

DECISION NOTICE
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Red-cockaded Woodpecker Recovery Plan
Non-significant Forest Plan Amendment #7

USDA Forest Service
National Forests and Grasslands in Texas

April 2006

Decision Notice

Decision

I have examined the initial Proposed Action and the one alternative to the Proposed Action, which have been considered in detail. The National Forests and Grasslands in Texas's (NFGT) Project Analysis Team completed an interdisciplinary analysis of the effects that the Proposed Action and the alternative would have on the environment.

I have selected Alternative 2 for implementation. My decision is based on the analysis and process described in the environmental assessment (EA).

Alternative 2 would amend the NFGT 1996 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (the *Plan*) to incorporate the latest findings issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the recovery of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*). The latest information available for the conservation of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) is the January 2003 RCW Recovery Plan – Second Revision issued by the USFWS (2003 RCW Recovery Plan). The main difference between the 2003 RCW Recovery Plan and the *Plan* lies in the description of good-quality foraging habitat and how to conduct foraging habitat analysis. The Proposed Action would change the following standards for Management Area (MA) 2 – Red-cockaded Woodpecker Emphasis and MA-6 – Longleaf Ridge Special Area:

- MA-2-80-4.1 Foraging Habitat Management – General
- MA-2-80-4.2 Reduced Foraging Habitat
- MA-2-80-4.7 Thinning
- MA-2-80-4.8.5 Accelerated Pine Restoration

The following table describes current *Plan* direction and proposed changes derived from the 2003 RCW Recovery Plan.

Comparison of the Plan and the Proposed Plan Amendment.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Plan</i> (1996)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Proposed Plan Amendment</i> (March 2006)</p>
<i>Foraging Habitat Management – General</i>	
<p>MA-2-80-4.1: Adequate levels of foraging habitat shall be provided for all active clusters and recruitment stands.</p> <p>Available foraging habitat includes the cluster, recruitment, and replacement stands.</p> <p>Foraging habitat is not required for inactive clusters unless identified as recruitment stands.</p> <p>Additional foraging habitat is not required for replacement stands, as they are always associated with active clusters that should have adequate foraging habitat.</p> <p>Adequate foraging habitat will be provided according to USFWS guidelines for preparation of biological assessments and evaluations for the RCW (Blue Book Standards)¹, whenever pine tree removal is planned within ½ mile of clusters or recruitment stands.</p> <p>The following foraging habitat requirements must be met for all active clusters and recruitment stands: (the Plan, p. 116-117)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>At least 8,490 square feet of BA (basal area) in pine stems larger than 5 inches DBH.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>At least 6,350 pine stems 10 inches DBH (diameter at 4.5 feet above ground level) or larger and 30 years old or older.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Must be within 1/2 mile of the geometric center of the cluster or recruitment stand (if existing foraging within the 1/2 mile radius circle is inadequate, stands beyond 1/2 mile must be included to meet foraging requirements.)</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Must be continuous and contiguous with the cluster or recruitment stand.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Include only pine or pine- hardwood stands. An exception to this requirement is the Daniel Boone NF, where hardwood-pine stands may be counted as foraging, until pine or pine-hardwood stands can be restored within 1/2 mile of the cluster.</i></p> <p>Stands identified as foraging habitat should be</p>	<p>MA-2-80-4.1: The following foraging habitat requirements must be met for all active clusters and recruitment clusters.</p> <p>Foraging habitat for recruitment clusters must meet all requirements, except 2a and 2e below, if good quality foraging habitat is not available. These stands should contain no more than 70 square feet per acre of basal area in total.</p> <p>Foraging habitat is not required for inactive clusters unless identified as recruitment stands.</p> <p>1) <i>Area Provided by Site Productivity</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a) <i>In systems of medium to high site productivity (site index 60 or more, for the dominant pine species), provide each group of woodpeckers 120 ac of good quality habitat as defined below. A specific exception to this area requirement is made for longleaf and shortleaf habitat types under group selection silviculture.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b) <i>In systems of low site productivity (site index below 60, for the dominant pine species), provide each group of woodpeckers 200 to 300 ac of good quality habitat as defined below (2003 RCW Recovery Plan, p. 188).</i></p> <p>2) <i>Definition of Good Quality Foraging Habitat. Good Quality Foraging Habitat has some large old pines, low densities of small and medium pines, sparse or no hardwood midstory, and a bunchgrass and forb groundcover. Good quality habitat has all of the following characteristics: (2003 RCW Recovery Plan, p. 188-189).</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a) <i>There are 18 or more stems per acres of pines that are ≥ 60 years in age and ≥ 14 in dbh. Minimum basal area for these pines is 20 square feet per acre. Recommended minimum rotation ages apply to all land managed as foraging habitat</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b) <i>Basal area of pines 10 – 14 in dbh is between 0 and 40 square feet per acre.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c) <i>Basal area of pines < 10 in dbh is below 10 square feet per acre and below 20 stems per</i></p>

¹ “Blue Book Standards” is obsolete. It has been replaced by direction in the 2003 Recovery Plan.

<i>The Plan</i> (1996)	<i>Proposed Plan Amendment</i> (March 2006)
<p>maintained at 70-110 square feet of pine BA, depending on site and stand condition. However, stands with 30 or more square feet of pine BA may be considered as suitable foraging habitat, i.e., mixed stands, pine shelterwood cuts, etc. (the Plan, p. 117).</p> <p>Where foraging is limited, make thinning of young stands (<10" DBH) within 1/2 mile of active clusters a priority. Thin such stands using standard silvicultural prescriptions.</p> <p>Provide 100% of foraging for RCW groups whose 1/2 mile foraging zone extends onto another ownership unless a coop agreement exists with the non-Forest Service landowner to ensure they will provide their proportional share of foraging habitat.</p> <p>Provide the Forest Service proportional share of foraging for RCW groups on adjacent non-Forest Service land when a group's 1/2 mile foraging zone extends onto national forest, even if no cooperative agreement exists.</p>	<p><i>acre.</i></p> <p>d) <i>Basal area of all pines ≥ 10 in dbh is at least 40 square feet per acre. The minimum basal area for pines in categories (a) and (b) above is 40 square feet per acre.</i></p> <p>e) <i>Groundcovers of native bunchgrass and/or other native, fire-tolerant, fire-dependent herbs total 40% or more of ground and midstory plants and are dense enough to carry growing season fire at least once every 5 years.</i></p> <p>f) <i>No hardwood midstory exists, or if a hardwood midstory is present it is sparse and less than 7 ft in height.</i></p> <p>g) <i>Canopy hardwoods are absent or less than 10% of the number of canopy trees in longleaf forests and less than 30% of the number of canopy trees in loblolly and shortleaf forests. Xeric and sub-xeric oak inclusions that are naturally existing and likely to have been present prior to fire suppression may be retained but are not counted in the total area dedicated to foraging habitat.</i></p> <p>h) <i>All of this habitat is within 0.5 mi of the center of the cluster, and preferably, 50% or more is within 0.25 mi of the cluster center.</i></p> <p>i) <i>Foraging habitat is not separated by more than 200 ft of non-foraging areas. Non-foraging areas include (1) any predominantly hardwood forest, (2) pine stands less than 30 years in age, (3) cleared land such as agricultural lands or recently clearcut areas, (4) paved roadways, (5) utility rights of way, and (6) bodies of water.</i></p> <p>Where foraging is limited, make thinning of young stands (<10" DBH) within 1/2 mile of active clusters a priority. Thin such stands using standard silvicultural prescriptions (the Plan, p. 117).</p> <p>Provide 100% of foraging for RCW groups whose 1/2 mile foraging zone extends onto another ownership unless a coop agreement exists with the non-Forest Service landowner to ensure they will provide their proportional share of foraging habitat.</p> <p>Provide the Forest Service proportional share of foraging for RCW groups on adjacent non-Forest Service land when a group's 1/2-mile foraging zone extends onto</p>

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	national forest, even if no cooperative agreement exists.
Reduced Foraging Habitat	
<p>MA-2-80-4.2: Foraging habitat may be provided at a level below that given in MA-2-80-4.1 if the following situations occur and providing there is a finding that RCW populations would benefit in the long-term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Thinning to reduce risk of SPB outbreaks per the SPB EIS and ROD, even if foraging is limited. Such thinnings must be supported by a SPB hazard analysis showing a moderate or high risk of infestation.</i> 2) <i>Thinning of dense immature sawtimber stands (>110.-120 BA) to improve their suitability as foraging habitat even if foraging is limited. Such stands may be reduced to a BA of 90.</i> 3) <i>To expedite the restoration of pine species preferred by RCW, foraging habitat for recruitment stands 1.5 miles or more from an active cluster can be reduced 50% below U.S.FWS requirements (Blue Book Standards). This would require approximately 3,175 stems > 10" DBH and larger. The foraging habitat must be contiguous and continuous with the recruitment stand.</i> <p><i>If such a recruitment stand is activated or a new active cluster is found closer than 1.5 miles, a full complement of foraging must be provided, if available, for the new active cluster and any recruitment stands within 1.5 miles of it. If a full complement of foraging is not available all foraging within 1/2 mile will be retained.</i></p> <p>Obtain Regional Forester approval prior to implementation of any thinning or restoration project which reduces foraging below Blue Book Standards.</p>	<p>MA-2-80-4.2: Foraging habitat may be provided at a level below that given in MA-2-80-4.1 if the following situations occur and providing there is a finding that RCW populations would benefit in the long-term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Thinning to reduce risk of SPB outbreaks per the SPB EIS and ROD, even if foraging is limited. Such thinning must be supported by a SPB hazard analysis showing a moderate or high risk of infestation</i> 2) <i>If a project will impact some of the best 120 (200-300) acres dedicated to foraging habitat, and will not move the habitat directly toward the desired structure, the project would need modification before implementation. In some cases, such as the restoration of site appropriate pine species, it may continue at a reduced level.</i>
Thinning	
<p>MA-2-80-4.7: Thinning of forest stands is a key activity in the timely production of good RCW habitat. Direction for thinning pine and pine-hardwood stands varies depending on the age of the stand to be thinned and its suitability as RCW foraging habitat.</p> <p>Thinning of stands considered unsuitable as foraging habitat (average DBH of < 10") is encouraged and may take place at any time. Standard silvicultural guidelines apply.</p>	<p>MA-2-80-4.7: Thinning of forest stands is a key activity in the timely production of good RCW habitat. Direction for thinning pine stands varies depending on the age of the stand to be thinned and its suitability as RCW foraging habitat.</p> <p>Thinning of stands considered unsuitable as foraging habitat (average DBH of < 10") is encouraged and may take place at any time. Standard silvicultural guidelines apply.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">The Plan (1996)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proposed Plan Amendment (March 2006)</p>
<p>Provide for the following in stands that are > 10" DBH:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain pine BA of 70-110 square feet, depending on site and stand condition.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Do not remove more than 30 square feet of BA in the dominant or codominants in any single thinning operation.</i></p> <p>In MILs (Management Intensity Levels) 2-4:</p> <p>Use the following priority to select pine trees to retain:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) relict trees (2) other potential cavity trees (3) trees >10" DBH that are not potential cavity trees (4) trees <10" DBH</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>In MIL 1: Same as in MILs 2-4 except trees to retain should be well formed, healthy, and vigorously growing.</i></p> <p>As stands approach the age to provide potential nesting habitat, generally 70-100 years depending on pine species, they should be managed as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain a pine BA of 60-80 square feet and maintain a minimum spacing of 20-25 feet between dominant and codominant trees. Spacing is especially critical in the non- longleaf types.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain an open park- like structure through regular prescribed burning. See MA-2-80-4.4.</i></p> <p>If foraging habitat is limited, thinnings in stands > 10" DBH and > 30 years old may not occur, except in some situations it may be desirable to thin even if foraging is limited. See MA-2-80-4.2, Reduced Foraging Habitat, for specifics on these situations.</p>	<p>Provide for the following in stands that are > 10" DBH:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain pine BA of 70-110 square feet, depending on site and stand condition.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain loblolly pine < 80 square feet of basal area.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Do not remove more than 30 square feet of BA in the dominant or codominants in any single thinning operation.</i></p> <p>In MILs 2-4:</p> <p>Use the following priority to select pine trees to retain:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) relict trees (2) other potential cavity trees (3) trees >10" DBH that are not potential cavity trees (4) trees <10" DBH</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>In MIL 1: Same as in MILs 2-4 except trees to retain should be well formed, healthy, and vigorously growing.</i></p> <p>As stands approach the age to provide potential nesting habitat, generally 70-100 years depending on pine species, they should be managed as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain a pine BA of 60-80 square feet and maintain a minimum spacing of 20-25 feet between dominant and codominant trees. Spacing is especially critical in the non- longleaf types.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Maintain an open park- like structure through regular prescribed burning. See MA-2-80-4.4.</i></p>
<p>Accelerated Pine Restoration</p>	
<p>MA-2-80-4.8.5: The rate of restoration may be accelerated as long as there are no short-term adverse effects on RCW and there will be a long-term benefit to them. There are three specific situations where an accelerated rate of restoration may be desirable, and is allowed:</p> <p>1) HMAs with sparse or scattered RCW populations. In order to expedite restoration in portions of an HMA that are 1.5 miles or more from an active cluster the 0-10 and 0-30 guidelines may be exceeded and a reduced level of foraging habitat may be provided for recruitment stands,</p>	<p>MA-2-80-4.8.5: The rate of restoration may be accelerated as long as there are no short-term adverse effects on RCW and there will be a long-term benefit to them. There are three specific situations where an accelerated rate of restoration may be desirable, and is allowed:</p> <p>1) HMAs with sparse or scattered RCW populations. To expedite restoration in portions of an HMA that are 1.5 miles or more from an active cluster the 0-10 and 0-30 guidelines may be exceeded, provided that:</p>

The Plan (1996)	Proposed Plan Amendment (March 2006)
<p>provided that:</p> <p><i>During the first 20 years of RCW Strategy implementation the area in the 0-10 age classes cannot exceed 15%, and the area in the 0-30 age classes cannot exceed 40%.</i></p> <p><i>Foraging habitat for recruitment stands can be reduced to 3,175 pine stems >10" DBH and at least 30 years old and 4,245 square feet of pine BA in stems >5" DBH (see MA-2-80-4.1).</i></p> <p>2) When soils or other site factors cause off-site species to experience severe mortality after 40-50 years of acceptable growth.</p> <p><i>This situation is one of the most difficult to resolve because available foraging habitat is frequently being lost at a rate far in excess of the rate of replacement. Restoration efforts should be concentrated in the oldest stands of off- site species.</i></p> <p>3) When soils or other site factors prohibit trees from reaching foraging size (10 inches DBH) regardless of age (stagnation).</p> <p><i>The off-site stands being regenerated do not qualify as foraging habitat, therefore the rate of restoration is limited only by the previous mitigation measures which apply to all restoration efforts. See MA-2-80-4.8.4.</i></p>	<p><i>During the first 20 years of RCW Strategy implementation the area in the 0-10 age classes cannot exceed 15%, and the area in the 0-30 age classes cannot exceed 40%.</i></p> <p>2) When soils or other site factors cause off-site species to experience severe mortality after 40-50 years of acceptable growth.</p> <p><i>This situation is one of the most difficult to resolve because available foraging habitat is frequently being lost at a rate far in excess of the rate of replacement. Restoration efforts should be concentrated in the oldest stands of off- site species.</i></p> <p>3) When soils or other site factors prohibit trees from reaching foraging size (10 inches DBH) regardless of age (stagnation).</p> <p><i>The off-site stands being regenerated do not qualify as foraging habitat, therefore the rate of restoration is limited only by the previous mitigation measures which apply to all restoration efforts. See MA-2-80-4.8.4.</i></p>

Reasons for the Decision

I have selected Alternative 2 over the other alternative for the following reasons:

1. Alternative 2 meets the purpose and need for the project, to incorporate the latest findings issued by the 2003 RCW Recovery Plan into the *Plan* (EA, page 1-1, 1-8).
2. Alternative 2 provides a more descriptive definition of good quality RCW habitat and a different way to analyze that habitat when projects are proposed in MA-2 and MA-6 (EA, page 3-1).
3. Alternative 2 would not change the *Plan's* direction for RCW management, desired condition, or effects on vegetation (EA, page 3-3).

4. Alternative 2 would increase the efficiency of planning and analysis of projects in MA-2 and MA-6 (EA, page 3-3).

Proposed Action, Purpose and Need

The Proposed Action was first brought forward in 2003. The project was proposed to amend the *Plan* with the most current information available for managing habitat for RCW (EA, page 1-9).

Public Involvement and Issue Identification

Internal and external scoping involved resource professionals and interested members of the public and is documented in the EA, page 1-9. Initial scoping began July 15, 2004, in a letter mailed to the 149 agencies, organizations, and individuals, describing the Proposed Action. The Interdisciplinary Team, composed of several Forest Service professionals and technicians, identified no significant issues from internal and external review of the proposal.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

The following alternatives were considered in detail. They are fully described, and contrasted on page 2-1 of the EA, and a description summary, in table form, is also given on page 2-2 of the EA.

Alternative 1 – This is the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action would not be implemented. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

Alternative 2 – This is the Proposed Action, under which the *Plan* would be amended to incorporate the most current information available for managing habitat for RCW derived from the 2003 RCW Recovery Plan.

For each alternative, all applicable Standards and Guidelines, Mitigation Measures and Management Requirements in the *Plan* would be applied (EA, page 2-1).

These alternatives were evaluated as to their effects on the environment. Some of the important effects are summarized in a comparison table on page 2-2 of the EA, and detailed effects are given on pages 3-1 to 3-3.

NFMA Finding of Non-Significance for Amendment of the NFGT Land Management Plan

Alternative 2 proposes a Forest Plan Amendment for incorporating the most current information available for managing habitat for RCW from the 2003 RCW Recovery Plan. Pursuant to 36 CFR 219.14(e)(2), this *Plan* Amendment uses the provisions of planning regulations in effect before November 9, 2000. Section 5.32 of Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12 lists four

factors to be used to determine a whether this *Plan* Amendment is significant or non-significant: timing; location and size; goals, objectives, and outputs; and management prescriptions. The determination of significance or non-significance depends on the analysis of all of these factors, as well as the extent of the change in the context of the entire *Plan*. I have carefully evaluated the proposed actions within the context of the entire area covered within the 1996 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, and determined as follows:

Timing - The timing factor examines at what point, over the course of the Forest Plan period, the *Plan* is amended. Both the age of the underlying document and the duration of the *Plan* Amendment are relevant considerations. The handbook indicates that the later in the time period, the less significant the change is likely to be. The changes to *Plan* standards MA-2-80-4.1, MA-2-80-4.2, MA-2-80-4.7, and MA-2-80-4.8.5 would be implemented immediately. The *Plan* was approved in 1996, nearly 10 years ago. As mentioned on page 6, incorporating these changes provides the most current information and will help to improve the efficiency of planning and analysis in MA-2 and MA-6. Delaying the changes to the next planning period would result in non-compliance with the latest USFWS direction, and in the continued use of somewhat outdated analysis tools.

Location and Size - The key to the location and size is the context of the relationship of the affected area to the overall planning area (FSH 1909.12, sec. 5.32(b)). The *Plan* allocated approximately 250,000 acres to MA-2 and 32,300 acres to MA-6 for management of RCW. This represents roughly 42 percent of the 672,800 acres within the NFGT. Incorporating these guidelines would not change the *Plan's* direction for RCW management, desired condition, or effects on vegetation.

Goals, Objectives, and Outputs – The goals, objectives, and outputs factor involves the determination of “whether the change alters the long-term relationship between the levels of goods and services in the overall planning area (FSH 1909.12, sec. 5.32(c)).” This criterion concerns analysis of the overall Forest Plan and the various multiple use resources that may be affected. There is no guarantee under National Forest Management Act (NFMA) that output projections will actually be produced. These changes would not alter the long-term relationships between the levels of goods and services projected by the *Plan*. No commodity outputs are expected to be affected with this decision.

Management Prescriptions – The management prescriptions factor involves the determination of 1) “whether the change in a management prescription is only for a specific situation or whether it would apply to future decisions throughout the planning area” and 2) “whether or not the change alters the desired future condition of the land and resources or the anticipated goods and services to be produced (FSH 1909.12, sec. 5.32(d)).” The changes to *Plan* standards MA-2-80-4.1, MA-2-80-4.2, MA-2-80-4.7, and MA-2-80-4.8.5 would not affect the management prescriptions for MA-2 or MA-6. The desired future conditions for MA-2 and MA-6 would not change.

Finding of No Significant Impact

During evaluation of environmental effects, all foreseeable actions that may cause direct, indirect, or cumulative effects were analyzed with all alternatives (EA, page 3-1 to 3-3).

Based on the process and analysis shown in the environmental assessment, along with experience with similar forest management activities, I have determined that implementation of the selected alternative, with the associated mitigation measures, is not a major federal action, either individually or cumulatively, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This determination was based on the following factors:

1. Both beneficial and adverse effects have been considered and this action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the environment (EA, pages 3-1 to 3-3).
2. The selected alternative will not affect public health or safety.
3. The prescribed actions will not affect any unique characteristics of the geographical area (historic or heritage resources, wetlands, floodplains, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, etc.)
4. The effects of this project on the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. Broad-level public disputes with forest policy are beyond the scope of this decision. Page 1-9 of the EA discusses the public contacts made in the course of the environmental analysis, and documents the issues identified from these contacts. The NFGT Interdisciplinary Team has made every effort to listen to public concerns and to incorporate them into the decision-making process.
5. The Selected Alternative does not involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown environmental risks.
6. This decision does not set precedent for future action with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
7. There will be no cumulative effects between this project and other ongoing or planned projects on either national forest or private land.
8. No sites listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the proposed activities.
9. The Selected Alternative will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act. The Forest Service consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and determined that

the actions are not like to affect any endangered or threatened species (Biological Evaluation, Appendix B).

10. None of the prescribed actions threaten or lead to violations of federal, state, or local environmental laws, or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. This will be ensured by carrying out the selected actions in a way that is consistent with the standards and guidelines, management requirements and mitigation measures established in the *Plan*.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 217. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with: Charles L. Myers, Appeal Deciding Officer, Attn: Appeals & Litigation, USDA-Forest Service, Southern Region, 1720 Peachtree Rd, NW., Atlanta, GA 30309 or faxed to (404) 347-5401.

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are 8 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to appeals-southern@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the Lufkin Daily News, the newspaper of record. Appeals received after the 45-day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the Lufkin Daily News is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 217.9.

Contact

For further information concerning this decision or the Forest Service Appeal Process, contact Project Analysis Team Leader Glenn Donnahoe at 415 S. First Street, Suite 110, Lufkin, TX 75901, phone 936-639-8504, or e-mail gdonnahoe@fs.fed.us.

Responsible Official:

/s/ Fred S. Salinas

4/14/06

Fred S. Salinas
Forest Supervisor
National Forests and Grasslands in Texas

Date

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