



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

National Forests and Grasslands  
in Texas  
Supervisors Office

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Dear Reader:

On November 8, 2002, we sent you a letter that briefly described a new process the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas will use to develop vegetation management proposals. We sent out the notice to give interested individuals and organizations as much time as possible to become familiar with the watersheds we plan to examine. The first two areas mentioned were on the Sabine and Sam Houston National Forests (NFs). Recently, another project has been identified in Texas that arose in response to the President's Healthy Forests Initiative.

In August 2002 President Bush announced the Healthy Forests Initiative and directed Agriculture Secretary Veneman, Interior Secretary Norton and Council on Environmental Quality Chairman Connaughton to improve regulatory processes to ensure more timely decisions, greater efficiency, and better results in reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires by restoring forest health. The actions planned in the initiative include:

- ? Improving procedures for developing and implementing fuels treatment and forest restoration projects in priority forests and rangelands, in collaboration with local governments.
- ? Reducing the number of overlapping environmental reviews by combining project analysis and establishing a process for concurrent project clearance by federal agencies.
- ? Developing guidance for weighing the short-term risks against the long-term benefits of fuels treatment and restoration projects.
- ? Developing guidance to ensure consistent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures for fuels treatment activities and restoration activities, including development of a model Environmental Assessment (EA) for these types of projects.

The Forest Service national headquarters website at [www.fs.fed.us/](http://www.fs.fed.us/) provides more detailed information on the Healthy Forests Initiative.

In response to the need to develop consistent NEPA procedures and develop a model EA for fuels treatment and restoration activities, in December the administration identified several pilot projects across the nation. One of these projects is the Four Notch/Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forest Initiative Pilot Project on the Sam Houston NF.



The Four Notch/Boswell Creek Watershed Project will include assessment of the fuels conditions and the need to reduce fuels on the portions of the Sam Houston NF in the Boswell Creek watershed in Walker County. The Boswell Creek watershed encompasses about 15,000 acres, approximately 8,500 acres of which are national forest land. We want you to have as much time as possible to look at the project areas that interest you and identify your concerns early in the process. We are still gathering information and do not expect to send out a proposed action for public comment until mid-March.

I have included a map showing the location of the Boswell Creek watershed and the national forest land in the watershed.

If you have questions about this process, please contact Keith Baker at (936) 344-6205, extension 231.

Sincerely,

/s/Glenn Donnahoe  
GLENN DONNAHOE  
Acting Forest Supervisor