



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: 1950/2400

Date: February 19, 2009

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

I would like to ask for any comments on the proposed salvage of trees damaged by the February 18, 2009 storm on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. The most severe damage on the Oconee Ranger District occurred in Compartments 148, 149, 150 and 152 near the Willard community, south of Highway 16, west of Eatonton, in Jasper and Putnam Counties, Georgia as shown on the attached vicinity map. While the majority of the dead and damaged trees are loblolly pine, some upland hardwoods are either blown over or partially uprooted (rootsprung). I am proposing to salvage as many as possible of the down, leaning, rootsprung or other severely damaged pine and hardwood trees. Relatively undamaged trees will be left wherever possible.

The project areas lie within the Habitat Management Area for the federally listed, endangered red-cockaded woodpecker in the Murder Creek and Little River sub-watersheds. Failure to remove as much of the damaged timber as possible will: 1) leave the area ripe for insect and disease attack, and 2) greatly impede efforts to regenerate the forest on this site. This proposal is for two projects, one in each of the two watersheds, up to 250 acres each with less than ½ mile of temporary road construction in each.

These proposed actions are in compliance with the Forest Plan, Forest Health goals and objectives, specifically:

Goal 41: To enhance forest health conditions in forest stands that are: (1) substantially damaged by fire, wind throw, or other catastrophes (in this case, very large hail); or (2) in imminent danger from insect or disease attack.

A Biological Evaluation (BE) and Heritage Resource Survey will be completed for the actions.

The proposed actions appear to fall into a category that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. This determination, however, will not be finalized until after consideration of your comments and concerns.

In your response, please be as specific as possible. We would appreciate receiving your comments by **March 6, 2009**, as our window of opportunity to salvage the trees is extremely small.

Please mail your written comments to the address on the letterhead and include the following:

Attn: Erin Bronk
2009 Storm Salvage



You may also comment by e-mail (ebronk@fs.fed.us), or in person (1199 Madison Road, Eatonton GA). Comments received, including names, become part of the project record and are available for public review. Please note also that you will be sent further information **only** if you comment on these specific projects. More detailed information on these proposed actions are available upon request at the Oconee Ranger District Office by appointment, phone, or e-mail.

Thank you for your interest in National Forest Management.

Sincerely,

/s/ Erin M. Bronk

ERIN M. BRONK
District Ranger

Enclosure (1)