

DECISION MEMO

Upper Brushy Stewardship Project Midstory Removal and Wildlife Opening Improvement FY 2006 - 2009

USDA, Forest Service
Bankhead National Forest - National Forests in Alabama
Winston County and Lawrence County, Alabama

Decision

I have decided to conduct mechanical removal of understory and midstory vegetation on approximately 242 acres (6 areas) and refurbish one wildlife opening, (approximately 6 acres). These treatment areas are located in Sections 4, 5, 6, 8, 16, and 17, Township 9 South, Range 7 West on the Bankhead National Forest. These sites are located in Area 2 of the Forest Health and Restoration Project, National Forests in Alabama, Bankhead National Forest ([FHRP](#)).

The purpose of this project is to move toward desired fuel condition class, improve wildlife and native plant habitat, and facilitate restoration of fire adapted woodland desired conditions as identified by the ([FHRP](#)).

This project consists of two separate treatments, each is described below:

Midstory Treatment

This treatment will use mechanical equipment to mow and/or mulch understory and midstory brush and trees up to six inches in diameter from selected stands. This treatment will improve wildlife and native plant habitat, and facilitate restoration of fire adapted woodlands desired conditions as identified by the ([FHRP](#)).



Example of Current Condition



Example of Desired Condition

The following areas will be treated:

- Compartment 31, Stand 11
- Compartment 33, Stand 18
- Compartment 34, Stand 10
- Compartment 33, Stand 9
- Compartment 33, Stand 22
- Compartment 34, Stand 18

Wildlife Opening Treatment

This treatment will use mechanical equipment to clear the brush and small trees from an overgrown wildlife opening. The wildlife opening will then be seeded with a mixture of grass species to provide food for a variety of wildlife species including deer, turkey, quail, and various song birds. This treatment will provide early successional habitat as called for in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan of the National Forests in Alabama ([RLRMP](#)).



Example of Current Condition



Example of Desired Condition

The following areas will be treated:

- Compartment 31, Stand 5

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 (6) - 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).

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 for the midstory treatment ([BE](#)) was completed and the determination was “No Effect” on T & E species requiring no further consultation, and “No Impact” on Sensitive species. The biological evaluation for the wildlife opening treatment ([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 a report was sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). No properties that are eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places were found. Therefore, the proposed treatments will have no impact on significant cultural resources.

Mitigation measures that are listed in the [FHRP](#) (pp 48-51) and those addressed in the [RLRMP](#) will be followed.

Public Involvement and Analysis

Scoping with the public was accomplished on this proposal with a notice published in the Northwest Alabamian and in the Moulton Advertiser on June 25, 2005. A letter was mailed to the district mailing list on June 27, 2005, to notify the general public and ask for comments on the proposal. Two comments were received and the respondents were supportive of the action as proposed, provided the needed surveys and analysis work was accomplished prior to the beginning of project work.

A legal advertisement establishing formal notice and comment period for this project was published in the Northwest Alabamian on December 10, 2005. Additionally, a letter notifying interested parties of the formal notice and comment period was mailed to the District mailing list. Two supportive 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.

Implementation

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12 (e), this decision is not subject to appeal. Implementation of this decision may begin immediately. For further information, contact Glen Gaines, Bankhead National Forest, PO Box 278, Double Springs, AL or at (205) 489-5111.

/s/ Glen D. Gaines

1/23/2006

GLEN D. GAINES
District Ranger
Bankhead National Forest

Date

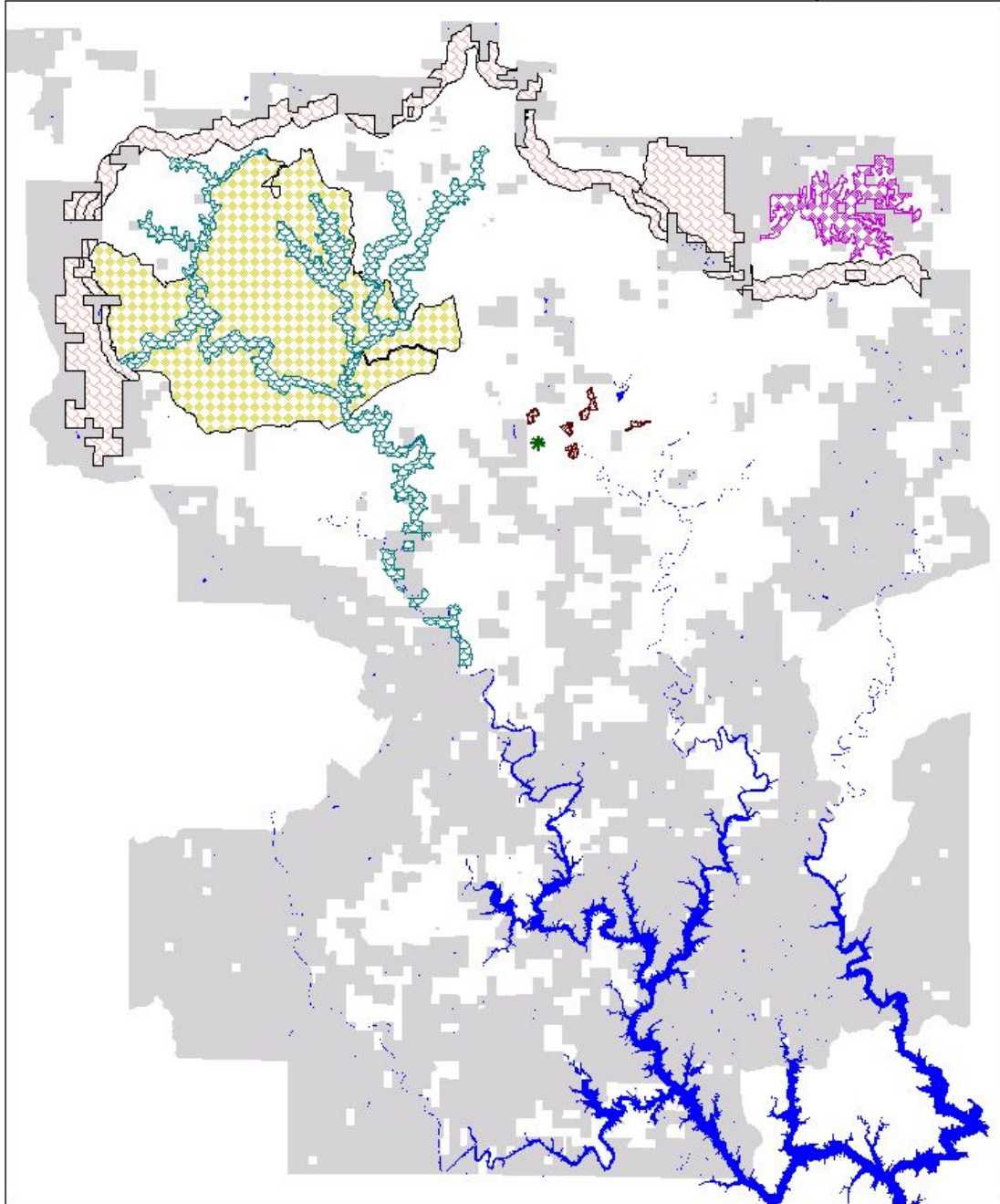
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Bankhead National Forest Upper Brushy Midstory and Wildlife Opening Project

- Wildlife Opening Restoration
- Midstory Treatment
- Wild & Beckie River
- Spray Wilderness
- Special Study Areas
- Flint Creek Biological Area
- Water
- Private Land





scale = 1:225000
jwc 8/2005



Bankhead National Forest Upper Brushy Midstory and Wildlife Opening Project



-  Wildlife Opening Restoration
-  Midstory Treatment
-  Water
-  Private Land

scale = 1:36000
jwc 08/2005

T9S, R7W

