



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chattahoochee-Oconee
National Forests
Oconee Ranger District

1199 Madison Road
Eatonton, GA 31024
(706) 485-3180

File Code: 1950

Date: February 6, 2008

Dear Interested Persons:

I am requesting comments on a proposal for **Fiscal Year 2008 Planting** for the Oconee Ranger District of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. The project includes planting containerized longleaf pine on approximately 120 acres of openings created by 2007 southern pine beetle (SPB) suppression efforts. Planting would take place on the Hitchiti Experimental Forest in Jones County. A map of the areas treated on the Hitchiti to date is attached. Actual acres planted would be based on site suitability.

This proposal merely covers planting the limited number of longleaf seedlings that were available this year. Since the initial outbreak of the SPB, approximately 5,000 acres have been treated. The process for determining the best method of regenerating the majority of those acres and any related actions which would ensure successful regeneration has just begun and is separate from this proposal. Implementing this project will not preclude any other management options.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, scoping is being conducted on this project and your comments are requested. It is anticipated that the activities described fall within Category 31.2 (5) of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15: Regeneration of an area to native tree species including site preparation which does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion. Under this category, the decision would be documented in a Decision Memo and the decision would not be subject to appeal (36 CFR 215.11(e)).

If you would like to comment on this project or would like additional information, please contact Tim Walker or myself at (706) 485-1776, 8:00 to 4:30 Monday through Friday, by fax at (706) 485-7141, or at 1199 Madison Road, Eatonton GA 31024. Your comments must be postmarked or received by **March 6, 2008** and should include the following information:

1. Name, address, and (if desired) telephone number,
2. Title of the project (**Fiscal Year 2008 Planting**), and
3. Specific facts or comments along with supporting information that I should consider in reaching a final decision.

I appreciate your interest in the Oconee National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Erin M. Bronk

ERIN M.BRONK
District Ranger

