



**DECISION MEMO**  
**Optimus Salvage Project**  
**Region 8, Forest Service**  
**United States Department of Agriculture**  
**Sylamore Ranger District, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests**  
**T16N-R10W, Sec. 7, 8, 18**  
**Stone County, Arkansas**

**Background**

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. The District has proposed 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.

**Decision**

I have determined the proposal falls within the following category listed in regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 220.6 that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

FSH 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)]

Consideration of the resource conditions listed below is documented in the project planning record. No extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the aforementioned CE were identified.

- *Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat or Forest Service sensitive species*
- *Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds*
- *Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas or national recreation areas*
- *Inventoried Roadless Areas*
- *Research Natural Areas*
- *Native American religious or cultural sites*
- *Archaeological sites, historic properties or areas*

### **Public Involvement**

To comply with the requirements of NEPA and to help identify pertinent issues and management concerns, public involvement was sought. The formal comment period for this proposal coincided with public scoping (see 36 CFR 215.5 and 215.6).

A scoping letter dated May 31, 2013 was mailed to 40 individuals, organizations, agencies and local government officials who are notified when any project involving harvest and associated activities are proposed. Letters were mailed to 48 individuals representing 21 Native American Tribes or Nations, and a letter was also posted on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests' website at that time. The letters described the proposal, invited those interested in or affected by this proposal to make their concerns known and included a map illustrating the proposed salvage harvest units. Information regarding submittal of a comment under 36 CFR 215 appeal regulations was provided in both the scoping-concurrent 30 day comment period letter and in the legal notice initiating the formal 30 day comment period which was published in the newspaper of record, *The Stone County Leader*, Mountain View, AR on June 5, 2013. Only one supportive comment was received from the public during the 30 day comment period.

### **Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations**

No issues or extraordinary circumstances related to this action that might preclude the use of the categorical exclusion at FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, § 32.2 (13) were identified.

This action does not violate or threaten to violate any applicable federal or state laws or regulations, and it is consistent with the standards and guidelines of the Revised Ozark-St. Francis National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act.

### **Appeal Opportunities**

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12 because no comments expressing concerns or only supportive comments were received during the formal 30 day comment period for this project.

## **Implementation**

Implementation may begin 5 days after publication of the legal notice of this decision in the newspaper of record [36 CFR 215.9(c)].

## **Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this decision contact Ed Spence, Sylamore and St. Francis Ranger Districts, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests at 1001 E. Main St., Mountain View, AR 72560, (870) 269-3228.

/s/ ***James R. McCoy***

July 8, 2013

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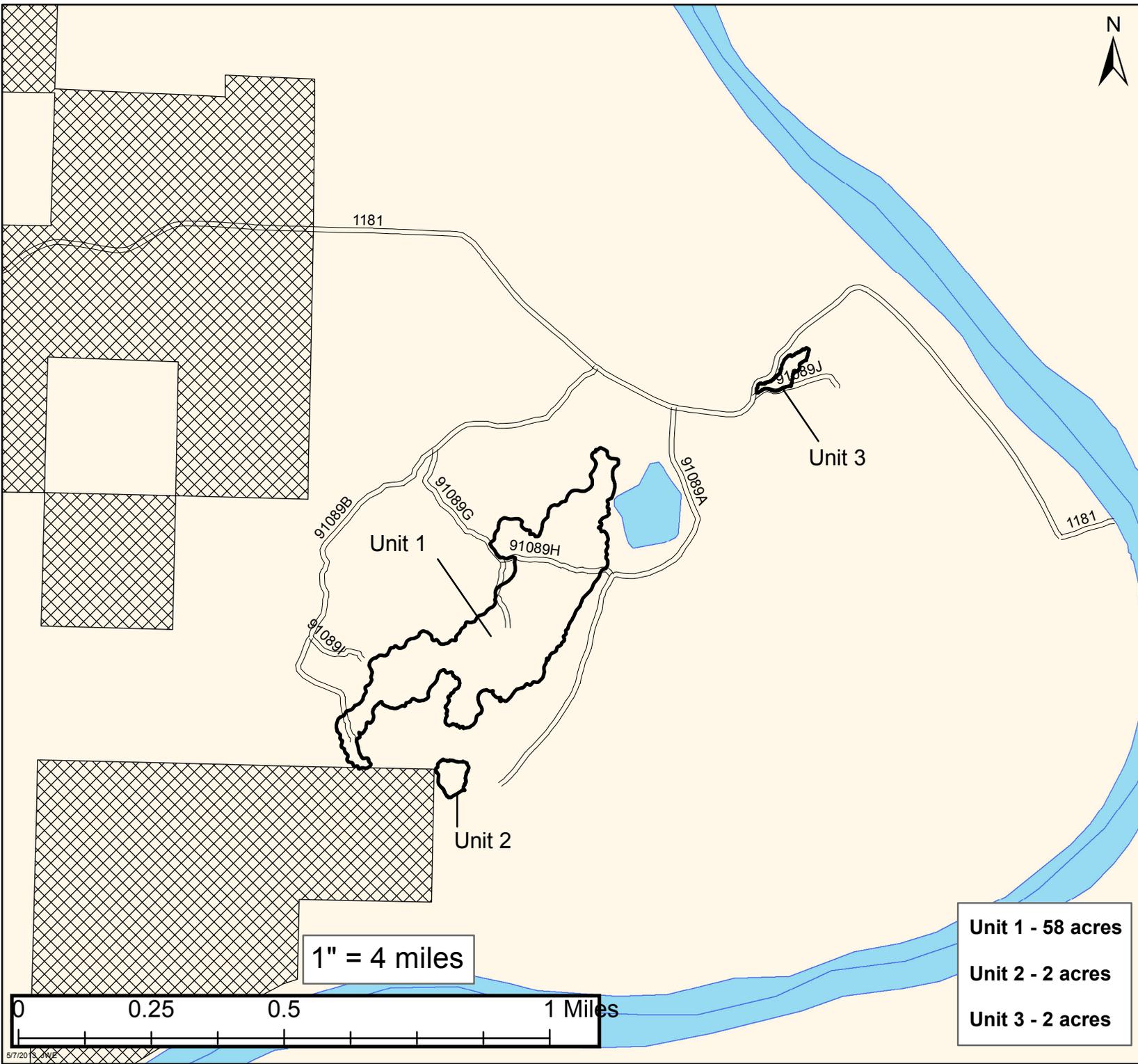
JAMES R. McCOY  
District Ranger  
Sylamore and St. Francis Ranger Districts  
Ozark-St. Francis National Forests

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Date

attachment (1) map

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# Optimus Salvage Project Area

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

-  Roads
-  Harvest Units
-  Private
-  Pond

## Legal Description

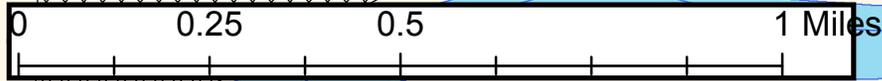
T16N-R10W, Sec. 7,8,18

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1" = 4 miles



**Unit 1 - 58 acres**  
**Unit 2 - 2 acres**  
**Unit 3 - 2 acres**