

DECISION MEMO
Big Piney Ranger District
Ozark-St. Francis National Forests
TNT Tornado Salvage Project

Decision

I have decided to implement the actions necessary for a salvage timber project of no more than 250 acres caused by a tornado in April of 2011. A severe weather/wind event occurred in Newton County north of Deer, Arkansas causing timber blowdown on approximately 1,500 acres of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. Specific activities consist of a commercial salvage harvest of severely damaged trees. Removal of these trees would reduce the amount of hazardous fuels caused by the storm and increase the safety of forest visitors and Forest Service personnel. Following the salvage operations, treatments of manual site preparation, pine or hardwood planting and manual release can occur.

These activities fall under 36 CFR 220.6(e) (13) Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 1/2 mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing. Project scoping and analysis did not identify any extraordinary circumstances associated with this project and these actions do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Because of these findings, this project is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Public Involvement

A legal notice was published in Russellville's *The Courier* on June 14th, 2011 and in *The Newton County Times* on June 15th, 2011. No comments were received. Letters were sent to the Native American Tribes asking for comments on the project proposal. A single comment was received from one tribe which had no issues with the project proposal.

Findings Required by Other Laws

These actions are consistent with the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests' Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, as required by the National Forest Management Act.

My conclusion is based on a review of the record that: 1) shows a thorough review of the best available science and other information and 2) documents no opposing views were received during public scoping activities. I acknowledge that there may be some unknown, but relevant, information that would be useful in designing the project's activities, but I am satisfied that the efforts to discover and address the environmental impacts of this project are adequate and sufficient.

Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

These actions are not subject to appeal (36 CFR 215.12 9(f)) Decisions for actions that have been categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS pursuant to FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, section 31.