

DECISION MEMO

Mothers Day Tornado Salvage Project FY 2008

USDA, Forest Service
Shoal Creek Ranger District – Talladega National Forest
Cleburne County, Alabama

Decision

I have decided to remove trees damaged and blown down by the tornado that touched down on approximately 165 acres, located in Township 16 South, Range 9 East Section 13 and Township 16 South, Range 10 East Section 18. This project will improve visual quality, reduce heavy fuel build up, and facilitate restoration to the desired future conditions as determined by the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (RLMP).

On May 11, 2008, an EF1 tornado blew down, snapped off and damaged trees within the forest. An estimated 450 acres have areas of concentrated damage. This situation in these areas has created the following concerns:

- Reduced visual quality along the Talladega Scenic Drive.
- Increased the risk of insects and diseases to the forest.
- Increased forest fuel loads that escalate the risk of resource damaging wildfires.

Mothers Day Tornado Damage along Talladega Scenic Drive



The purpose of this project is:

- To improve visual quality.
- To decrease risk of insects and disease infestations to residual forest.
- To reduce forest fuel loads.
- To facilitate restoration to the desired future conditions as determined by the prescription (9D1) in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan.

This action will remove a significant amount of storm debris from the areas impacted and will reduce effects to the issues listed above.

Removal of the merchantable parts of the damaged trees will facilitate the restoration of the project areas to the desired future conditions by reducing the amount of large woody debris that covers the areas. This will help promote seedling germination and vigorous sprouting of hardwood stumps, and will insure the best possible conditions for starting a new stand of trees. Residual long leaf pine that are standing and appear undamaged will remain as a seed source for natural regeneration.

These areas will be treated by removing the damaged trees by commercial timber sale. This action will take place during the months of July and August 2008.

The proposed Mothers Day Tornado Salvage area falls within the Cahulga 6th level huc of the Tallapoosa basin. The streams located in this area are tributaries of Bobo Creek which flows into Cahulga Creek. The layout of the proposed salvage area does not fall within any riparian area which applies to intermittent streams (order 3) and perennial streams (order 4 or higher). There are however, ephemeral streams (orders 1 and 2) or drains that may be salvaged used winching, perpendicular access, and other appropriate means to remove damaged timber. All other standards for stream protection and soil stabilization outlined in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan will apply. The proposed Mothers Day Tornado Salvage poses little risk to the water quality and continued support of the downstream designated uses of public water supply and fish and wildlife.

Rational for the Decision

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or EA because it is consistent with the following categories from Forest Service Handbook 1909.15-2004-3, dated 07/06/2004:

Section 31.2 (13) - Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres.

- Actions will remove those trees that were blown down, snapped off, twisted, and/or were otherwise damaged by the tornado.
- No new road construction is necessary to carry out this action.
- Actions will reduce hazardous fuels in the project area.

I find that this project is appropriate for categorical exclusion within these categories because no extraordinary circumstances exist as defined in FSH 1909.15, 30.3.2.

Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species. – The project area has been surveyed for threatened, endangered or sensitive plants and animals (TES), the biological evaluation (BE) was completed and the determination was “No Effect”, on T & E species requiring no further consultation, and “No Impact” on Sensitive species.

Flood plains, wetlands, or 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. – A cultural resource survey has been conducted on the project area and reports were sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Monitoring of the area will be carried out regularly during active logging to insure that no additional damage is caused by the removal of the trees.

Mitigation measures that are addressed in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan of the National Forests in Alabama ([RLRMP](#)) will be followed.

Public Involvement and Analysis

Scoping and request for comment with the public was accomplished on this proposal with a notice published in the Anniston Star, May 21, 2008. A letter was mailed to the district mailing list on May 21, 2008, to notify the general public and ask for comments on the proposal.

No comments were received.

Findings Required by Other Law

National Forest Management Act - My decision is based on an analysis of the situation and this action is consistent with the [RLRMP](#), Goals and Objectives (pp 2-10), Goal 3, Standards 7B-01, Management Prescription 9D1, (pp 3-39).

Implementation

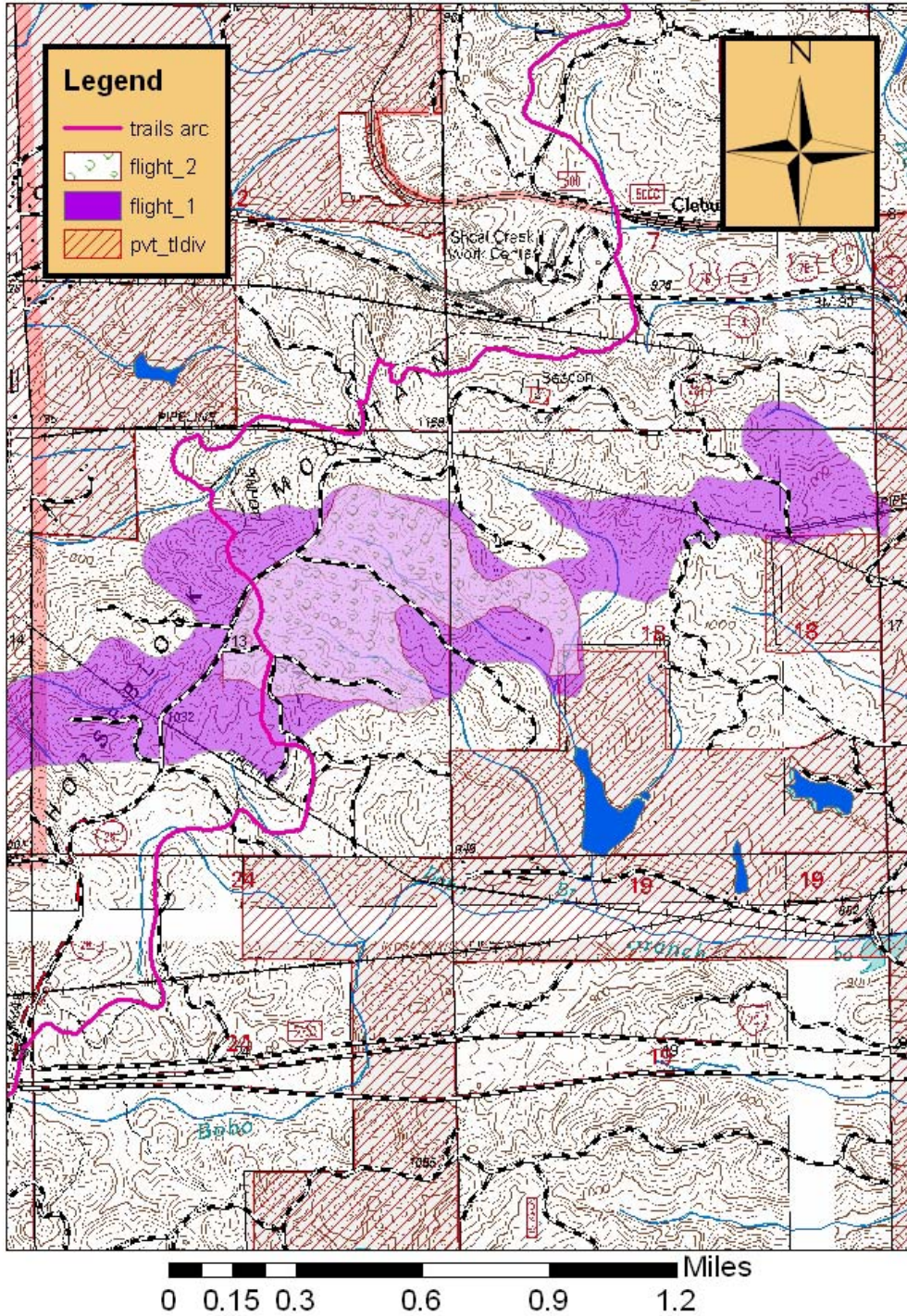
Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12 (f), this decision is not subject to appeal. Implementation of this decision may begin immediately. For further information, contact Kimberly Bittle, Shoal Creek Ranger District, 45 Hwy 281, Heflin, AL or at (256) 463-2273.

/s/ Kimberly Bittle
KIMBERLY BITTLE
District Ranger
Shoal Creek Ranger District

June 20, 2008
Date

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281 Storm Damage



Talladega National Forest
Proposed Tornado Salvage Areas - Cleburne County Alabama
T16S/R10E Sec 18 & T16S/R9E Sec 13
Compartments 65 & 66
May 11, 2008 - Tornado Damage

