

**Decision Memo**  
**Tornado Salvage and Restoration**  
**FY 2007 - 2009**

**USDA Forest Service**  
**Bankhead National Forest**  
**Bankhead Ranger District**  
**Winston County, Alabama**

**Decision and Rationale for the Decision**

I have decided to proceed with the proposal to salvage 86 acres of storm-damaged timber from areas located in Sections 21, 22, 28, 31, 32, T11S, R7W in the southeastern portion of the Bankhead National Forest. My decision is based on a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk specifically as it relates to biological effects. The timber was damaged as a result of a tornado event having occurred on March 1, 2007. The project area will be reforested following the timber salvage. Site preparation (roller drum chopping and prescribed burning) will be performed and a portion of the area will be artificially regenerated (planted) to longleaf pine, while the other portion of the salvage area will be restored to an upland oak-hickory woodland forest using handtools. The project is proposed to be implemented during fiscal years 2007-2009.

The purpose of this project is to reduce heavy fuel build up, improve visual quality and facilitate restoration to the desired future condition of longleaf pine woodlands and upland oak-hickory woodlands, as identified by the [Forest Health and Restoration Project](#).

This project will accomplish the goals and objectives of the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan by promoting the restoration of upland forest communities native to the Cumberland Plateau Region. The project areas are managed under Prescription 9.C.3. (Southern Cumberland Plateau Native Ecosystem Restoration and Maintenance) as outlined in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Alabama. This particular prescription emphasizes restoration of "...pine (...shortleaf...)...forest communities based on historic conditions" ([RLRMP](#)).

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

*Section 31.2 (6) – "Timber stand improvements which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction" and Section 31.2 (13) – "Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction."*

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. Since the road corridor is located in a previously disturbed area, no sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the activity.

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

### **Public Involvement**

A legal notice of formal notice and comment period being established for this project was published in *The Northwest Alabamian* on April 21, 2007. No responses were received.

### **Findings Required By Other Laws and Regulations**

The project follows Forest-Wide Goals and Objectives listed in the Plan (pp. 2-9 through 2-60) including, but not limited to: Goal 1, Objective 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5; Goal 16, Objective 16.1; Goals 17-19, 27 and 29. Forest Wide Standards and Guides FW-7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 18, 38-40, 43, 48, 50, 56, 61-69, 76, 94-99, 105, 118 . Management Area Direction, state-approved Best Management Practices would be implemented and the actions would comply with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and with the seven requirements of 36 CFR 219.27 (b). I have also determined that this action is consistent with the intent and requirements of the Endangered Species Act, The National Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the National Forest Management Act.

### **Implementation**

Implementation of this decision may begin immediately upon publication of the Notice of Decision in the paper of record (*Northwest Alabamian*).

**Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

Pursuant to the 1993 version of 36 CFR 215.3, this decision is not subject to appeal.

**Contact Person**

For further information, contact Glen Gaines, Bankhead National Forest, PO Box 278, Double Springs, AL or at (205) 489-5111.

    /s/ Glen D. Gaines      
GLEN D. GAINES  
District Ranger

    July 11, 2007      
Date