



Date: August 15, 2013

Dear Friend of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest:

The Big Piney Ranger District of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests is proposing management activities within the Three Knob Project area to improve vegetation diversity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, road access and protect heritage resources. The area is comprised of 18,748 acres of Forest Service lands in eastern Johnson and northwest Pope Counties. Maps showing the project boundaries and approximate locations of the proposed activities are enclosed.

Improvement of vegetation and wildlife habitat

- 4,418 acres of improvement thinning
- 2,636 acres of non-commercial stand improvement
- 2,834 acres of regeneration treatments to improve habitat diversity
- 500 acres of salvage improvement thinning
- Habitat improvement through prescribed burning on 1,771 acres.
- Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) control on 500 acres annually.
- Improvement of habitat diversity by constructing new openings, enlarging existing openings, and treating around openings, for a total of 75 acres of openings and 150 acres of transition areas
- 6 acres of glade restoration
- Construction of 37 and maintenance of 34 existing wildlife ponds
- 31 acres of cane restoration.
- Improvement of stream conditions through large woody debris placement
- Commercial surface rock collection

Improvement of recreational opportunities and road access

- Six miles of off highway vehicle (OHV) routes removed from designated routes list
- Designate a canoe launch at "Phillips Ford" on Big Piney Creek
- 107 miles road maintenance
- 1 mile road reconstruction
- 27 miles road maintenance and then closure
- 1 mile road closure
- 7 miles road decommission
- 4 miles convert road to OHV trail
- Stabilization and protection of a Heritage Site

Natural gas exploration and development is planned on National Forest lands containing federal mineral holdings, in response to possible requests for mineral investigation and potential extraction. This would be done in a timely, environmentally responsible manner to meet the President's Energy Initiative. Additional biological evaluations (BE), Heritage surveys and site specific analysis would be conducted on these sites.

Heritage resources and biological surveys have or would be completed and concurrence obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Native American Tribes and the US Fish and Wildlife Service before any proposed activities would be implemented.

In order to identify issues resulting from this proposal and better assess its effects, I would appreciate your site/project specific responses and/or concerns sent to:

Timothy E. Jones, District Ranger, 12,000 SR 27, Hector, AR 72843. Verbal or hand delivered written comments must be made during regular business hours or 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday-Friday. Responses may be mailed electronically to our office, in a common digital format, at comments- southern-ozark-stfrancis-bayou@fs.fed.us. In order to proceed in a timely manner, your responses need to be postmarked or received within 30 days of publication of the legal notice for this project in Russellville AR's newspaper *The Courier*.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Mike Mulford at the Big Piney District Office in Jasper, AR by phone at 870-446-5122 ext. 5136 or by email at mmulford@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,



TIMOTHY E. JONES
District Ranger