



File Code: 1950

Date: May 31, 2013

Dear Interested Public:

A high wind event on April 11, 2013 blew down several trees and damaged others on approximately 62 National Forest Service acres managed by the Sylamore Ranger District. The affected area occurs within compartment 89 southeast of the Optimus community and approximately 3 miles east of Highway 5 north on Stone County Road 1181. It is accessible via Forest Service Roads 91089A, 91089B, 91089G, and 91089H as shown on the attached map.

Much of the damaged timber is Shortleaf pine and of merchantable size. We are proposing the *Optimus Salvage Project* to remove it through a commercial salvage sale before it is affected by blue stain fungus. Blue stain does not affect the wood's integrity, but does affect the price a logger could get at the mill. We may need to remove a few green trees to facilitate construction of approximately ¼ mile of temporary road as well as skid trails and log landings; these installations would be disked, seeded and blocked following the salvage operation. The area may also be made available for firewood removal.

The proposed action is consistent with the requirements of the Revised Ozark-St. Francis National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and would be conducted in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations in place to protect the human and natural environments. If approved, it would be implemented this calendar year.

Alternatives currently being considered for this project are 1) the no-action alternative in which none of the damaged material would be removed, and 2) the proposed action alternative as described in this letter.

At this time, it is anticipated that this project will be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement under Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30 Section 32.2 (13): *Salvage of dead or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental tree removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.* [36 CFR 220.6(e)(13)]

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.5, I am requesting comments on this proposal. The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of a legal notice in the newspaper of record, *The Stone County Leader*, Mountain View, AR. The tentative legal notice publication date is June 5, 2013.

Only those persons, non-Federal organizations or entities that comment or otherwise express interest during the formal 30-day comment period will be eligible to appeal the subsequent decision on this project. In order to secure appeal eligibility, each individual or representative



must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. All comments received, including those submitted anonymously will be considered; however, only those who submit a comment and provide a mailing address will be notified when the Decision for this project is signed. Please note that comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection.

Written comments can be submitted to our mailing address, sent via e-mail, facsimile, delivered to our office or presented in person at our office. Include your name, mailing address, telephone number, and the title of the project on which comment is being submitted (*Optimus Salvage Project*). Send comments regarding the proposed action to me, District Ranger James R. McCoy at the Sylamore-St. Francis Ranger District, OSFNF, 1001 East Main, Mountain View, AR 72560. Our phone and facsimile numbers are: [phone] (870) 269-3228; [FAX] (870) 269-3000. Hand-delivered comments will be accepted at the District Office during normal business hours of 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. E-mail comments should be submitted in a common digital format at comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-sylamore@fs.fed.us

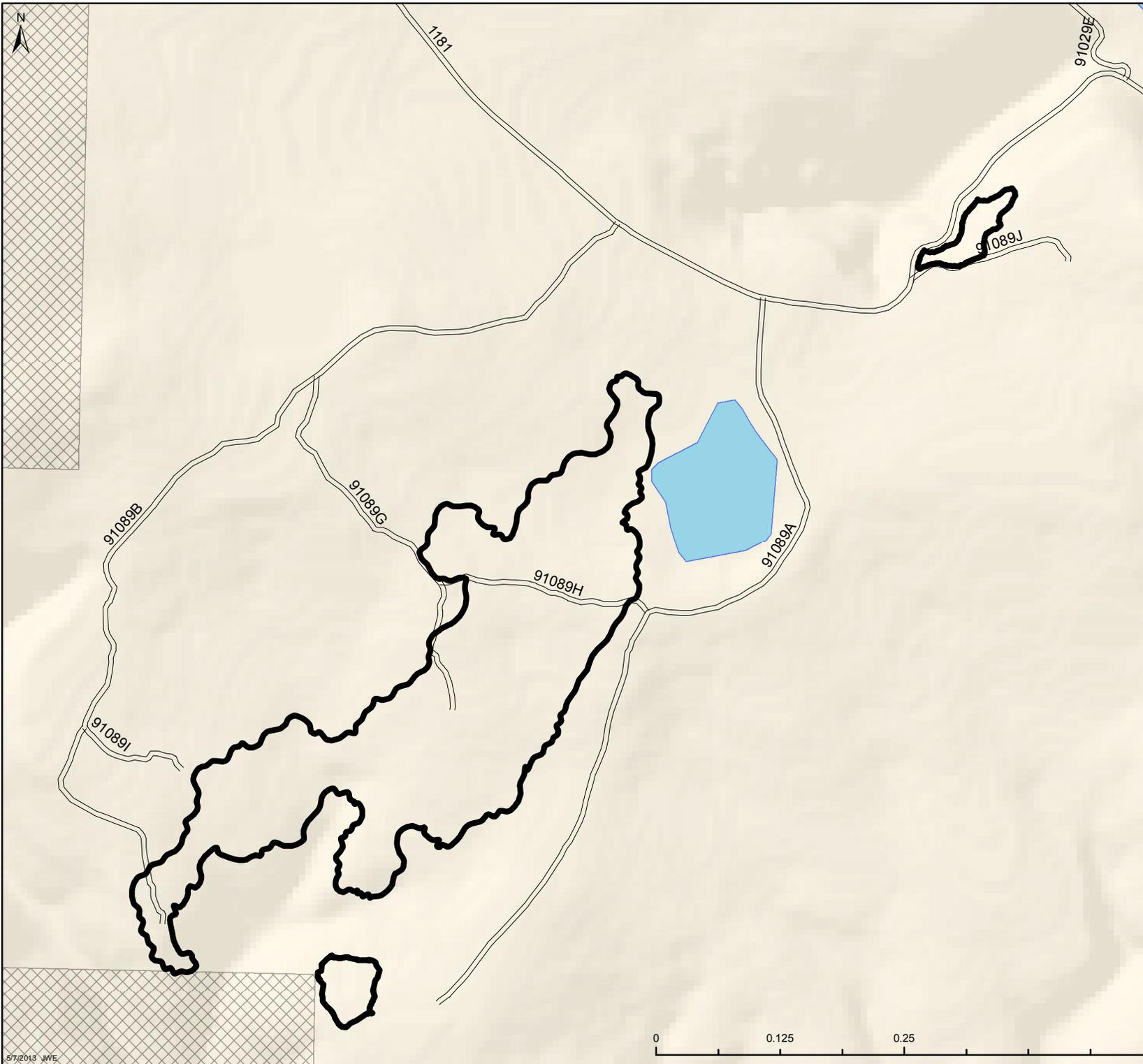
If you have questions regarding this proposed action please contact me or Timber Management Assistant Ed Spence at (870) 269-3228. Thank you for your time and your interest in the management of the Sylamore Ranger District.

Sincerely,

/s/ **James R. McCoy**

JAMES R. McCOY
District Ranger

jlf
Attachment (1 map)



Optimus Salvage Project Area

Ozark-St. Francis National Forests
 Sylamore Ranger District
 Stone County, Arkansas

-  FS Roads
-  Project Area
-  Private
-  Pond

Legal Description

T16N-R10W, Sec. 7,8,18

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