



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Baldwin/White Cloud  
Ranger Station  
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**File Code: 1950**

**Date: February 13, 2009**

Dear Interested Citizen,

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Huron-Manistee National Forests. A copy of the Decision Memo to authorize the Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Restoration Project on National Forest System lands is enclosed. The project consists of restoring 431 acres of occupied Karner blue butterfly habitat within 72 openings/savannas on the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District. The project areas are located on National Forest System lands within Section 36 of Grant Township (T13N, R17W), Sections 11, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, and 34 of Otto Township (T13N, R16W), and Sections 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19 and 30 of Greenwood Township (T13N, R15W), Oceana County, Michigan. Project implementation will increase habitat quantity and quality for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly, as well as other species associated with openings, prairies, savannas, and barrens such as the red-headed woodpecker, whip-poor-will, eastern box turtle, dusted skipper, frosted elfin, hill-prairie spittlebug, prairie smoke, Hill's thistle, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and white-tailed deer.

Restoration of Karner blue butterfly habitat will be achieved by reducing tree/shrub density (to an average of <15% canopy cover) and reducing the cover of undesired vegetation less than 2 meters in height (to an average of <25%) by removing individual herbaceous or woody plants using hand tools. Reducing overstory and understory cover will promote the growth of wild lupine – the host plant for the Karner blue butterfly, other nectar plants such as black-eyed Susan and horsemint, and native grasses such as big blue stem, little blue stem, and Indian grass. Additional treatments might be required to achieve the desired coverages of native grasses and flowering plants:

- Seeding/planting using hand tools to establish 5-15% cover of wild lupine and other Karner blue butterfly nectar plants.
- Seeding/planting using hand tools to establish >60% presence of desired savanna plant species and <5% presence of non-native invasive species.

Management activities will be prohibited within the 72 openings/savannas between March 15 and August 15 to protect the Karner blue butterfly. By restoring 431 acres of occupied Karner blue butterfly habitat, the project will contribute towards meeting the goals of the Huron-Manistee National Forests' Land and Resource Management Plan, the Draft Karner Blue butterfly Habitat Management Strategy for the Huron-Manistee National Forests, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan.

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11 (meeting the intent of *Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck*, CIV F-03-6386 JKS), by those who supplied comments or otherwise expressed interest in this proposal before the close of the 30-day comment period. Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from: Heather Keough, U.S. Forest Service, P.O. Box Drawer D, Baldwin, MI 49304, (231) 745-4631 ext. 3111; (231) 745-8297



(TTY); Fax: (231) 745-2345; or email at hkeough at fs.fed.us. I appreciate your continued interest in the management of your National Forest.

Sincerely,

/S/ Leslie E. Russell

LESLIE E. RUSSELL  
District Ranger

Enclosures