



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

National Forests and Grasslands
in Texas

Sam Houston NF
394 FM 1375 West
New Waverly, Texas 77358
Phone 936-344-6205

File Code: 1950-1

Date: September 9, 2003

Dear Reader:

We have completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forests Initiative Project (BCWP). You are invited to comment on the proposed action to reduce hazardous fuels and southern pine beetle hazard on approximately 7,465 acres of upland pine forest by prescribed burning and thinning before the final decision. The EA and the associated specialist reports are available online at http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/texas/healthy_for_ini/hfi_page.html. If you need a hard copy of the EA, please contact Lue Nell Miller at (936) 639-8635.

This is one of the Forest Service's demonstration projects for the President's Healthy Forests Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities as shown at <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/hfieaguide/projects/index.html>. 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.

The EA looks quite different from the traditional Forest Service approach and includes the FONSI. The effects analysis in the EA is focused on supporting the determination that there will be no significant impacts from this proposed action, which meets the requirements of our laws and regulations.¹ Other components of the analysis will be considered in reaching the decision. Some of the information is available in the project record and specialist reports are available on our website. In the past, we have included this information in the EA.

Based on the analysis completed so far and your comments, the EA and the following will be considered in reaching a decision:

- Public health and safety related to wildland fire;
- Reducing the acreage of hazardous fuels;
- Reducing southern pine beetle hazard; and
- Beneficial and adverse impacts to wildlife, including the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and management indicator species.

In accordance with 36 CFR 215.6(a)(3), individuals or organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must comment during this 30-day comment period and provide the following information:

¹ For information on the core elements of the EA process, see the President's Council On Environmental Quality memo under the Healthy Forest Initiative:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/guidanceforenvironmental_assessmentsofforest_healthprojects_memo.pdf



- 1) Your name and address.
- 2) Title of the Proposed Action.
- 3) Specific substantive comments (215.2) on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision.
- 4) Your signature or other means of identification verification. For organizations, a signature or other means of identification verification must be provided for the individual authorized to represent your organization.

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. Comments must be postmarked or received within 30 days beginning the day after publication of the legal notice in the Conroe Courier. Oral or hand-delivered comments must be received within our normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Comments may be mailed electronically to our office in these acceptable formats: plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-southern-texas-samhouston@fs.fed.us with **Subject: Boswell Creek Watershed Project**.

The Responsible Official will consider the complete analysis contained in the Project Planning Record at the Sam Houston Ranger District Office, as well as comments received on this EA and proposed FONSI, in reaching a final decision. Please contact Keith Baker at (936) 344-6205 ext. 252 if you have questions about the EA.

We appreciate your interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

/s/ Timothy R. Bigler
TIMOTHY R. BIGLER
District Ranger