

## DECISION MEMO

### Hurricane Ivan Storm Salvage Project FY 2005

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

#### Decision

I have decided to remove trees damaged and blown down by Hurricane Ivan and local thunderstorms on approximately 165 acres, located in Sections 9, 10, 16, 17, 22, and 23, Township 9 South, Range 9 West and along Forest Roads 204, 208 West, and 210. These sites are located in Area 1 of the Forest Health and Restoration Project, National Forests in Alabama, Bankhead National Forest. This project will improve visual quality, facilitate road maintenance, reduce heavy fuel build up, and facilitate restoration to the desired future conditions as determined by the Forest Health and Restoration Project ([FHRP](#)).

On September 16, 2004, high winds from Hurricane Ivan blew down and damaged trees on the west side of the district. On January 13, 2005, high winds associated with a local thunderstorm blew down and damaged trees, mostly associated with areas previously damaged by Hurricane Ivan. An estimated 165 acres of trees in 9 areas and along 3 forest roads have areas of concentrated damage. This situation in these areas has created the following concerns:

- Reduced visual quality along heavily traveled forest roads.
- Increased road maintenance needs.
- Increased forest fuel loads that escalate the risk of resource damaging wildfires.



Parker Branch Storm Damage



Parker Branch Storm Damage

The purpose of this project is:

- To improve visual quality.
- To facilitate road maintenance.
- To reduce forest fuel loads.
- To facilitate restoration to the desired future conditions as determined by the Forest Health and Restoration Project.

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.

These areas will be treated by removing the damaged trees by commercial timber sale. This action will take place during Fiscal Year 2005.

Some of the heaviest damage occurred in the upper reaches of Parker Branch east of County Road 23, NW ¼, NW ¼, Section 16, T. 9S., R. 9W. This site consists of the headwaters (ephemeral streams) for Parker Branch. Soils within the ephemeral stream channel and immediately adjacent to the stream channel are considered floodplain soils. The 100 year floodplain is very narrow. The widest spot, approximately 250 to 300 feet wide, is found at the southern end where two order one ephemeral streams form a second order ephemeral stream. Included is a small area, less than 1/10th acre, subject to ponding for short periods of time. The overall area of floodplain soils is less than 2 acres. Soils within the drainage are subject to compaction under wet conditions. Erosion potential is slight due to the relatively flat slopes. Erosion would occur on areas disturbed if a major flood event occurred ([S&W report](#)).

Most of the downed and damaged trees are within the riparian area of the stream. These trees will be removed from the riparian area by means of cabling so that no equipment enters the riparian zone. Skid trails and landings will be located on the west side of Parker Branch so that additional disturbance does not occur on both sides of the stream.

Due to the direction of fall of most of the trees and the limitations on equipment use in the stream zone, it is expected that there will be some damage to residual trees from the cabling operation. Trees that are damaged to the extent that survival is questionable will be removed also. By working closely with the operator this damage can be kept to a minimum.

### **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 31.12 (4) - Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landlines boundaries.*

- The treatment area is along and in close proximity to FS roads 204, 208 West, and 210.
- Actions provide for the overall maintenance of the roads.
- Project file and decision memo not required.

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

- Actions will remove only those trees that were blown down, snapped off, and/or were otherwise damaged by Hurricane Ivan.
- 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 who concurred with the findings. Part of this project is along Forest Road 210, which is in the Kinlock and High Town Path special study areas. Along this road, all equipment use will be restricted to the road travel way and all trees will be cabled to the road. Properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be avoided and protected.

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 listed in the [FHRP](#) (pp 48-51) and those addressed in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan of the National Forests in Alabama ([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 February 9, 2005. A letter was mailed to the district mailing list on February 8, 2005, to notify the general public and ask for comments on the proposal.

Field trips of the proposed areas were held on January 12, 2005, January 26, 2005, and March 8, 2005, for individuals that had expressed interest in damage to the forest caused by Hurricane Ivan. A total of six interested parties took part in these trips.

Four 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.

### **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 2-9 and 2-10), Goal 27, 28, 29, Objective 27.1 Standards FW145, 146, and 147 (p 2-60); Goal 30 Standards FW151, 152, and 153 (pp 2-62 and 2-63); and Goal 35, Objective 35.4 (p 2-68).

### **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 Glen Gaines, Bankhead National Forest, PO Box 278, Double Springs, AL or at (205) 489-5111.

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GLEN D. GAINES  
District Ranger  
Bankhead National Forest

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Date

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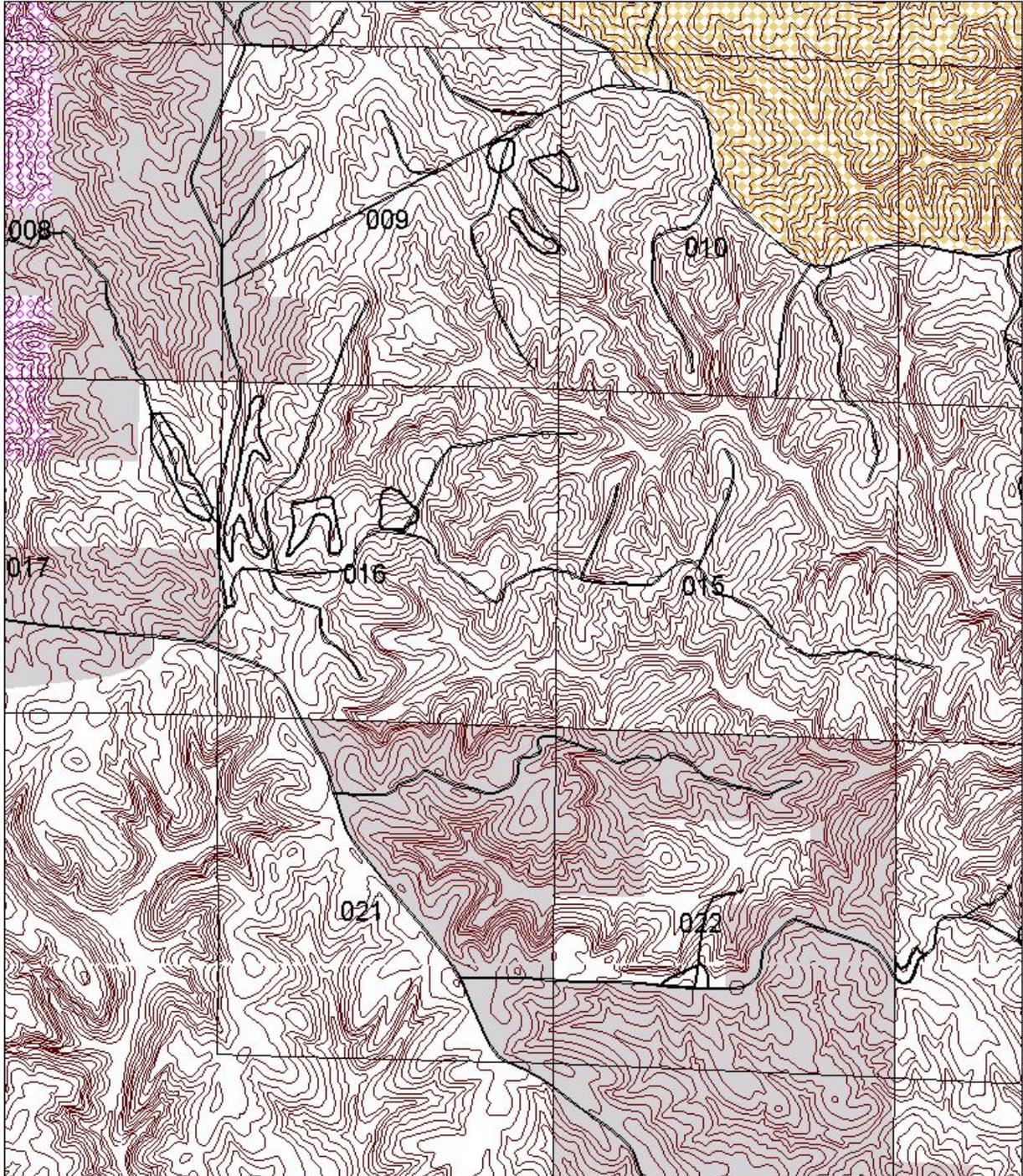
- Salvage Areas
- Roads
- Wilderness
- Heritage Study Areas

Estimated Acres = 65

# Ivan Storm Damage Bankhead National Forest T9S, R9W



scale = 1:24000  
jwc 02/05



- Road Cleanup Areas
- Roads
- Wilderness
- Heritage Study Areas

# Ivan Storm Damage Bankhead National Forest T8S, R9W



scale = 1:36000  
jwc 02/05

Estimated Acres = 100

