



Forest Service

Huron-Manistee National Forests 989-739-0728 (Voice)  
Huron Shores Ranger Station 989-739-0347 (Fax)  
5761 N. Skeel Avenue 989-739-0806 (TTY)  
Oscoda, MI 48750

---

File Code: 1950

Date: January 24, 2011

Dear Interested Publics:

I am writing to invite you to provide review and comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) that has been prepared for the Snow Bird Kirtland's Warbler (KW) Project. ***As the Responsible Official for this project, the Proposed Action is my preferred alternative.*** A final decision will be made following the 30-day comment period.

The Snow Bird project is located on the Tawas Ranger District of the Huron-Manistee National Forests. It is approximately 932 acres in size and consists of two separate areas that are approximately six miles southeast of the town of Glennie in Township 24 North, Range 6 East, Sections 13 and 14, and Township 24 North, Range 7 East, Section 7 of Iosco County, Michigan. These activities are proposed for implementation between the years 2011 and 2019.

The projects main objective is to maintain and develop essential nesting habitat for the Kirtland's warbler and to reduce hazardous fuels. The specific management activities of the Proposed Actions are:

- Regenerate approximately 693 acres of jack pine at densities required for Kirtland's warbler nesting habitat through a combination of commercial timber harvest, site preparation, and tree planting. Commercial timber harvest would consist of clearcutting red pine and mixed jack pine/red pine/oak stands. Site preparation would consist of either mechanical methods, prescribed fire or a combination of methods to reduce slash and submerchantable trees and prepare the sites for tree planting.
- Site prep approximately 11 acres of small openings with prescribed fire and/or mechanical methods and regenerate to jack pine at densities required for KW nesting habitat.

It should be noted that in the initial scoping of the Snow Bird Project, the Proposed Action differed from the Proposed Action you will read in the attached Environmental Assessment. This difference is due to more accurate field reviews of the project area.

**NOTE:**

- *An internal review of the red pine (191 acres) proposed for thinning and underburning determined that it had not grown enough since the last time it was treated to warrant another thinning. Therefore, it has been dropped from consideration in the Proposed Action.*
- *Similarly, it was determined that the submerchantable mixed bigtooth aspen and jack pine/oak (approximately 23 acres) proposed for treatment could not economically be converted to jack pine at densities required for nesting Kirtland's warbler. Therefore, site prep and regeneration of these stands was dropped from the Proposed Action.*



- *Furthermore, additional field review revealed an approximately 14 acre stand of red pine in the southwest portion of the project area was found to be of exceptional quality. Consequently, it was determined that converting this stand to jack pine for Kirtland's warbler habitat was not the best use of this resource. Management activities on this red pine stand were dropped from the Proposed Action.*

A total of 932 acres were proposed for treatment in the original scoping letter, approximately 228 acres is being dropped, so the Proposed Action now proposes treatment on a total of 704 acres.

Please refer to Appendix A of the Snow Bird Environmental Assessment to view maps of the proposed project areas and management activities associated with this alternative. Site specific information is provided in Table 1 of the Snow Bird Environmental Assessment.

A 30-day comment period provides the final pre-decisional opportunity for public review of the proposed action and the Environmental Assessment. The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the Oscoda Press. Appeals may be filed by persons or non-Federal organizations or entities that provide comments or otherwise express interest in the proposed action. In order to have standing to appeal this decision under 36 CFR 215, you must have submitted comments prior to the close of the 30-day comment period for the legal notice, and sign the comments or be able to verify identity upon request. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Your comments will be considered by District Ranger, Susan M. Kocis, in reaching a final decision.

Please submit your written or hand-delivered comments to me at: USDA Forest Service, Huron Shores Ranger Station, 5761 N. Skeel Ave., Oscoda, MI 48750, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or you may fax them to (989) 739-0347. E-mail comments are accepted at the following address: [comments-eastern-huron-manistee-huron-shores@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-huron-manistee-huron-shores@fs.fed.us) (must be readable by Microsoft Office 2007 or Adobe Acrobat 6.0 formats).

Please include the following in your comments:

- 1) name, address, telephone number, organization represented and title;
- 2) title of the document on which the comments are being submitted (Snow Bird KW Project);
- 3) specific facts and supporting reasons regarding your comments.

Comments received in response to the project will become a matter of public record<sup>1</sup>. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Snow Bird KW Project, please contact Paul Thompson at (989) 739-0728, or write to USDA Forest Service, Huron Shores Ranger Station, 5761 N. Skeel Ave., Oscoda, MI 48750. Copies of the final decision will be mailed to people who have submitted comments on this proposal and to anyone who requests a copy of these documents.

Sincerely,

*/s/Susan M. Kocis*

SUSAN M. KOCIS  
District Ranger

<sup>1</sup>Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit such comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request that a submission be withheld from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the submission will be returned and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.