

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS
USDA Forest Service
Sam Houston National Forest
Sam Houston Ranger District
Walker and San Jacinto Counties, Texas
Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forests Initiative Project

The Environmental Assessment (EA) and proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forests Initiative Project have been completed and are available for review on our website at http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/texas/healthy_for_ini/hfi_page.html, or at the Sam Houston Ranger District Office. You are invited to comment on the proposed action before a final decision is made. The Proposed Action would implement thinning and fuel reduction treatments on about 7,465 acres of upland pine forests within and adjacent to the Boswell Creek Watershed to reduce the future risk of large destructive wildfires, reduce the potential for damage to property and natural resources, improve firefighter and public safety, reduce southern pine beetle hazard, improve red-cockaded woodpecker habitat, and improve forest health.

This is one of the Forest Service demonstration projects under the President's Healthy Forests Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities as shown at <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/HFI.shtml>. This initiative calls for administrative improvements to ensure more timely decisions, greater efficiency, and better results in projects that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and restore forest health.

This EA looks quite different from the traditional Forest Service approach and includes a proposed FONSI. The effects analysis in the EA is focused on the information that is most important for determining whether or not there may be significant impacts from this proposed action. The Responsible Official will consider the complete analysis contained in the Project Planning Record, as well as comments received on this EA and proposed FONSI, in reaching a final decision. Supporting specialist reports are available on our website at the address shown above or at the Sam Houston Ranger District Office.

This EA is subject to the revised comment procedures at 36 CFR 215.5, dated June 4, 2003 (http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfrhtml_00/Title_36/36cfr215_00.html). The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of this legal notice in the Conroe Courier. Comments may be submitted to District Ranger Timothy R. Bigler, 394 FM 1375 W, New Waverly, TX 77358, (936) 344-6205. Comments may be submitted by FAX (936-344-2123) or by hand-delivery to the address shown above during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm). Electronic comments, in acceptable formats (plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf) or Word (.doc)), may be submitted to comments-southern-texas-samhouston@fs.fed.us with **Subject: Boswell Creek Watershed Project**. Names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action, and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who only submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215.

Only those who submit timely and substantive comments will have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215. Each individual or representative from each organization submitting substantive comments must either sign the comments or verify their identity upon request.

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