231 for wetland protection and aesthetics.	Scoping done December 2003	To begin in August 2004	November 2004	Jeff Allison (218) 835-4291

Walker Ranger District
201 Minnesota Ave. East
Walker, MN 56484
(218) 547-1044 Fax: (218) 547-3260

THOMAS G. SOMRAK, District Ranger
NEPA Coordinator: Chris Brunner (cbrunner@fs.fed.us)

Environmental Analyses in Progress

Project Number	Project Name	Location	Description	Scoping Status	Analysis Status	Expected Decision Date	Contact Person
W70	Re-issuance of Various Lands Special Use Permits	District-wide	Evaluate the renewal of special use permits near expiration. Permits are valid for five years.	February	Ongoing	March 2004	Jim Tande (218) 547-1044
W71	Leech Lake River Resource Management	T142-T145N R26-28W	Timber harvest, prescribed burning, planting, and road decommissioning	Completed	In progress	June 2004	Christine Brunner (218) 547-1044
W73	Pipeline Maintenance	Numerous spots along pipeline that crosses Walker district.	Maintenance of pipeline and corridor. Digs to inspect pipeline that are necessary to ensure spills/leaks do not occur.	Completed	Completed	February 2004	Cathy Thompson (218) 335-8655
W74	Bridge Replacement	Laura Lake Creek T141N R 27W Sec. 25	Replacement of bridge	Completed	In progress	Spring 2004	Bill Yourd (218) 335-8672
W75	FR 2862 Reconstruction and Easement	T141N R28W Sec. 7	Applicant has requested a special use permit for a portion of FR 2862 to access private land	March 2004	In progress	May 2004	Jim Tande (218) 546-1044
W76	Gadbolt Lake Access	T141N R31W Sec. 27	Applicant has requested a special use permit to reconstruct ½ mile of FR 3767A and construct 1000 feet of new road on NFS lands.	February 2004	In progress	August 2004	Jim Tande (218) 546-1044
W79	Conifer Thin	District -wide	Commercial thinning in conifer stands.	February/March	Begin in February	June 2004	

Completed Decision Documents

Project Number	Project Name	Location	Description	Decision Approval Date	Appeal Due Date	Appeal Review Date	Contact Person
W78	Goblin Fern Administrative Study	T144N R30W, Sec. 3	Conduct a partial cut harvest to determine the effects on <i>Botrychium mormo</i>	January 12, 2004	Non-appealable	N/A	John Casson (218) 547-1044

Deer River/Marcell Ranger District
 1037 Division Street
 Deer River, MN 56636
 (218) 246-2123 TTY: (218) 246-9743

Marcell Office
 49554 State Hwy 38
 Marcell, MN 56657
 (218) 832-3161

WADE SPANG, District Ranger
 NEPA Coordinator: Michael Jiménez (mjimenez@fs.fed.us)

Environmental Analysis in Progress

Project Number	Project Name	Location	Description	Scoping Status	Analysis Status	Expected Decision Date	Contact Person
D49	Hanauska Road Access	T143N, R25W, Sec 27, FR2082A	Request for Special Use Road permit to access private land.	Scoping done in winter 2003	Analysis in progress	Spring/summer 2004	Jane Munnell 218-246-2123
D50	Benham Road Access	T148N, R26W, Sec 23 SWNW	Request for Special Use Road permit to access private land.	Scoping done in winter 2003	Analysis in progress	Spring/summer 2004	Jane Munnell 218-246-2123
D51	Mississippi Vegetation Management Project	Encompasses the Mississippi Watershed on the Deer River Ranger District.	Evaluates the management options related to vegetative, fuels, and roads management in the Mississippi River Watershed	Spring 2004	Analysis in progress	Fall 2004	Michael Jiménez (218) 246-2123
D29	Private Road Access to Bowstring Lake Property	T147N, R26W, Section 2, SWSW and Section 11, NWNW.	Applicant has requested special use permit for a ¼ mile road crossing NF lands to access private land	Scoping completed	Analysis in progress	March 2004.	Gregg Alle (218) 832-3161
D41	Upper Bowstring Intergrated Resource Project (IRP)	Encompasses the Upper Bowstring Watershed including Spring, Jessie, Rice, Caribou, and Turtle Lakes.	Evaluates the management options related to vegetative, wildlife, & watershed management and restoration in the Upper Bowstring Watershed.	Scoping completed	Analysis in progress.	February 2004.	Michael Jimenez (218) 246-2123
D42	Eagle Nest Road	Road extends from Hwy 46 to South Deer Lake Campground. T147N, R27W, Sections 14,15,21,22, &28.	Project will look at small realignments, reconstructing bridges and adding bituminous surface to Eagle Nest Road. Project will also encompass the rehabilitation of East and West Seelye Campgrounds adjacent to this road.	Scoping completed.	Analysis initiated in December 2002.	September 2004.	Mike Martin (218) 335-8633
D47	Pipeline Maintenance	Numerous spots along pipeline that crosses Deer River district and Forest-wide	Maintenance of pipeline and corridor. Digs to inspect pipeline that are necessary to ensure spills/leaks do not occur.	Scoping done in spring 2003	Analysis in progress	February 2004	Cathy Thompson (218) 335-8655
D48 M55	Bridge Replacement and Repairs	Two Mile Creek T147 N R 26W Sec 30 Long Lake Creek T143N R25W Sec 30; Batson Lake Inlet T60N R26W Sec 26	Replace bridges	Scoping done in spring 2003	Analysis in progress	Spring 2004	Bill Yourd (218)-335-8672

Forest Plan Revision to Culminate in 2004

January 2004

Forest Plan revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests will continue into 2004. Since the end of the four-month comment period (September 11, 2003) for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and proposed Forest Plans, the planning team has completed coding a total of over 1,200 printed pages of comments as part of a process called Content Analysis. The Forest Service uses this analysis method to systematically compile, categorize, and capture the full range of viewpoints, and concerns expressed in public comments.

A computer database was created to track and assist in analysis of comments. The team is currently finalizing “public concern statements” based on the information in the database and review of original letters. In content analysis, public concern statements are written to represent *what* action is requested by the commenter (s), by *whom*, and *where* the action is requested to take place in terms of specific changes to the proposed plans or environmental analysis. One public concern statement often represents several individual comments regarding the same topic.

The next step is for the planning team to determine appropriate responses to the public concern statements. Some concerns will elicit changes in the EIS or the Plans. The response to other public concerns may be an explanation as to why a change will not be made. A summary of public comments and Forest Service responses will be published in the Final EIS.

This work is part of a joint analysis by the Chippewa and Superior National Forests that will result in two separate revised Forest Plans. The Final EIS, decision document, and final revised Forest Plans will be issued in 2004. The Forest Plans will guide management direction for the next ten to 15 years.

For more information:

Specific questions concerning revision may be directed to:

Duane Lula, Forest Planner, Superior National Forest (218) 626-4300

Brenda Halter-Glenn, Forest Planner, Chippewa National Forest (218) 335-8651

Kay Getting, Chippewa Public Affairs, (218) 335-8673

Kris Reichenbach, Superior Public Affairs, (218) 626-4300

Draft documents and other Forest Plan Revision information is available at:

www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa.

Large print available upon request.

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Individuals and organizations with legal, economic, or preservation interests may request to participate in consultation on the project's effects on historic properties.

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