

# RESPONSE TO COMMENTS RECEIVED

## Environmental assessment

### Administrative Site Reconstruction

### Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District

The USDA Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forests filed a notice of public comment for the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District Administrative Site Reconstruction Environmental Assessment, on Monday March 21, 2011. The notice was published in the Cadillac News, the paper of record for the Huron-Manistee National Forests. The ending date for comments on this project was Wednesday, April 20, 2011.

Two responses were received related to this project and are attached to this document. They included:

1. Jill Engelman, Pre-Construction Consultant Lake County Museum/Welcome Center Baldwin, Michigan She reported that she was in support of the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District reconstruction project.
2. **William Wiersema** < [mm2usn@hotmail.com](mailto:mm2usn@hotmail.com), Address or phone number not given. He reported that he was not in favor of the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District reconstruction project for the reason *"in the midst of a budget crisis the USFS wishes to demolish a perfectly good building to replace it with a new one. The old Bldg. is far from being in sad shape. It is a beautiful place and it needs not to be replaced."*

In response to Mr. Wiersema's comment, the Purpose and Need for Action , page 2-3 of the , EA states:

The Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District Administrative site occupies two city blocks within the Village of Baldwin, Michigan. Buildings on this site were constructed in 1936 with the exception of one residential structure built in the early 1970's. At the present time the site contains one 4817 square foot, two story office building; two residential housing units which have been converted to 3579 square foot of employee office space; one residential housing unit currently used as crew quarters for up to seven seasonal crew personnel; four warehouse buildings used for equipment and vehicle storage; and three garage and/or shed buildings used for small equipment storage. All of the buildings on this site have exceeded their planned design life by many years and are not suitable for continued use as employee work space. The proposed project would address the following facility limitations:

- Costs of maintaining four separate buildings as office space is high. Service costs include maintaining multiple heating and cooling systems, more complicated utility system repairs and complex cleaning services.
- Employee office space is insufficient and does not comply with several key building code standards, including accessibility requirements under the Architectural Barriers Act.
- Space for public and employee parking is not sufficient, especially during the summer.
- The current facility provides limited space for visitor contacts and interpretive/educational displays. This results in a poor environment for public interaction and creates a negative impression for office visitors
- Lack of conferencing and training facilities.
- Existing seasonal employee and volunteer housing does not meet current code standards for employee housing.
- Current available space will not meet the anticipated staff changes in all disciplines expected over the next 50 year, the life expectancy of the facility.
- Current storage and warehouse facilities will not meet planned needs for upgrades to fire equipment and rolling stock.

This action responds to the goals and objectives recommended in the Huron-Manistee National Forests' Facility Master Plan, approved by Kent Connaughton, Regional Forester for the Eastern Region, on 11/20/2008. The desired future condition for the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District administrative site is described as: "*new administrative facilities are necessary. Some facilities may be retained, decommissioned, altered in use or acquired.*" Specific actions recommended in this document include: Decommissioning the main office building, the fire office building, the converted house and garage office space, and the bunkhouse with garage; retaining all four existing warehouse buildings as well as the oil shed and equipment shed; and acquiring a new office building, fire warehouse and garage, fire office, new garage/warehouse, and crew quarters.

**The current Baldwin/White Cloud office facilities cannot be upgraded in their current condition to meet 2011 occupancy standard for office/public contact use.**