

Notice to Receive Comments

The Fuels Management Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Big Piney Ranger District of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests is available for your review and comments. The EA can be found online at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/osfnf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5212180> or by contacting the District Offices in Jasper or Hector. The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and is subject to pre-decisional objection process at 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

The Fuels Management Project area is spread out across the Big Piney Ranger District at several locations (See Maps in Appendix A of the Fuels Management EA). Proposed project activities are located close to the following communities: Appleton, Cleveland, Austin, Tilly, Witts Springs, Moore, Lurton, Pelsor, Fort Douglas, Haw Creek, Pilot Rock Mountain, Cowell, Deer and Red Star in Newton, Madison, Searcy, Conway, Van Buren, Pope and Johnson Counties, Arkansas. The Proposed Action, a No Action and a No Herbicide Alternative were analyzed in the EA. I have identified the Proposed Action as my preferred action.

The specific activities proposed include restoration of native forest types, improvements to vegetation, wildlife habitat, road access and non-native invasive species control.

Although a preferred action has been identified, my final decision on which action to implement has not been made. You can help me in making this decision by providing comments on the EA. The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of this legal notice in Russellville's *The Courier*. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments §218.2 regarding the proposed project or activity during a public comment period established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection §218.24(b) (6). For issues to be raised in objections, they must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to submit written comments on a proposed project or activity. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure that their comments are received in a timely manner. Written comment(s) must be submitted to Timothy E. Jones, Big Piney Ranger District, 12,000 SR 27 Hector, AR 72843. Verbal or hand-delivered written comments must be received during our normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mon-Fri. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc, .docx) to: comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-bayou@fs.fed.us. This project decision could be objected if public comments are received (36 CFR 218). For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request §218.24(b)(8).

Please state "Fuels Management Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments, on on the envelope when replying by mail.

The Draft EA is being reviewed both internally and externally during this 3-day period. So, it can be expected that the Final EA will have minor changes which will not affect the analysis or the results of the assessment, but serve to clarify and enhance the disclosure of effects.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Mike Mulford at the District Ranger's Office in Jasper, Arkansas at 870-446-2228 extension 5136.

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