

Legal Notice – Request for Comments
Homochitto National Forest
Amite, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilkinson, Adams, and Franklin Counties, MS
Prescribed Burning Proposals FY04-FY05

The Homochitto Ranger District is proposing to prescribe burn approximately 84,286 acres for wildlife habitat improvement and fuels management during fiscal years 2004 and 2005. Typically, burning begins in December and is carried out on suitable days through July. We are in the process of scoping (gathering initial information and comments) related to burning on the Homochitto Ranger District. Total acres proposed for each year and season are as follows: FY04 growing season = 12,112 acres; FY04 dormant season = 27,034 acres; FY05 growing season = 12,355 acres; FY05 dormant season = 23,719 acres; FY05 either season = 9,062 acres. Conditions may result in particular blocks being burned in a different season or a different year than initially planned.

The project proposal and distribution maps showing the locations of the proposed burn areas and their relationship to private lands and major roads are available at the Homochitto Ranger District office in Meadville. Private land within the proposed burning areas will not be burned. The long-term goal of the prescribed burning program is to burn each area on an approximately 3-year rotation. In some cases, however, two or three burns spaced 18-30 months apart are necessary to control less-desirable vegetation and re-initiate the pyrotypic communities desired. In addition, although many of the areas are closely located, they are likely to be burned on different days distributed across the burning seasons.

Prescribed burning projects are considered routine treatments that maintain the natural relationships and habitat within the forest. Each prescribed burn is planned and overseen by a State certified prescribed burner, and is conducted under a burning permit only when weather and environmental conditions are such that burning objectives can be reached with little effect on air quality and other resources. Such projects are typically categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment if the initial analysis indicates that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would result in adverse effects to critical resources.

We want to use the best information available and consider all comments and concerns when making a decision. Therefore, if you wish to comment or need additional information, I ask that you write District Ranger Gary Bennett, 1200 Hwy 184 East, Meadville, MS 39653, or contact Charles Price or Jay Pittman by phone at (601) 384-5876. Please have your comments to us by October 31, 2003.