



File Code: 1950

Date: January 26, 2010

Dear Interested Public:

The Sylamore Ranger District (the District) of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests (the Forest) has developed a preliminary proposed action for the construction and subsequent maintenance of a new pond on an existing grazing allotment. The purpose of this letter is to inform potentially interested parties of the proposal and to solicit comments on the proposed action. The proposed project's title is the *Dorsey #19(1) Range Allotment Pond Construction Project*. It will be identified as the proposed action in this letter.

### **Proposed Project Area:**

The Dorsey #19 Range Allotment is located in Compartment 89 stands 26 and 27. These stands occur in Section 8, T. 16N, R. 10W of Stone County. This range allotment consists of approximately 225 acres of mixed bermuda and fescue fields with occasional inclusions of pine and mixed hardwood, and approximately 30 acres in woodland located along the west bank of the White River. One of these fields [Dorsey #19(1)] contains approximately 85 acres and is currently maintained under permit as a grazing allotment.

The proposed project area is limited to an area of less than ½ acre within the western half of Dorsey #19(1). A map showing the proposed location for the new pond is attached.

### **Existing Condition:**

Dorsey #19(1) is an existing range allotment on which the permit holder grazes cattle from April 1 to September 30 annually. The allotment is cross-fenced into an eastern and western section, and under the terms of the permit, the permit holder is supposed to rotate the cattle between these sections on a "rest-rotation" schedule. This practice prevents overgrazing, and usually results in higher quality pastures for the cattle.

In the eastern section, cattle drink water from a trough that is gravity fed from a fenced off pond. In the western section, cattle have direct access to a pond established in a natural sinkhole. The level of water in this sinkhole pond has decreased dramatically during the last two years, and it is undependable as a water source for livestock; for this reason, the permit holder has stopped rotating his cattle between the sections and instead leaves the gates between them open. The cattle use less of the whole allotment, and congregate in certain areas. As a result, the pasture is showing signs of overgrazing.

### **Purpose of and Need for Action:**

The existing water resource in the western section of the Dorsey #19 (1) range allotment is unreliable. There is a need to construct a pond in the western section that will provide a dependable water source. Once the pond is established, the permit holder will be able to resume a cycle of rest



and rotation between the eastern and western sections of the allotment thereby improving pasture conditions.

### **Proposed Action:**

A pond measuring approximately 60-80 feet in diameter will be constructed with a bulldozer in the western section of the Dorsey #19(1) range allotment as indicated on the attached map. Bentonite (clay) may be added if needed to prevent leaking, and the pond banks will be seeded with annual rye to allow subsequent establishment of native plant species. A gated post and wire fence will be constructed around the new pond to prevent the cattle from walking into it or breaking down the dam, and a stock tank and gravity-fed system will be installed to provide water to the cattle.

Associated actions will include the maintenance of this new fence and water system. Maintenance may include activities to keep the pond free of silt and debris (brushing or use of heavy equipment) or to remove woody vegetation that may sprout on the pond dam [use of heavy equipment or hand tools, or selective application (direct foliar spray or cut stump treatment) of a commercial formulation of glyphosate herbicide without added surfactant].

Herbicide application would be at the lowest effective rate and according to the manufacturer's label specifications. The typical mix used on the Sylamore Ranger District in this type of application is a 1:1 dilution of glyphosate with water, with an application rate of approximately 1 quart per acre. Characteristics of glyphosate are discussed in *Glyphosate—Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment Final Report* (2003) which is available for viewing at the Sylamore Ranger District Office in Mountain View, AR and at [www.fs.fcd.us/foresthealth/pesticide/risk.shtml](http://www.fs.fcd.us/foresthealth/pesticide/risk.shtml). All aspects of herbicide use will be monitored to ensure that proper mixing, application, and clean-up procedures are followed. Treated areas will be monitored to determine treatment efficacy, and monitoring will be conducted for off-site herbicide movement.

This proposed action has been designed to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations which are in place to protect natural and cultural resources as well as the human environment and with the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests (Forest Plan). The Forest Plan is posted on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/oonf/ozark/projects/planning/planning.html>.

### **Alternatives Currently Being Considered:**

Alternatives currently being considered for this project include 1) a no action alternative in which a new pond would not be constructed and 2) the proposed action alternative as described in this letter.

### **Submitting Comments:**

We invite you to participate in the development of this project and are asking for your comments on it. Information you provide may help us refine the proposed action, identify pertinent issues related to the proposed action, develop any additional alternatives or mitigation measures that may be needed, and assist in preparing a pre-decisional Environmental Assessment (EA). Your comments are welcome at any time, but those received within 30 days of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the EA for this project. Please be as specific as possible with your comments or in expressing concerns so that we can more effectively address them.

Upon completion of the pre-decisional EA, a preferred alternative will be identified. A formal 30 day comment period will be initiated through publication of a legal notice in the newspaper of record, *The Stone County Leader*, Mountain View, AR. The pre-decisional EA will be posted on the Sylamore Ranger District's project webpage at <http://www.fs.fed.us/oonf/ozark/projects/planning/sylamoreproject.html> and will be available upon request, but if you respond to this solicitation and provide a mailing address, a copy of the pre-decisional EA will be sent to you.

Comments received during the formal 30 day comment period will be considered prior to making the final decision which will be documented in a Decision Notice. Only those persons, non-Federal organizations or entities that comment or otherwise express interest in the proposed action by the close of the formal 30 day comment period will be eligible to appeal the decision on this project. Please note that comments received during any phase of this project's development (including names and addresses of those who comment) will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Your comments can be submitted via the U.S. Postal Service, via e-mail, facsimile, telephone or presented in person at our office. When submitting a comment, please provide the following information:

- Your name and mailing address.
- Title of the proposed action: *Dorsey #19(1) Range Allotment Pond Construction Project*
- Your comments on the proposed action.
- Your signature or other means of identification verification; for organizations, a signature or other means of identification verification must be provided for the individual authorized to represent your organization.

Please submit written comments to me: District Ranger Cynthia Snow Kopack. Sylamore Ranger District, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests, Attn: *Dorsey #19(1) Range Allotment Pond Construction Project*, 1001 East Main, Mountain View, AR 72560. Our telephone and FAX numbers are: Phone (870) 269-3228, FAX (870) 269-3000. Hand delivered comments may be submitted at the Sylamore Ranger District Office within the normal weekday business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. To mail your comments electronically, use a common digital format (without attachments) and submit it to the following e-mail address: [comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-sylamore@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-sylamore@fs.fed.us).

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. If you have a question regarding this proposed action please contact me or District Wildlife Biologist Kathryn Furr at (870) 269-3228.

Sincerely,



CYNTHIA SNOW KOPACK

District Ranger

jlf



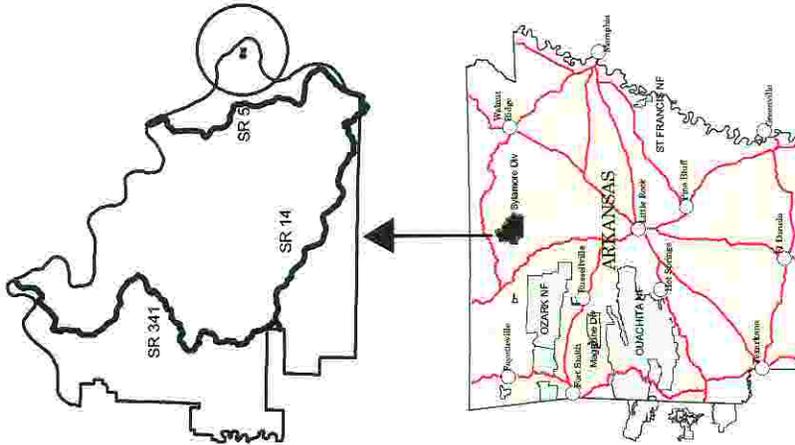
# Dorsey #19 (1) Range Allotment Pond Construction Project

## Ozark-St. Francis National Forests

Section 8, T16N R10W

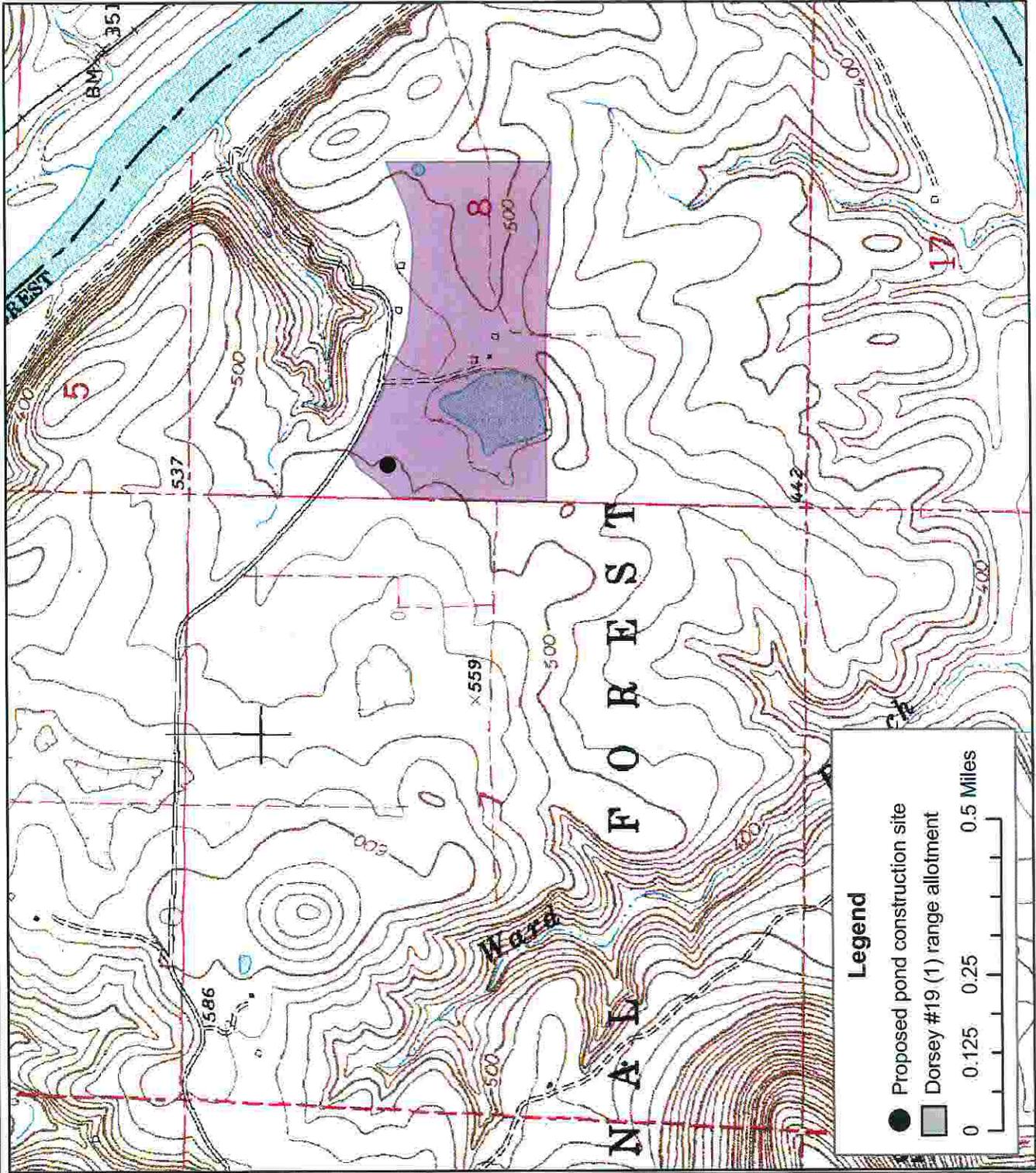


### Sylamore Ranger District Project Vicinity



The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and products may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, incomplete while being created or revised, etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results.

The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace GIS products without notification. For more information contact: Sylamore Ranger District, 1001 East Main, Mountain View, AR 72560 (870) 269-3228.



### Legend

- Proposed pond construction site
  - Dorsey #19 (1) range allotment
- 0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles