

**Bankhead National Forest
Liaison Panel
Meeting Agenda
Moulton, Alabama
July 23, 2009**

6:00 **Welcome**

Jorge Hersel,
Acting District Ranger,
USFS, Bankhead

Welcome and appreciation for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend.

Two objectives tonight:

1. Revisit one of the topics discussed at the last panel meeting.
2. Learn about projects planned and ongoing on the Bankhead Ranger District.

Wide range of topics that I hope you will find as interesting as I do.

The topics may generate many questions. I ask that you please respect the speakers, and each other, and wait until people finish speaking.

May cut discussion short in the interest of time, but the speakers will be here after the meeting if you would like to talk to them further.

Glen Gaines, District Ranger, announced to the group he will be leaving his position as district ranger to accept a position as regional longleaf restoration coordinator, with emphasis coordinating implementation of ARRA longleaf restoration projects. He will report for his new duties on August 31, 2009.

6:05 **Mechanized Fuels Treatment on the Bankhead**

Kerry Clark/Allison Cochran
Fire Management Officer &
Wildlife Biologist
USFS, Bankhead

Approximately 1400 acres are planned for mechanical fuels reduction (woodland restoration) through Recovery Act and traditional appropriated/trust funds.

Discussion on what was planned structure of the Forest after these activities. Answer is that there will be no change. These are understory and midstory removal activities that general forest structure will not change. Just open it up the stands to promote grass understory associated with woodland communities identified for restoration in the Forest Health & Restoration Project.

There was a concern expressed on the effects of fire and woodland restoration on herptofauna (reptiles and amphibians).

6:35 **Alabama A&M Research on the Bankhead-
New aquatic Wildlife research**

Dr. Wes Stone and Heather Howell
Alabama A&M University

Part of projects through funding under Crest Research. Research in areas below thinned and burned areas. This new emphasis area will focus on small mammals and benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects, mussels, etc) in riparian and aquatic environments.

Interest expressed in having a Herpetologist do a presentation on studies done on the Bankhead.

Dr. Colomore Christian added a presentation on proposed Recreation Use study on the Bankhead RD. The study will focus on demographics of forest users. Dr. Christian invites interested people to participate in related surveys.

7:00 **Quality Deer Management in the Black
Warrior WMA**

Barry Baird
ADCNR Wildlife Biologist
Black Warrior WMA

Power Point presentation on Quality Deer Management in Black Warrior WMA.
A side discussion developed on effects of feral hogs in WMA. Interest expressed after meeting for a presentation on Hog Management and challenges on Bankhead District. Tom Counts updated the group that +/- 100 hogs per year are being removed from the area. There were also concerns and interest expressed in the role predation plays in the Black Warrior deer herd.

7:30 **Non Native Invasive Species Inventory-
Sipsey Wilderness**

Mark Kolinski
Alabama Program Manager
Wild South

Increased collaborative effort with Bankhead NF to move Sipsey Wilderness further along to meet baseline management standards set by Chief of FS in 2002 by 2014. Surveys funded through a grant from the National Forest Foundation through their Wilderness Steward Challenge Grant program. They are concentrating their survey efforts on corridors along trails and streams. Presented accomplishments to date, and the fact they are finding a lot of NNIS in the wilderness. Site recording and Data management are taking up more time than anticipated. The inventory data collected is being transferred to the Forest Service for use in prioritizing treatment of NNIS plants.
Lively discussion developed on Wilderness management philosophies.

8:00 **Rock Creek Watershed Planning & Clean Water
Act Grant.**

Mona Scruggs
Auburn University
LaVerne Matheson
Winston Co. Smith Lake
Advocacy Inc.

In trying to maintain good water quality in Lewis Smith Lake they decided to concentrate efforts on Rock Creek Watershed. Rock Creek is considered an impaired water body by Alabama Department of Environmental Mangement/Environmental Protection Agency. Need for a watershed Management Plan focusing on best management practices and education to address impairments. Getting assistance from Alabama Water Watch in developing a Management Plan. Has to be non-regulatory. They have started the grant proposal process. However, the requirement to have a 40% matching funds for the \$300,000-\$500,000 grants is a little daunting. The benefit of working with Alabama Water Watch is that they can administer the grant and use some salaries as matching in-kind funds for the grant.

8:30 **Closeout**

Jorge Hersel,
Acting District Ranger,
USFS, Bankhead

Thanked everyone for coming. Hope the topics and discussion informative and interesting.

Next Meeting Date: October 22, 2009.

Location: Double Springs

Requested any feedback on how to improve the meetings, and any topics they would like to see at the next meeting. Send any comments to Allison Cochran.

Possible topics:

- Herpetology studies on Bankhead (Graduate student Bill Sutton, Alabama A&M, who is researching reptiles & amphibians was mentioned)
- Hog Management and challenges (Talked to Barry Baird and he was willing to develop Power Point presentation for the next meeting)
- Presentation on Archeological Site looting. What to look for and what to do if you see someone that may be looting. (Jean Allan has agreed to do this presentation).
- Off shoot of Archeological Looting presentation. Presentation by LEO on general illegal activities on district and what to look for or do if you come upon illegal activity. Personal Safety.
- An update from Mike Henshaw on activities of the Winston County Natural Resources Council was requested.