

LEGAL NOTICE

REQUEST FOR SCOPING COMMENTS
ANALYSIS UNIT 38 PROJECT
HOMOCHITTO RANGER DISTRICT
FRANKLIN COUNTY
MISSISSIPPI

The Homochitto National Forest is proposing vegetative management and associated activities to improve forest health and maintain or improve wildlife habitat in Analysis Unit 38. This proposal includes the removal of timber by timber sales and regeneration by natural and artificial methods. **All management activities will take place on Forest Service lands.**

Analysis Unit 38 encompasses 3,934 acres of National Forest land and, specifically, sections 7, 18, and 19 of T5N, R2E and sections 1, 2, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 34, and 35 of T5N, R1E. It is located in Franklin County, Mississippi, approximately 11 miles southwest of Meadville, Mississippi. Analysis Unit 38 also lies within the habitat management area of the red-cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species. Proposed management activities place particular emphasis upon protecting and improving existing habitat, while replacing sufficient declining forests to sustain this species in the future.

We are preparing an environmental assessment to evaluate the impacts of this proposed action. As part of this effort, we must provide information about this project and ask the public to assist us in the analysis by sharing any special knowledge, interests, or concerns related to the activities or the project area. The following actions are proposed:

- Seed-tree regeneration: Harvest approximately 20 acres by the irregular seed-tree regeneration method. This site is outside the area where regularly scheduled prescribed burns are anticipated and is suitable for shortleaf and loblolly pines.
- Pine-hardwood regeneration: Harvest approximately 97 acres by the clearcut with reserves regeneration method. These areas are also outside the prescribed burning boundary and will be planted in widely spaced loblolly pines in order to maintain and increase pine and hardwood species on these sites.
- Mixed-pine regeneration: Harvest approximately 138 acres by the clearcut with reserves regeneration method. These areas lie within the prescribed burning boundary and will be planted in longleaf in order to restore this historic species to these sites.
- Intermediate thinning: Thin approximately 425 acres of mixed pine and mixed pine-hardwood sawtimber. This treatment will reduce the threat of southern pine beetle infestations, remove mature timber, and allow more space for the younger trees within the stand to grow.
- Initial first thinning: Thin approximately 424 acres of mixed pine pulpwood for the first time. These areas are pine plantations that were regenerated within the last 25 years. The objective will be to thin the pines in order to maintain growth and stand vigor.
- Midstory removal: Apply the removal of midstory to approximately 353 acres of mixed pine and hardwood-pine located within the red-cockaded woodpecker's habitat management area. This treatment removes understory pines, hardwoods, and shrubs in

order to open the forest floor to sunlight and allow for the development of an open pine, grassy understory condition.

- Site preparation: Release seedlings in approximately 255 acres of regeneration areas using a combination of herbicides, prescribed fire, chainsaws, and/or handtools. These will be applied in the 20-acre seed-tree regeneration area before seed fall.
- Prescribed burning: Burn approximately 2,200 acres on an approximately three-year cycle in order to improve wildlife habitat and forest health.
- Acres for this analysis area are estimated by computer mapping methods and are only approximate.

This initial scoping period will end on November 23, 2000, or 30 days after the publication of this legal notice in the Clarion-Ledger, our paper of record. Comments should be submitted in writing to: Gary Bennett, District Ranger, Homochitto Ranger District, Homochitto National Forest, Rt. 1, Box 1, Meadville, MS 39653. Or you can call Charlie Price, District Planning Team Leader, at (601) 384-5876.