

DECISION MEMO

LONGLEAF PINE SITE PREPARATION AND PLANTING PROJECT FY 2005 - 2006 BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST NATIONAL FORESTS IN ALABAMA WINSTON COUNTY, ALABAMA

Decision

I have decided to proceed with the proposal to perform site preparation followed by artificial regeneration (planting) of longleaf pine seedlings in seven areas, located in Sections 17 and 20, T11S, R8W, 38 acres; Sections 9 and 11, T11S, R8W, 14 acres; Section 34, T10S, R8W, 42 acres; and Section 6, T11S, R7W, 21 acres on the Bankhead National Forest. This project is located in Area 3 and is part of the restoration of the longleaf pine/bluestem native community. It meets the direction of the desired future conditions for the Bankhead National Forest as outlined in the Forest Health and Restoration Project EIS ([FHRP](#)) and the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests of Alabama ([RLRMP](#)).

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to restore the native longleaf pine/bluestem community type. Longleaf pine is an intolerant species, requiring full sunlight with little or no competition for moisture and nutrients for successful establishment. These areas were loblolly and mixed pine stands and are in need of regeneration after southern pine beetle killed the existing pine overstory.

There is a need to perform site preparation activities to prepare these areas for planting longleaf pine seedlings and to ensure survival. The proposed method of treatment is roller drum chopping, followed by prescribed burning. Containerized longleaf pine seedlings will be planted after site preparation is completed. This action will take place during the fiscal years 2005 through 2006. Maps for the treatment areas are attached to this document.

Category

This action is consistent with FSH 1909.15, Section 31.2, Category 5, "Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation which does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion".

No extraordinary circumstances as defined in FSH 1909.15, Section 30.3(2) exist that might cause the action to have significant effects:

- *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 species, the biological evaluation was completed and the determination was "not likely to adversely affect" the Eggert's sunflower; will not affect the 23 other plants and animals that are federally listed for the Bankhead; may impact individuals but will not cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for sweet pinesap, clammy locust, lanceleaf trillium and Diana fritillary; and will have no impact on the 47 other species listed as sensitive for the Bankhead. Concurrence was received by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Biological Evaluation and the Decision Memo are available on a CD upon request.

- *Flood plains, wetlands or municipal watersheds.* The project area is not in a flood plain, wetland or municipal watershed.
- *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 and research natural areas.* No part of the project area is designated as inventoried roadless area or research natural areas
- *American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites or historic properties or areas.* A cultural resources survey was conducted on the sites, and no properties that are eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places were found. Therefore, the proposed site preparation and planting project will have no impact on significant cultural resources.

Therefore, this action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment.

Public Involvement and Analysis

This proposal was presented at a public meeting held in Double Springs, Alabama on June 2, 2005. A notice of the proposed action was published in the Northwest Alabamian and the Moulton Advertiser on June 8, 2005 to notify the general public and ask for comments on the proposal. No comments were received concerning this proposal during the comment period.

Findings Required by Other Laws

My decision is based on an analysis of the situation. This area will be treated to ensure adequate tree regeneration in accordance with the National Forest Management Act. This action is consistent with the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests of Alabama, Forest-Wide Goals and Objectives pp. 2-1 through 2-10; Goal 1, Objectives 1.3 and 1.5; Standards and Guides, FW-9, FW-10, FW-12, FW-13, FW-37, FW-38, FW-53, FW-74, FW-115, FW-116 and FW-117; Management Prescription 9.C.3, pp 3-37 through 3-38 ([RLRMP](#)). Mitigation measures that are listed in the Bankhead Forest Health and Restoration EIS, pages 48-51, ([FHRP](#)) and those addressed in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Alabama ([RLRMP](#)) will be followed.

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.

/s/ Glen D. Gaines

8/3/05

GLEN D. GAINES
District Ranger
Bankhead National Forest

Date