



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Boston Mountain
Ranger District

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Subject: **Highway 59 Tornado Salvage Project**

April 7, 2016

Dear Reader:

The Boston Mountain Ranger District of the USDA Forest Service is proposing to salvage trees damaged by a recent tornado on approximately 185 acres of National Forest land on the Lee Creek Unit northwest of Natural Dam along Highway 59 in Crawford County, Arkansas. The project area is in sections 2 and 11 in T12N, R33W.

This scoping letter serves as notification of the project to parties that would be affected or are interested in these types of activities. Please note that none of the activities would occur on private property. The proposed activities are referred to as the *Highway 59 Tornado Salvage Project*.

The stands affected were once abandoned old fields that grew up in mostly blackjack and post oaks, hickory and cedar. The intense winds of the tornado caused trees in the damaged area to become severely root sprung and/or completely knocked down to the ground or snapped off at the trunks several feet above the ground. Approximately 100 acres of hardwood and cedar timber within the damaged area would be salvaged (removed) and commercially sold. After salvage operations are complete, logging slash may be piled and burned, followed with two mechanical or manual chainsaw treatments that would take place over a five year period to reduce stocking levels while favoring native mast tree species and promoting free to grow conditions.

An incidental amount of undamaged cedar and hardwoods would also be removed. The remaining damaged timber on 85 acres where damage is sporadic and sparse along both sides of Hwy 59, would be offered through fire wood and salvage permits that can be obtained at the district office located in Ozark, Arkansas.

All undamaged, healthy hard mast species in the affected area would be retained where feasible to promote oak and hickory regeneration. Native hardwood species and shortleaf pine would be seeded and planted in a predominately hardwood and pine mix (70% or more of the harvested area would consist of hardwood).

An existing closed road in the area (95573F) would be used to access the damaged area to the south. This section of road would be seeded, water barred if necessary and closed off by gate after completion of project activities.

Up to 0.4 miles of temporary road, would be needed in the north end of the project area. This road would be rehabbed to natural state at sale closure; seeded/slashed in, water barred if necessary and closed off. To access the project area, two crossings would occur on Mountain Fork Creek. These would be armored with rock on both approaches.



I anticipate that this proposal will fall under a categorical exclusion (36 CFR 220.6(e)(13)): **Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction....The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing...**

This project complies with the Revised Ozark-St. Francis National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for management areas: 3B - Oak Woodland, and 3I - Riparian Corridors. Management activities in this area must also comply with the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960.

I invite your comments on this proposal. These comments will be used by an interdisciplinary team to develop issues and analyze the project. A decision document will then be prepared and mailed to those who commented on this project. In order to be most helpful, please return your comments referencing this project using the attached comment form by mail to the above address no later than seven days after the notice of this project. Oral or hand-delivered comments must be received within our normal business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. local time. You may also call or fax your comments to the numbers above, or email them to comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-bostonmtn@fs.fed.us. All comments will become part of the project record available for public review. I appreciate your interest in this project.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM DUNK

District Ranger

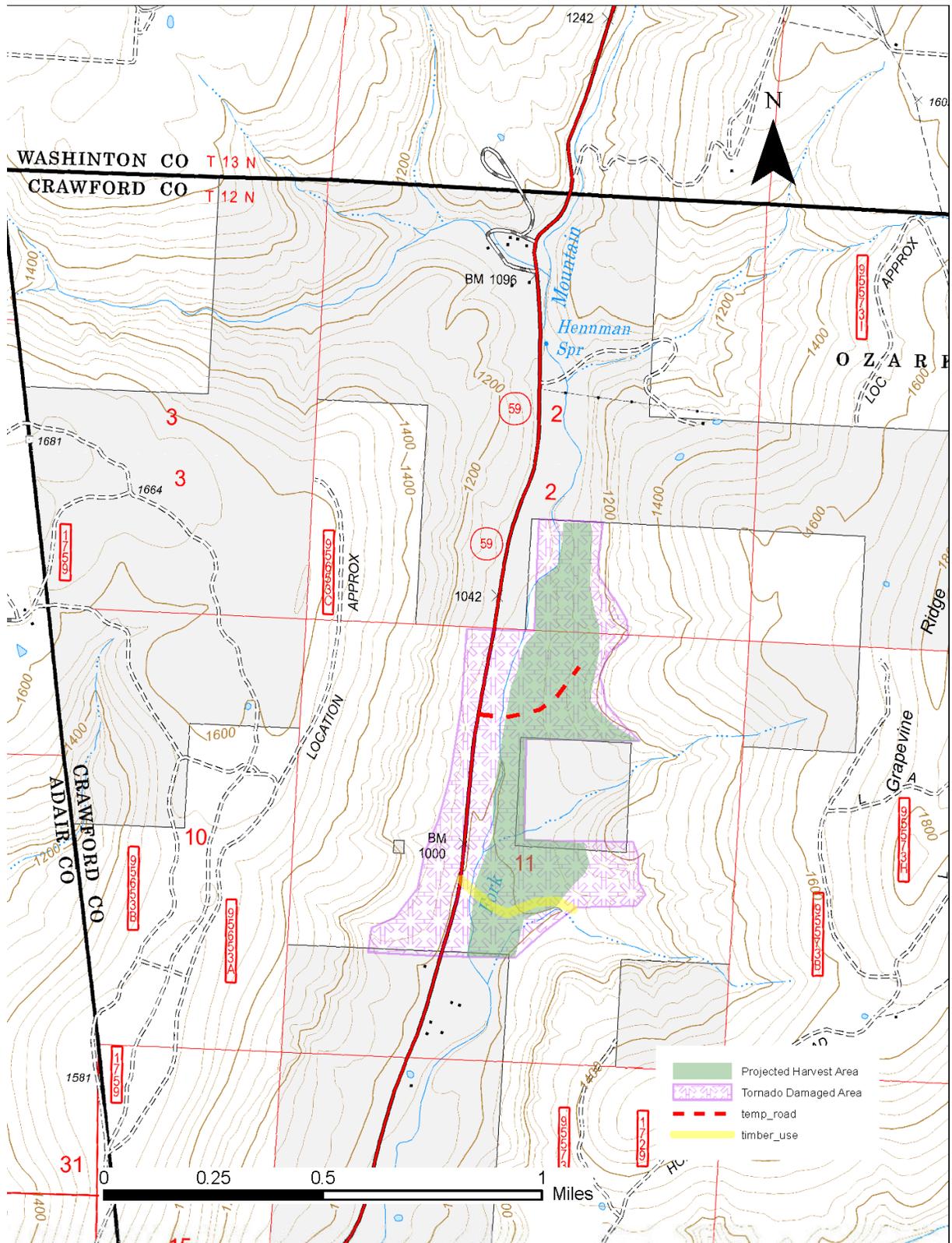


Figure 1. Map of affected area.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Would you like us to contact you about your comments? _____

Comments:

Please mail your completed comment form to 1803 North 18th Street, Ozark, AR 72949. Comments are also accepted verbally at 479-667-2191 or by email at: comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-bostonmtn@fs.fed.us. Your input is important.