



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

National Forests and Grasslands
in Texas
Supervisors Office

701 N. First Street
Lufkin, TX 75901
Phone 936-639-8501
TDD# 936-639-8560

File Code: 1950

Date: December 12, 2003

Dear Reader:

On December 9, 2003, District Ranger Timothy R. Bigler signed a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) approving the Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forest Initiative Project. This project provides for fuel reduction treatments and thinning on about 7,420 acres of upland pine forests within and adjacent to the Boswell Creek Watershed. The purpose and need for this project is 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. Copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA), Decision Notice, FONSI, Maps, Supporting Documents and Specialist Reports for the Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forests Initiative Project are available on our website at:

http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/texas/healthy_for_ini/index.shtml. Paper copies or electronic copies of these documents (on CD) are available by request from the Sam Houston Ranger District Office (936-344-6205, ext 252 – Keith Baker) or from the Forest Supervisors Office (936-639-8635 – Lue Nell Miller).

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 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 All components of the analysis were considered in reaching the final decision, including the comments received during the 30-day comment period. All of the information is available as described above. In the past, we have included this information in the EA.

Based on the completed analysis and comments received, the District Ranger considered the following in reaching his decision:

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



- 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.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. Individuals or organizations that submitted substantive comments during the comment period may appeal. Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14 (see <http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/appeals/> Final Rule).

Written appeals, including attachments, shall be sent to: National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, ATTN: Appeals Deciding Officer, 701 North First Street; Lufkin, Texas, 75901, within 45 days of the date of the legal notice in the Conroe Courier. Appeals may be faxed to (936) 639-8588. Hand-delivered appeals must be received within normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays). Appeals may be mailed electronically to appeals-southern-texas@fs.fed.us. Email appeals must be submitted in Word (.doc), rich text (.rft) or plain text (.txt) formats with **Subject: Boswell Creek Watershed Healthy Forests Initiative Project**. The publication date of the legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 business days following the date of appeal disposition.

Names and addresses of those who appeal will be considered a part of the public record on this decision, and will be available for public inspection. Appeals submitted anonymously will not be accepted and will have no standing.

Please contact Keith Baker at (936) 344-6205 ext. 252 if you have questions about any of the above.

We appreciate your interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

/s/Gay Ippolito (for)
FRED S. SALINAS
Forest Supervisor