



The Shawnee Quarterly

The Shawnee National Forest NEPA Newsletter
with the Schedule of Proposed Actions
April 2012

“The Shawnee Quarterly” is the Shawnee National Forest’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) newsletter. The Quarterly is published four times a year: January, April, July, and October. It provides planning information on the management and use of the Forest and includes a copy of the Forest’s Schedule of Proposed Actions.

The Schedule of Proposed Actions lists actions proposed or in progress that require consideration under NEPA prior to implementation. The purpose of the Schedule of Proposed Actions is to provide early, informal notice of proposed projects so that you can be aware of Forest activities, indicate your interest in specific projects, and be involved early in the environmental analysis and documentation process. The schedule also provides information associated with the status of environmental analysis or planning of ongoing projects.

New projects are listed with the ***NEW LISTING*** identifier in the title box on the Schedule of Proposed Actions. You can become part of the decision-making process by commenting on all projects that interest you. Projects are sorted in tables by nation-wide projects, the Supervisor’s Office (for Forest-wide projects), or by the Ranger District where the action is proposed. The name of a contact is provided with each project and comments or questions should be directed to this contact person.

Management Note: A recent court ruling (Sequoia Forest- keeper v. Tidwell) requires that actions that can be categorically excluded using categories found at 36 C.F.R. 220.6(e) be subject to public notice, comment, and opportunity for administrative appeal. Therefore, each decision that requires a decision memo will now be noticed in The Southern Illinoisan for public scoping and comments. An additional legal notice will be published upon making a decision and will include the appeal process for the decision.

SCOPING FOR PROJECTS EXPECTED TO BE CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDED:

Projects listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions followed by “CE” are expected to be categorically excluded from extensive analysis under NEPA. In an effort to conserve resources by avoiding duplicative mass-mailings, and commensurate with their expected scope and intensity, the Forest announces scoping for these projects in this Quarterly newsletter. Sufficient details of proposals are provided to enable comments on the projects. If you wish to receive further information on any project, please contact the individual listed. With the recent court ruling the quarterly newsletter will not be the sole source of scoping information but we will continue to use as a tool to increase project awareness.

Comments will be accepted for three weeks following publication of the Quarterly.

New projects listed in this month’s Schedule of Proposed Actions that are expected to be categorically excluded include:

Ellis Cave Bat Gate Construction

Installation of a steel cupola bat gate across the opening to Ellis Cave for the protection of federally listed bat species.

Management Note: Many of our routine projects, such as trail maintenance and recreation site maintenance do not require a decision memo and do not require that the Forest maintain a NEPA file. These types of projects will continue and some new projects could be announced in this Quarterly Newsletter but will no longer appear in the Schedule of Proposed Actions.

Johnson County - ROW Easement – Double Bridges Lane. The Johnson County Highway Department has contacted the Forest to request a public road easement for a 400' section of existing road (Double Bridges Lane) in order to accommodate the replacement of an old wooden bridge across the East Branch of Cedar Creek.

Cancelled Projects:

In the current "Schedule of Proposed Actions", we have cancelled a few projects. We have added the information below to help you understand why these projects were cancelled.

One Horse Gap Trailhead

Last quarter we propose to designate a trailhead for hiker and equestrian use located near the River to River Trail about one mile south of the One Horse Gap area. Based on site surveys we have decided to construct this trailhead in another location. The new location is located at the junction of Forest Service Roads 186 and 1421 near Benham Hill. Coverage under the National Environmental Policy Act for the new proposed location was addressed under the Trails Destination Project Environmental Impact Statement. Project contact: Robert Monroe, 618-658-2111, or robertmonroe@fs.fed.us

Frontier Communications -Renew Permit

Reauthorization of the special use permit previously issued to Verizon North (now Frontier Communications) has been cancelled because our current staffing and resource limitations preclude timely processing of the new authorization. Frontier Communications, has been and will continue to be required to pay an annual land use fee for continued use and occupancy of NFS land. We anticipate re-initiating the permit reauthorization process during FY2013. Project contact: Robert Monroe, 618-658-2111, or robertmonroe@fs.fed.us

Ameren Timber Haul Road. We have cancelled this proposal to issue a special use permit to Ameren Illinois authorizing the use of an existing non-system road on NFS land in order to haul timber from adjoining private land. Initially, issuance of a multi-year permit had been contemplated, but the Forest Service has determined that the need for the authorized use can be accommodated by the issuance of a one-year permit instead. Accordingly, if the Forest decides to issue a permit, we would issue a short-term special use

permit. Categorical Exclusion of approval for minor, short-term (1 year or less) permits pursuant to 36 CFR 220.6(d)(8) does not require a project file or a Decision Memorandum. Project contact: Robert Monroe, 618-658-2111, or robertmonroe@fs.fed.us

PRIVACY OF YOUR COMMENTS

Comments received in response to solicitation as part of the NEPA process, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record of a proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act permits such confidentiality.

How you can become involved: Read through the list of proposed projects. To comment on a project or be placed on the project mailing list, call or write the contact person. You may also comment during the scoping or comment periods on environmental assessments (EA) or environmental impact statements (EIS). Thank you for reviewing this list of projects and planned or recent decisions. We appreciate your interest in the management of the Shawnee National Forest.

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Schedule of Proposed Action (SOPA)

04/01/2012 to 06/30/2012

Shawnee National Forest

This report contains the best available information at the time of publication. Questions may be directed to the Project Contact.

Project Name	Project Purpose	Planning Status	Decision	Expected Implementation	Project Contact
Projects Occurring Nationwide					
Gypsy Moth Management in the United States: A Cooperative Approach EIS	- Vegetation management (other than forest products)	In Progress: DEIS NOA in Federal Register 09/19/2008 Est. FEIS NOA in Federal Register 12/2011	Expected:03/2012	01/2013	Noel Schneeberger 610-557-4121 nschneeberger@fs.fed.us
	Description: The USDA Forest Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are analyzing a range of strategies for controlling gypsy moth damage to forests and trees in the United States.				
	Web Link: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/wv/eis/				
Location: UNIT - All Districts-level Units. STATE - All States. COUNTY - All Counties. Nationwide.					
Land Management Planning Rule EIS	- Regulations, Directives, Orders	Completed	Actual: 03/23/2012	12/2011	Brenda Halter-Glenn 202-260-9400 bhalterglenn@fs.fed.us
	Description: The Department of Agriculture proposes to promulgate a new planning rule, which will set out the process for development, revision, and amendment of National Forest System land management plans.				
	Web Link: http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule				
Location: UNIT - All Districts-level Units. STATE - All States. COUNTY - All Counties. Agency-wide Rule.					
Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant on National Forest System Lands. EIS	- Regulations, Directives, Orders	Completed	Actual: 12/13/2011	01/2012	Glen Stein 801-200-2703 gstein@fs.fed.us
	Description: The Forest Service will prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement for the continued nationwide aerial application of fire retardant on National Forest System lands.				
	Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/retardant/index.html				
Location: UNIT - All Districts-level Units. STATE - All States. COUNTY - All Counties. Nationwide.					

Shawnee National Forest, Forestwide (excluding Projects occurring in more than one Forest)

R9 - Eastern Region

Project Name	Project Purpose	Planning Status	Decision	Expected Implementation	Project Contact
Shawnee National Forest, Forestwide (excluding Projects occurring in more than one Forest)					R9 - Eastern Region
American Land Holdings of Illinois, LLC Land Exchange Proposal EA	- Land ownership management	In Progress: Scoping Start 01/06/2012 Est. 215 Comment Period Legal Notice 04/2012	Expected:10/2012	11/2012	Ron Scott 618-253-1038 comments-eastern-shawnee@fs.fed.us
	Description: We propose to exchange 384 acres of National Forest System land in Gallatin County for three non-Federal land tracts. These tracts are located in Pope and Jackson Counties, and total 831 acres.				
	Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=37754				
Location: UNIT - Shawnee National Forest All Units. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Gallatin, Jackson, Pope. National Forest System land in Gallatin County for non-Federal lands located in Pope County and Jackson County.					

Shawnee National Forest Hidden Springs Ranger District (excluding Projects occurring in more than one District)					R9 - Eastern Region
Ellis Cave Bat Gate Construction and Installation CE *NEW LISTING*	- Wildlife, Fish, Rare plants	Developing Proposal Est. Scoping Start 04/2012	Expected:07/2012	08/2012	Rod McClanahan 618-658-2111 rmccclanahan@fs.fed.us
	Description: Installation of a steel cupola bat gate across the opening to Ellis Cave for the protection of federally listed bat species.				
	Location: UNIT - Hidden Springs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Pope. Pope County, Illinois.				
One Horse Gap Trailhead CE	- Recreation management	Cancelled	N/A	N/A	Robert Monroe 618-658-2111 robertmonroe@fs.fed.us
	Description: Designate a trailhead for hiker and equestrian use located near the River To River Trail approximately one mile south of the One Horse Gap area.				
	Location: UNIT - Hidden Springs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Pope. LEGAL - Herod Quadrangle, Township 12 South, Ranger 7 East, Section 5, 3rd Principal, Pope County, Il. Located on Forest land just off Country Road 154 near the northwest corner of the annual 9-Day Encampment area, commonly called Chigger Camp.				

Project Name	Project Purpose	Planning Status	Decision	Expected Implementation	Project Contact
Shawnee National Forest Hidden Springs Ranger District (excluding Projects occurring in more than one District)					R9 - Eastern Region
Openlands Prescribed Burn Expansion Project CE	- Wildlife, Fish, Rare plants - Vegetation management (other than forest products)	In Progress: Scoping Start 04/06/2011	Expected:07/2012	09/2012	Rod McClanahan 618-658-2111 rmccланahan@fs.fed.us
	Description: To expand the area surrounding and/or adjacent to existing openland areas so as to take advantage of existing natural or man-made fire control lines, and to expand the restorative benefits of dormant season burning to adjacent woodlands.				
	Location: UNIT - Hidden Springs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Hardin, Johnson, Pope. Openland Tracts in Pope, Johnson and Hardin Counties -.				
Williams Hill Communication Site CE	- Special use management	In Progress: Scoping Start 04/06/2011	Expected:06/2012	07/2012	Ron Scott 618-253-1038 ronscott@fs.fed.us
	Description: Renew leases for existing communications facilities and update/revise the existing Communications Site Plan.				
	Location: UNIT - Hidden Springs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Pope. Williams Hill near Herod, IL.				

Shawnee National Forest Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District (excluding Projects occurring in more than one District)					R9 - Eastern Region
Ameren Timber Haul Road CE	- Special use management	Cancelled	N/A	N/A	Robert Monroe 618-658-2111 robertmonroe@fs.fed.us
	Description: Ameren has requested a special use permit to use a temporary road that goes about 1/4 of a mile across Forest Service property. The road will be used to haul timber from private land.				
	Location: UNIT - Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Jackson. LEGAL - T10S R4W Section 12 and 13. On the south end of Fountain Bluff in Jackson County.				
Frontier Communications - Renew Permit CE	- Special use management	Cancelled	N/A	N/A	Robert Monroe 618-658-2111 robertmonroe@fs.fed.us
	Description: Issue a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization with Frontier Communications (formerly Verizon Telephone. Inc.).				
	Location: UNIT - Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Alexander, Jackson, Union. Various location throughout the Mississippi Bluffs RD.				

Project Name	Project Purpose	Planning Status	Decision	Expected Implementation	Project Contact
Shawnee National Forest Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District (excluding Projects occurring in more than one District)					R9 - Eastern Region
Lick Creek Special Use Private Road CE	- Special use management	Completed	Actual: 01/10/2012	01/2012	Robert Monroe 618-658-2111 robertmonroe@fs.fed.us
	Description: Applicant wants to build a 1/4 mile road across Forest Service property to access private property.				
	Location: UNIT - Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Union. LEGAL - T11S R1E Sec 22 SESW1/4. Near Lick Creek.				
Phragmites Eradication Environmental Assessment EIS	- Vegetation management (other than forest products)	Developing Proposal Est. NOI in Federal Register 04/2012	Expected:01/2013	04/2013	John DePuy 618-658-2111 jdepuy@fs.fed.us
	Description: Site-specific management of Phragmites australis - in seven areas within the Mississippi River Floodplain ranging from 0.1 to 0.5 acre in size, totaling less than five acres. Management would include a Glyphosate (aquatic)-based herbicide treatment				
	Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=37233				
Location: UNIT - Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Jackson, Union. Mississippi River floodplain in Jackson and Union Counties.					
Prescribed Fire for Improvement of Wildlife Habitat and Urban Interface EA	- Wildlife, Fish, Rare plants - Fuels management	On Hold	N/A	N/A	Scott Crist 618-687-1731 scrist@fs.fed.us
	Description: Five separate prescribed burning projects, totaling about 23,400 acres (about 4,800 acres each). The projects are spread across the District.				
	Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=6197				
Location: UNIT - Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Jackson, Johnson, Pulaski, Union, Williamson. Lands administered by the ranger district.					
Richs Cave Gating Project CE	- Wildlife, Fish, Rare plants	In Progress: Scoping Start 04/06/2011	Expected:07/2012	08/2012	Rod McClanahan 618-658-2111 rmccланahan@fs.fed.us
	Description: We proposes to construct a high security-type fence around a large sinkhole that also encompasses the back entrance to Richs Cave.				
	Location: UNIT - Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District. STATE - Illinois. COUNTY - Union. Richs Cave is located in Union County, IL, north of Anna, Illinois.				

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