

**NATIONAL FORESTS IN MISSISSIPPI LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT NUMBER 9**

**DECISION NOTICE
SUPPLEMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Pertaining to changes in the timber sale
in stand 07

Compartment 269
Strong River Ranger District
Bienville National Forest
Smith County, Mississippi

The Environmental Assessment for the compartment prescription in Compartment 269 was approved by the District Ranger on June 26, 1990. A recent examination of stand 07 (39 acres) by District personnel identified stand 07 as a potential candidate for an Uneven-aged Management Demonstration Area.

SUPPLEMENT

The current stand condition and location are well suited for a demonstration project to give a more accurate picture of uneven-aged management on a pine stand. Stand number 07 is presently an even-aged stand of loblolly pine sawtimber and contains a shortleaf pine component and a hardwood component. Transition from an even-aged to an uneven-aged silvicultural system for this stand will require several entries over time to bring the stand to a regulated condition based on diameter class distribution. The stand was recently acquired and in poor condition; poorly formed and diseased trees are common. The stocking and diameter class distribution are irregular. This stand was a high priority for regeneration but could not be regenerated this entry without violating Land and Resource Management Plan even-aged management standards and guidelines. The stand will receive a rough reduction burn to remove logging slash and herbicide treatments to control hardwood competition after the initial cut. Other alternatives considered included: a) the no action alternative, which would result in no regeneration activity for this stand during this entry cycle; b) the no herbicide alternative, would result in increased hardwood competition for the pine component making regeneration of the pine species difficult.

DECISION NOTICE

I have made an administrative decision to designate stand 07 of Compartment 269 as a demonstration project for an uneven-aged silvicultural system and implement Amendment Number 1 of Compartment Prescription 269 to begin to balance the diameter class distribution leading to an uneven-aged stand. This stand was chosen due to the current stand condition and location. The stand is easily accessible and ideally located to serve as a demonstration area for this type timber management.

In reviewing the proposed action for stand 07 and the alternatives considered in the original environmental assessment, the proposed initial cut in stand 07, to begin transition to an uneven-aged stand, has no effect on the other alternatives considered, including the no action alternative, nor does the change cause the potential environmental effects of the other alternatives considered to differ.

The Forest Land and Resource Management Plan specifies that the even-aged management system will be used for all working groups (page 4-115). To make the proposed actions for stand 07 in Compartment 269 consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi I have decided to amend (Amendment Number 9) the plan to allow application of an uneven-aged management system to implement this demonstration project on 39 acres in Compartment 269.

This amendment is not a significant change in the National Forests in Mississippi Land and Resource Management Plan; nor does it alter the multiple use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management. The amendment applies only to the management of stand 07 in Compartment 269 on the Strong River Ranger District, Bienville National Forest. The amendment allows the proposed actions for stand 07 to be consistent with the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

This Decision Notice will serve as the NEPA decision document for Supplement to the Environmental Assessment for implementation of Compartment 269 prescription activities in stand 07 and notification for Amendment Number 9 to the Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi.

FINDINGS

This action is consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi (Amendment Number 9).

From the results of the site specific analysis documented in the EA and this Supplement, I conclude that:

1. The cutting system to be used is appropriate to meet the objectives and requirements of the Land and Resource Management Plan (Amendment Number 9).
2. All manipulation of vegetation will comply with the requirements in 36 CFR 219.27(b).
3. No timber will be sold from lands not suited for timber production (see 36 CFR 219.14 for definition).
4. No activity is proposed in a roadless area.
5. No cultural resources are adversely affected.
6. Impacts on flood plains have been reduced to a minimum through use of the standards and guidelines in the Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi and Clean Water Act (33 CFR Part 330). For water quality management, State-approved Best Management Practices will be used for this project. These BMP's are from the State Nonpoint Source Pollution Management program document, and have been designed with the goal of producing water that meets state water quality standards. The project will be monitored to ensure BMP's are implemented. If implementing BMP's on a specific

site results in effects significantly higher than anticipated, because of unforeseen site factors or events, appropriate corrective measures will be considered and implemented. This project will fully comply with State approved BMP's and the Clean Water Act.

7. I have determined that this is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the following factors:

There are no known effects to human health and safety, critical habitat for proposed endangered, threatened or sensitive species, or cultural and historic values.

The physical and biological effects are limited to this immediate geographic area which has no special uniqueness such as park lands, and the action does not set a precedent for other projects that may have significant impacts.

There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks and based on scoping, the effects of this action are not likely to be controversial.

There are no known significant irretrievable or irreversible commitments of resources, and the action does not threaten violation of federal, state or local law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Implementation of this decision may occur no sooner than 7 days from day after legal notice of this decision is published.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Any written notice of appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9, "Content of Notice of Appeal", including the reasons for appeal. It must be filed, in duplicate, with: Regional Forester, Southern Region, 1720 Peachtree Road NW, Atlanta, GA 30367-9102, no later than 45 days, beginning the day after the legal notice of this decision is published.

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Bruce Macko, National Forests in Mississippi, 100 W. Capitol St., Jackson, MS 39269 or telephone number 601-965-4391.

/s/Kenneth R. Johnson
KENNETH R. JOHNSON
Forest Supervisor

DATE August 5, 1991