



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chattahoochee-Oconee
National Forests
Armuchee/Cohutta
Ranger District

3941 Highway 76
Chatsworth, GA 30705
(706) 695-6737

File Code: 1920-2-5

Date: May 23, 2005

Dear Forest User:

The Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District is proposing a vegetation management project on the Cohutta Unit and the installation of a weather station on the Armuchee Unit. The vegetation management project is located in the Holly Creek Watershed and is proposed to meet the resource objectives set forth in the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chattahoochee National Forest. The proposed weather station would result from relocating the existing station now residing on private land.

The opportunities for vegetation management include reducing stand density in pine and hardwood stands, reducing hardwood midstory in shortleaf pine stands, and creating canopy gaps in mid/late successional mesic-deciduous stands. A preliminary analysis of this watershed, which totals 11,874 acres of Forest Service land, indicated that a maximum of 1400 acres of these vegetative management opportunities exist. Additionally, there are opportunities to restore stands killed by the Southern Pine Beetle, to restore the shortleaf pine ecosystem, to restore open woodlands on mesic and xeric sites and to restore oak and oak-pine ecosystems. The preliminary analysis showed that there are an additional 200 acres available for this part of the proposal. Actions needed to restore these ecosystems include removing undesirable existing vegetation, site preparation for new regeneration, vegetative release through mechanical or chemical actions and prescribed burning. No additional permanent road construction would be needed for these actions. In stands that would be harvested by timber sale, sections of new temporary roads less than one-half mile in length and logging decks of approximately one-half acre in size could be constructed. There is also one other type of vegetation management possibility that will be studied in this proposal. We would like to establish approximately 5 acres of a canebrake ecosystem on Milma Creek. This action would require locating existing canebrake or planting canebrake on a site along Milma Creek, removing overstory trees and setting a prescribed burning cycle for the site. The enclosed map for this project displays the boundary where this project would take place. The specific stands and acreage amounts are to be determined as additional analysis is completed.

The second project on the Armuchee Unit proposes the installation of a weather station. The existing weather station on the Armuchee Unit is plagued by many problems due to its location. The proposed site, just north of Maddox Gap on Taylor's Ridge, is 1.5 acres in size. The proposed site is in a pine stand that has been killed by Southern Pine Beetles. A dozer would be used to clear an area around the weather station which would be maintained with a grass cover. No road construction is needed to construct the weather station. The facilities would be enclosed with a fence. A second enclosed map shows the proposed location along Forest Service Road #250A.

We are interested in your comments about these proposals and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us by June 22, 2005 at the Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District office, or by email to mwmurphy@fs.fed.us. Thank you for your interest in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL W. MURPHY
Acting District Ranger

