



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Boston Mountain
Ranger District

TTY 479-667-1931

1803 North 18th Street
Ozark, AR 72949
Phone 479-667-2191
FAX 479-667-5807

September 14, 2012

Dear Reader:

The Boston Mountain Ranger District is proposing to control burn approximately 43,000 acres of National Forest land in the Main Unit (see enclosed map) in Franklin, Crawford and Madison Counties Arkansas over the course of the next several years. This scoping letter serves as notification of the project to parties that would be affected or are interested in these types of activities. Please note that none of the activities would occur on private land unless an agreement between a landowner and the Forest Service has been reached. The proposed activities are referred to as the *White Rock Prescribed Burning Project*.

The White Rock Management area encompasses the main unit of the Boston Mountain Ranger District of the Ozark National Forest and consists of primarily hardwoods and pine adapted to periodic disturbance regimes such as fire. Decades of fire suppression in the area has resulted in a buildup of fuels, the dominance of early successional trees with concomitant reductions of overstory diversity, and declines in the quality of open areas for wildlife forage. In addition, natural mortality caused by red oak borer infestations and several severe droughts over the last decade has increased the volume of dead trees across the landscape.

Controlled burning is an appropriate management tool to improve wildlife habitat and viewing opportunities while reducing the spread of non-native invasive vegetation and pests. Prescribed burning also enhances recreational settings and reduces fuel buildup for protection of infrastructure. Other benefits to the area would include stimulation of nutrient recycling: by increasing the amount of sunlight reaching the forest floor, growing conditions improve for small herbaceous plants and forbs, increasing browse and soft mast production for wildlife.

The entire project area would **not** be burned all at one time. Burn areas would be sub-divided into more manageable burn units each done on a separate day (Please see Appendix A for a list of separate burn areas and a general time frame and frequency for burning). Line preparation would begin the day before the start of the controlled burn making fire behavior more manageable. Control lines would consist primarily of roads and creeks. There may be as much as 10 miles of new fire line needed throughout the entire project area to protect timber regeneration areas. Ignition of separate units would be done with the use of a helicopter with the perimeter lines ignited by hand crews.

Protection measures for the controlled burns include burning within Forest Service guidelines and protecting travelers on major forest roads from reduced visibility due to smoke. The area would be monitored after burning by Forest Service personnel to assess the effectiveness of the prescribed burn.



This project complies with the Revised Ozark-St. Francis National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for the following Management Areas (Table 1).

Table 1: Management Areas represented within the White Rock Prescribed Burn Project

Management Area	Acres
3.E. - High Quality Forest Products	24079
3.B. - Oak Woodland	6058
3.C. - Mixed Forest	5737
3.F. - Old Growth Area	2288

Other management areas represented in the burn areas include:

- 1.C. - Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers**
- 1.H. - Scenic Byway Corridors**
- 2.A. - Ozark Highlands Trail**
- 2.C. - Developed Recreation Areas**
- 3.A. - Pine Woodland**
- 3.I. - Riparian Corridors**
- 3.J. - Pastures and Large Wildlife Openings**

Healthy forests and watersheds, diversity of plant and animal species, safe and suitable access to the forest, a balance of traditional and emerging recreational opportunities, and continued local economic support are the desired future conditions for the project area as well as the Ozark National Forest as a whole. The White Rock Prescribed Burn Project has been proposed in order to improve forest and ecosystem health as well as to enhance watershed conditions. Improving wildlife habitat, reducing competition between trees, improved visual quality and access for forest users are important in this area. Reducing fuels buildup from natural mortality caused by red oak borer infestations and severe drought is a crucial step toward meeting the goals for this area.

Restoration of native ecological systems and improvement of wildlife habitat are the highest priorities in managing our natural resource base in order to have a lasting effect on future conditions of the forest. Habitat diversity for animals and plants, including threatened, endangered, and/or sensitive species would be maintained or improved by the management activities proposed.

I invite your comments on this proposal. These comments will be used by an interdisciplinary team to develop issues and analyze the project. A decision document will then be prepared and mailed to those who commented on this project. In order to be most helpful, please return your comments referencing this project using the attached comment form by mail to the above address no later than 30 days after the publication of notice of this project in the *Southwest Times Record*, the newspaper of record for projects on the Boston Mountain Ranger District. Oral or hand-delivered comments must be received within our normal business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. local time. You may also call or fax your comments to the numbers in letterhead, or email them to comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-bostonmtn@fs.fed.us. All comments will become part of the project record available for public review. I appreciate your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Dunk". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

WILLIAM DUNK

District Ranger

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Would you like us to contact you about your comments? _____

Comments:

Please mail your completed comment form to 1803 North 18th Street, Ozark, AR 72949.
Comments are also accepted verbally at 479-667-2191 or by email at comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-bostonmtn@fs.fed.us. Your input is important.

Appendix A. Burn Units and Approximate Dates of Scheduled Burns

Burn Unit	Approximate size (acres)	Year to be burned
<i>Spud Rock Waggley Hollow</i>	2,406	2013
<i>Dry Fork 5B (East Side of Mineral Hill)</i>	1,586	2013
<i>Rosson Spirit</i>	3,425	2013
<i>Big Eddy</i>	2,503	2013
<i>Shores Lake Campground</i>	6	2013,2014,2015
<i>Brannon Fields</i>	79	2013,2014,2015
<i>Spud Rock NE Plus Blocks A & B</i>	1,694	2014
<i>Dry Fork Area 2</i>	3,087	2014
<i>Dry Fork Area 3</i>	2,205	2014
<i>Dry Fork Area 4</i>	2,313	2014
<i>Dry Fork Area 5A (West Side of Mineral Hill)</i>	1,308	2014
<i>Deer East</i>	1,382	2014
<i>Plymouth</i>	1,087	2014
<i>Spud Rock Northeast</i>	4,130	2015
<i>Spud Rock West</i>	2,467	2015
<i>Spud Rock Deer Trap</i>	1,155	2015
<i>Spud Rock Central</i>	4,115	2015
<i>Dry Fork Area 1</i>	2,038	2015
<i>McGlendon</i>	1,397	2015

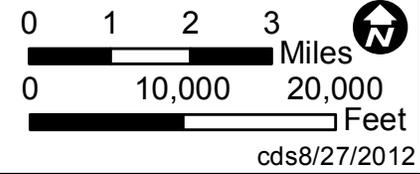
Please contact our office for more information on the burn units.



Ozark-St. Francis National Forests

Boston Mountain Ranger District White Rock Rx Burn Project

- Highway
- Road
- USFS Land
- District Boundary
- White Rock Rx Burn Area



The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy 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: Boston Mtn Ranger District, 1803 N 18th St, Ozark, AR 72949, (479) 667-2191

