



File Code: 1950-1

Date: May 19, 2009

## Apple Tree Maintenance Project

Dear Interested Party:

The Marienville Ranger District of the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) is proposing to maintain through pruning and release approximately 5,000 apple trees that are scattered throughout the district. These trees range in size from saplings to mature trees, which may exceed 100 years of age. Many of the trees have not been maintained, have decreased vigor with dead or dying limbs or are receiving insufficient sunlight. In an effort to compile the best available information, the district is asking the public to share any knowledge about locations of apple trees within the district. Site-specific locations would assist in the verification and documentation of our records.

### *Purpose and Need*

The following goals were identified in the Allegheny National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (ANF LRMP):

Maintain and enhance the distribution and diversity of plant and animal species by providing a diversity of high quality habitats across the landscape. (ANF LRMP, p. 14)

Develop and maintain mast-producing species on a variety of sites including lowlands, mid slopes and ridge tops. Maintain a diversity of understory and overstory mast-producing species. (ANF LRMP, p. 15)

Apple trees need to be maintained frequently to maintain tree health, vigor and high yields of fruit production. The risk of mortality to these trees from insects, disease or competition increases without proper maintenance. Maintaining these trees would improve wildlife habitat across the Marienville Ranger District. The project would include no ground disturbance. Maintenance would be completed during the dormant season.

### *Type of Analysis*

This project falls within category of exclusion 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 220.6(e)(6). This category allows for "timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction." This falls within the categories of actions for which a project or case file and a decision memo are required. The analysis will consider whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warrant further consideration in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Resource conditions that will be considered include: federally listed threatened or endangered species and Forest Service sensitive species; floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds; Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, and national recreation areas; inventoried roadless areas; research natural areas; American Indian and Alaska Native religious and cultural sites; and archaeological sites, and historical properties and areas (36 CFR 220.6 (b)). The mere presence



of one or more of these conditions does not preclude use of the category. The degree of the potential effect determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist. This decision will not be subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215 and the *Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck* ruling of October 19, 2005.

### ***How to Comment***

Submit written comments to Jodie L. Vanselow, Marienville Deputy District Ranger, 131 Smokey Lane, Marienville, PA 16239 or by facsimile (814) 927-2285. Submit hand-delivered comments to the Marienville District office, business hours are 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Submit oral comments to the Marienville District office during normal business hours via telephone (814) 927-6628. Submit electronic comments to [comments-eastern-allegheny-marienville@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-allegheny-marienville@fs.fed.us) using one of the following formats: e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or any software supported by Microsoft applications. If no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. An email address is not sufficient. Comments should be submitted or postmarked no later than June 19, 2009.

Comments, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered.

This letter and the attached map are also available on the ANF website at [http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny/projects/vegetative\\_management/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny/projects/vegetative_management/). For additional information, contact Kevin Treese, district NEPA coordinator, at (814) 927-5759. Thank you for your interest in the management of your national forest.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Jodie L. Vanselow*  
JODIE L. VANSELOW  
Deputy District Ranger

Attachment: map