



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Huron-Manistee National Forests
Huron Shores Ranger Station
5761 N. Skeel Avenue
Oscoda, MI 48750

989-739-0728 (Voice)
989-739-0347 (Fax)
989-739-0806 (TTY)

Date: April 8, 2010

Dear Interested Publics:

This letter is to inform you of the 2010 Fuelbreak and Opening Maintenance Project and the proposed action(s) for these areas. The Huron Shores Ranger Station is proposing management activities on approximately 2,150 acres. These activities would take place on sixty previously-managed fuelbreaks and wildlife openings on the Harrisville and Tawas Ranger Districts of the Huron National Forest. This project is being proposed in order to meet management objectives established by the Huron-Manistee National Forests' Land and Resource Management Plan for Management Areas 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 6.1, and 7.1. We invite you to help us identify opportunities and concerns that relate specifically to this proposed project.

Background

The Huron Shores Ranger Station has historically maintained open areas throughout the forest. This has been done by creating fuelbreaks and wildlife openings using mechanical means and/or prescribed burning. By utilizing prescribed burning and/or mechanical methods we plan to continue the maintenance of these openings and suppress the encroachment of woody vegetation in key areas near homes adjacent to the National Forest and throughout the forest itself.

Affected Area

The proposed project is located in Alcona and Iosco Counties. Please see attached spreadsheet for descriptive locations on all proposed project areas. These activities are proposed for implementation after the decision is signed. The expected decision date is June 15, 2010. Maps of the proposed project areas are available upon request.

Purpose and Need for the Proposal

The purpose of the proposal is to continue routine maintenance on sixty existing fuelbreak and wildlife opening areas within the Huron National Forest. This maintenance would provide several benefits. It would ensure habitat diversity for several species of wildlife that rely on these areas by maintaining openings that normally result from natural processes such as wildfire, and insect and disease outbreaks. It also aids in fire suppression by creating defensible space between areas of the forest that are heavily wooded and adjacent to occupied properties. The maintenance activities also help suppress the regrowth of existing woody vegetation, thus keeping them in their preferred open state.

Proposed Actions:

- The following activities may be used to maintain these openings. They may include but are not limited to: prescribed burning, roller-chopping, mastication, chainsaw use, brush-hogging, and mowing.

Comments on the Proposal

This public scoping opportunity includes and is concurrent with a 30-day comment period to establish standing under a Forest Service administrative appeal regulation. The 30-day comment period provides the final pre-decisional opportunity for public review of the proposed action. The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the



Oscoda Press. Appeals may be filed by persons or non-Federal organizations or entities that provide comments or otherwise express interest in the proposed action. In order to have standing to appeal this decision under 36 CFR 215, you must have submitted comments prior to the close of the 30-day comment period for the legal notice, and sign the comments or be able to verify identity upon request. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Your comments will be considered by District Ranger Sue Kocis in reaching a final decision.

Please submit your written or hand-delivered comments to District Ranger, USDA Forest Service, Huron Shores Ranger Station, 5761 N. Skeel Ave., Oscoda, MI 48750, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or fax to (989) 739-0347, or email to: comments-eastern-huron-manistee-huron-shores@fs.fed.us (must be readable by Microsoft Office 2007 or Adobe Acrobat formats). Please include the following:

- Name, address, telephone number, organization represented and title;
- Title of the document on which the comments are being submitted (2010 Fuel Break and Opening Maintenance Project) and specific facts and supporting reasons regarding your comments.

We would like to know your thoughts concerning the project proposal. Any suggestions you have regarding the site-specific activities will be considered as we identify issues and further develop the proposal. Please call or provide written comment before May 7, 2010. Please direct all responses to Paul Lyden at 989-826-3252, ext. 3350, or Greg Berner at 989-739-0728, ext. 3110. Submit comments electronically to [plyden at fs.fed.us](mailto:plyden@fs.fed.us) or [gberner at fs.fed.us](mailto:gberner@fs.fed.us). You may also contact us at the address and number listed in the letterhead above. Comments received in response to this project will become a matter of public record. If you have questions, or need further information regarding the proposal, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Greg Berner
NEPA Writer/Editor & Lead Fire Engine Operator
/s/ Greg Berner

Paul Lyden
Project Leader/Fuels & Fire Prevention AFMO
/s/ Paul Lyden

Comments received in response to this solicitation, 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; however, those who submit such comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request that a submission be withheld from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the submission will be returned and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's target center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-w, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250-9401 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD).