



File Code: 1950-1

Date: May 17, 2007

Dear Interested Party:

Proposal

The Marienville Ranger District of the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) is initiating an Environmental Analysis on the proposed salvage 434 acres of dead and/or dying trees in Warrants 2686, 3180, 3231, 3232, 3252, and 3786, Jones Township, Elk County, Pennsylvania. Planned reforestation treatments for all stand replacement areas (426 acres) include planting, release, site preparation, fencing or individual tree shelters, and herbicide application. The partial harvest areas (8 acres), which have an intact overstory, will not receive reforestation treatments. No new road construction or reconstruction is needed as existing forest roads (185, 185A, 239, 302, 302A, 302B, 304, 369, 497, 497A, and 497C) can be utilized to access the dead and/or dying timber. Three existing stone pits would be utilized to obtain stone for maintenance of the timber haul roads. The FR 497 pit and FR 185G pit would be expanded up to 0.5 acres, while the pit on FR 302 would be expanded downward. Project location is shown on the enclosed vicinity and project map.

Purpose and Need

The majority of acres to be treated in this project are in Management Area (MA) 2.2 (246 acres) and MA 8.6 (171 acres) under the ANF Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), while a small portion of the project acreage (17) is in MA 3.0. This salvage proposal would achieve the following Forest Plan objectives related to each management area:

- MA 2.2 – This management area contributes to the desired condition by providing predominantly late structural forest habitat that link relatively large areas of older forest, or core areas, across the landscape. Salvaging downed material followed by reforestation treatments would restore a diverse seedling and sapling component improving forest structural conditions, which are characteristic of late structural forests. The goals and objectives for MA 2.2 are detailed on pages 109 to 112 of the LRMP.
- MA 3.0 – This management area contributes to the desired condition by providing a mix of vegetative conditions and quality timber products that contribute to the local and regional economy. Salvaging downed material followed by reforestation treatments would allow for the establishment of an early structural forest, which is characteristic of this management area. The goals and objectives for MA 3.0 are detailed on pages 113 to 116 of the LRMP.
- MA 8.6 – This management area is part of the Kane Experimental Forest (KEF). It contributes to the desired condition primarily through development of knowledge about the Allegheny ecosystem and its management. Salvaging downed material followed by reforestation treatments is necessary to further long term research within the KEF. Studies on early stand development are an emerging research theme. The goals and objectives for MA 8.6 are detailed on pages 167 to 168 of the LRMP.



There is a need to remove dead and/or dying trees followed by reforestation treatments in this area in order to facilitate the desired LRMP condition of providing a diversity of vegetation patterns across the landscape that represents well distributed habitats, a range of forest age classes and vegetative stages, a variety of healthy functioning vegetation layers, moderate to well-stocked forest cover, and the variety of vegetation species or forest types necessary to achieve multiple resource objectives and sustain ecosystem health (LRMP p. 14). In meeting this need some of the economic value of the down timber would be recovered, hazardous fuels and insect/disease vectors would be reduced, hazardous trees along trails would be removed, and stand diversity consistent with each MA would be improved.

Background

The proposed project is located in a 5,000 acre area that was designated as MA 6.2 under the 1986 LRMP. MA 6.2 was managed to produce hardwood sawtimber during an intensive 10-year management period, which occurred once every 40 years. During the remaining 30 years, dispersed recreation activities were emphasized and motorized access was restricted, except for private oil, gas, and mineral operators. This MA 6.2 area was managed for timber production from 1986 to 1996. During this time, a network of forest roads was developed to access timber resources in the management area. Under the revised LRMP, the majority of this MA 6.2 area becomes part of MA 2.2, while a portion also becomes MA 8.6 and MA 3.0. Most of the roads in this area are currently closed and would remain so.

Comments

If you wish to provide comments concerning this salvage proposal, please send site specific comments to: Brush Hollow Salvage Project, ATTN: Rob Fallon, USDA-Forest Service, Marienville Ranger District, HC 2 Box 130, Marienville, PA 16239. Comments will also be accepted by telephone at (814) 927-6628 during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), by fax at (814) 927-2285, and via email at comments-eastern-allegheny-marienville@fs.fed.us. For e-mail comments, please include the project name in the subject line, your name, and mailing address. Comments should be received or postmarked by June 18, 2007. This letter and the enclosed map are also available on our website at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny/projects/vegetative_management/.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. This decision will be subject to notice, comment, and appeal pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 215.

If you need additional information concerning this project, please contact Kevin Treese at (814) 927-6628, extension 124. Thank you for your interest in the management of the ANF. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert T. Fallon
ROBERT T. FALLON
District Ranger

Vicinity and Project Map