

Decision Memo
Turner Hollow Salvage Project

USDA Forest Service
Pleasant Hill Ranger District, Ozark –St. Francis National Forest
Johnson County, Arkansas
Compartments 302, 308, and 493

I. Background

The proposed project area is in both Madison and Newton Counties, Arkansas. The project would occur in portions of the following areas: Compartments 302, 308 and 493. The legal description for the project areas includes the following: (Compartment 302) Township 13 North, Range 23 West, portions of sections 18 and 19, (Compartment 308) Township 13 North, Range 23 West, portions of sections 31 and 32, and (Compartment 493) Township 13 North, Range 25 West, portions of sections 11 and 12 as shown on the enclosed map. The proposed project is located entirely on public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Ozark National Forest – Pleasant Hill Ranger District.

The proposed action would include salvaging hardwood species that were damaged by the January 2009 ice storm on approximately 52 acres in Compartment 493, 59 acres in Compartment 302, and 96 acres in Compartment 308. Green timber (timber that has not been damaged) would also need to be harvested in order to provide access to the stands and facilitate the logging of damaged trees. Additionally, this project may improve wildlife habitat while encouraging oak regeneration in accordance with the Healthy Forest Initiative.

II. REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE DECISION

I find the proposed action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment because it fits under Category 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13) described in Forest Service Handbook id_1909.15-2009-1, April 17, 2009. This category is for "Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing."

The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. I considered: 1) Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, and Forest Service sensitive species; 2) floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds; 3) congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas; 4) inventoried roadless areas; 5) research natural areas; 6) American Indians and Alaska Native religious and cultural sites; and 7) archaeological sites and historic properties or areas.

III. Public Involvement

A notice of proposed action for this project was published in the *Johnson County Graphic* and mailed to the District NEPA mailing list on August 26, 2009, soliciting comments and input on this project. One positive comment was received within the comment period for this project.

IV. Findings Required by Other Laws

This project is consistent with the objectives of the Revised Land and Resources Management Plan for the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests.

V. Implementation Date

This project may be implemented on or after the date of the signature of the Deciding Official below.

VI. Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

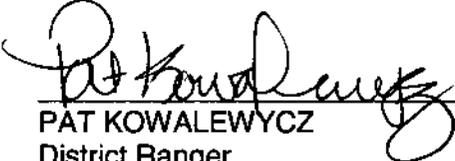
Only those who provided substantive comments regarding the proposed action by the close of the scoping comment period were accepted as appellants. No substantive comments were received as a result of public involvement. Therefore, this project is no longer subject to appeal.

VII. Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, please contact:

Pat Kowalewycz, District Ranger
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2591 Highway 21
Clarksville, AR 72830

Phone: 479-754-2864



PAT KOWALEWYCZ
District Ranger

10-05-09
Date