

DECISION MEMO
USDA Forest Service
Tuskegee National Forest
Pre-commercial Thinning
Macon County, Alabama

Decision

I have decided to precommercially thin stands of planted longleaf pine on 227 acres, located in Sections 11, 12, 14 and 15 in Township 17 North, Range 24 East and also Sections 6, 7, and 18 in Township 17 North, Range 25 East. This project will be accomplished using hand tools or mechanical equipment such as brush cutters, machetes, chainsaws or ax. The project areas located off Forest Service roads 901, 904, 906, 908, 913, 916, Macon County Road 89 and Alabama Highway 186, and are listed in Exhibit A.

This project will improve the growth and health of the stand by reducing the competition for nutrients, moisture and sunlight. Improved stand health decreases the risk of disease and insect attack, especially Southern Pine Beetle. These stands will be moved toward the future desired future condition as described in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Alabama.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or EA because it is consistent with FSH 1909.31.2.6(b), “Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service level D, FSH 7709.56)”.

I find that this category is appropriate for this action. I also find that no extraordinary circumstances exists as defined in FSH 1909.15, 30.3.2.

Federally Listed Species - The Forest Biologist has conducted a site-specific evaluation of the potential effects of this project regarding federally-listed and Regional Forester’s Sensitive species. The Biological Evaluation documents this action will have “no effect” on Federally Listed species.

Floodplains, Wetlands, Municipal Watersheds - The proposed action is not in a floodplain, wetland, or municipal watershed, and forest plan standards are implemented to prevent off site impacts.

Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas. – No congressionally designated areas are within the project area.

Inventoried roadless areas. – No part of the project area is designated as inventoried roadless area or research natural area.

American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites or Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas. – The project area has been previously ground surveyed for archeological sites by the Forest Archeologist. A records check based on the prior survey for these stands in this project revealed that there are no known historic sites within the project area eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Public Involvement

Public participation from scoping in 2004 resulted in one comment received. This proposed action was posted on the 2005 SOPA. It was also placed in the Tuskegee News on October 20, 2005 for comments.

Findings required by other laws

National Forest Management Act - I find that this decision is consistent with the National Forests in Alabama Revised Land Management Plan as required by NFMA. The project was designed in conformance with RLRMP goals, objectives and standards

Clean Water Act - The Forest Plan contains direction to ensure all projects comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Therefore by following that direction, this project is in compliance with the Clean Water Act.

Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately.

Appeal Opportunities

This project is not subject to appeal under CFR 215.12 (f. (Decisions for actions that have been categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS pursuant to FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, section 31)), because no substantive comments expressing concerns or only supportive comments were received during the comment period for this project.

Contact Person

For further information on this project please contact: Willie Humphrey, at 334.727.2652

/s/ Gerald Lawrance

Gerald D. Lawrence
Acting District Ranger

November 21, 2005

Date