

DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Woods Ferry Trailhead Parking Project

USDA Forest Service-Region 8
Sumter National Forest
Enoree Ranger District
Chester County, South Carolina

The Enoree Ranger District, Sumter National Forest has decided to construct a trailhead parking area for the Woods Ferry Horse Trail and build a connector trail.

Decision

I have decided to implement Alternative 2. This alternative with design criteria and monitoring best meets the Purpose and Need as stated in the *Trailhead Construction Project for the Woods Ferry Trail Environmental Assessment (EA)*.

This decision will construct a trailhead parking area for the Woods Ferry Horse Trail that will accommodate large trucks and horse trailers that equestrian rider's use. The project will be implemented as described below.

The project will disturb approximately five acres. This will include constructing a new trailhead parking lot¹ and a connector trail, tying the trailhead to the existing trail system. (See maps).

The project will clear forestland for gravel parking which will have approximately 20 pull-through parking spots and the following items:

- Site entrance sign on FS Road 305, Bucks Grave Road.
- Information Board
- Native pollinator seed mix will be planted in all disturbed areas adjacent to the parking area.
- Installation of donation tube, which will become a fee site if and when approved by regional fee board.
- Decommission existing trailhead location and associated trail 340A that leads to it on the north side of Turkey Creek. Trail section of 340A south of Turkey Creek would be kept to provide water access for equestrian trail users.

¹The size of the parking lot may vary depending on final design appropriate for anticipated use. However, the parking lot may be enlarged in the future to accommodate future increases in use.

Decision Notice and FONSI-Woods Ferry Trailhead Parking Project

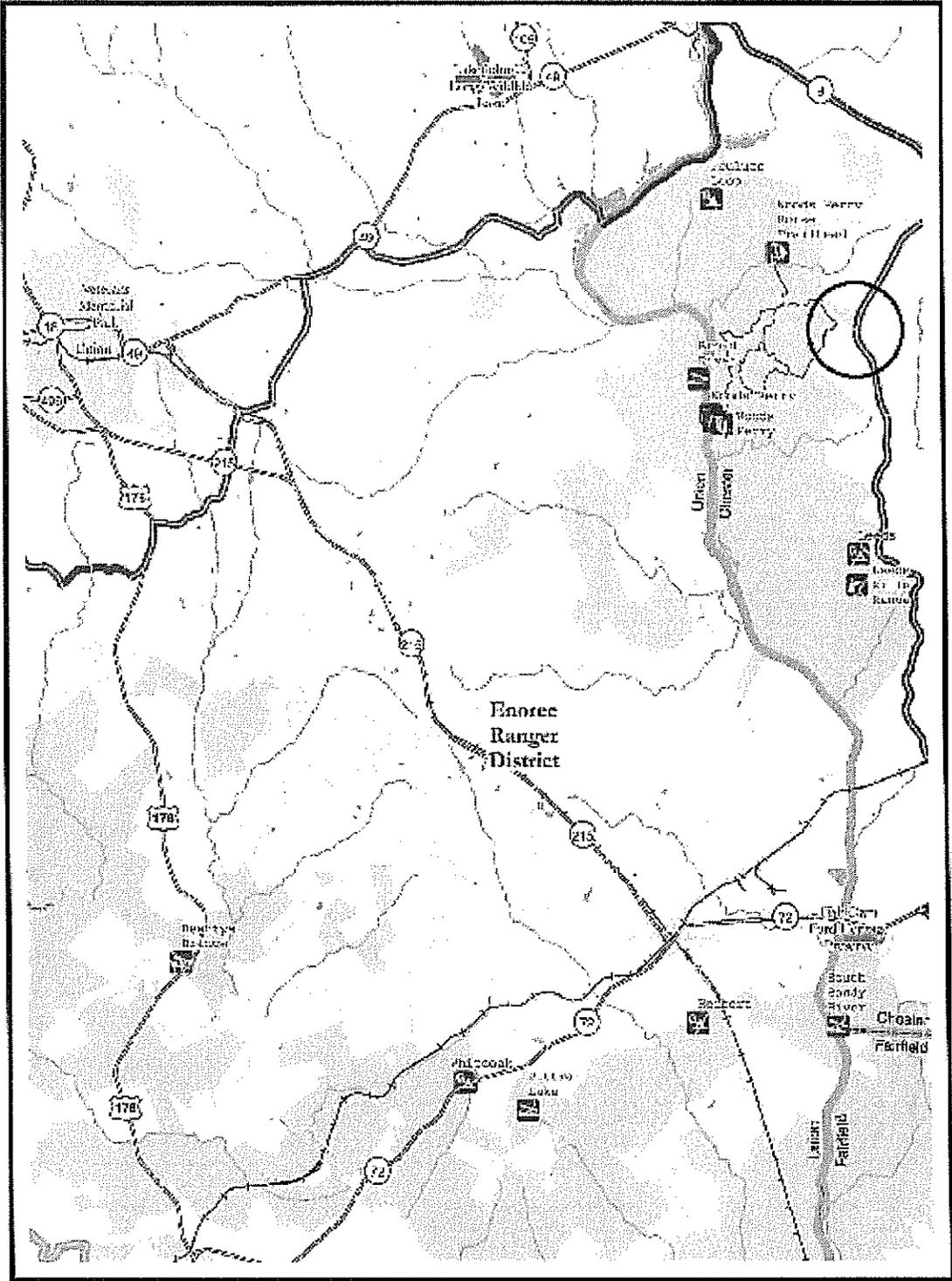
- The project also includes the construction of a connector trail, approximately half a mile long and following Forest Service standards for a Trail Class 3, equestrian, non-wilderness, trail.

The trailhead parking area will be constructed utilizing mechanized equipment to remove tree stumps and root balls and to level and grade the parking area. The parking area will be graveled and pull-through parking spaces will be designated. The trail will be constructed using mechanized equipment. All directional signs, kiosks and trail will be constructed and installed according to US Forest Service standards.

This project also includes the regular maintenance of the trail, parking area, signs, etc. Maintenance activities may include but will not be limited to; trail tread grading, trail corridor clearing and drainage reconstruction work when needed, occasional grading of parking lot and weed removal. Herbicide will be used to help control all vegetation within the graveled parking area and eliminate the need to mow the area. Mowing a graveled parking area presents a liability issue and safety hazard with rocks ricocheting off parked vehicles and horses.

Glyphosate (Accord Concentrate or equivalent) herbicide will be applied by either backpack sprayers or with a tractor sprayer. The parking area will be sprayed 2 to 3 times a year. If application is by backpack sprayer, glyphosate herbicide would be mixed at a 2% rate with water and a 0.5% surfactant, with an estimated 10 gallons per acre of mix being applied. If application is by tractor sprayer, more water will be used, but the same per acre rate of 26 ounces herbicide will be applied.

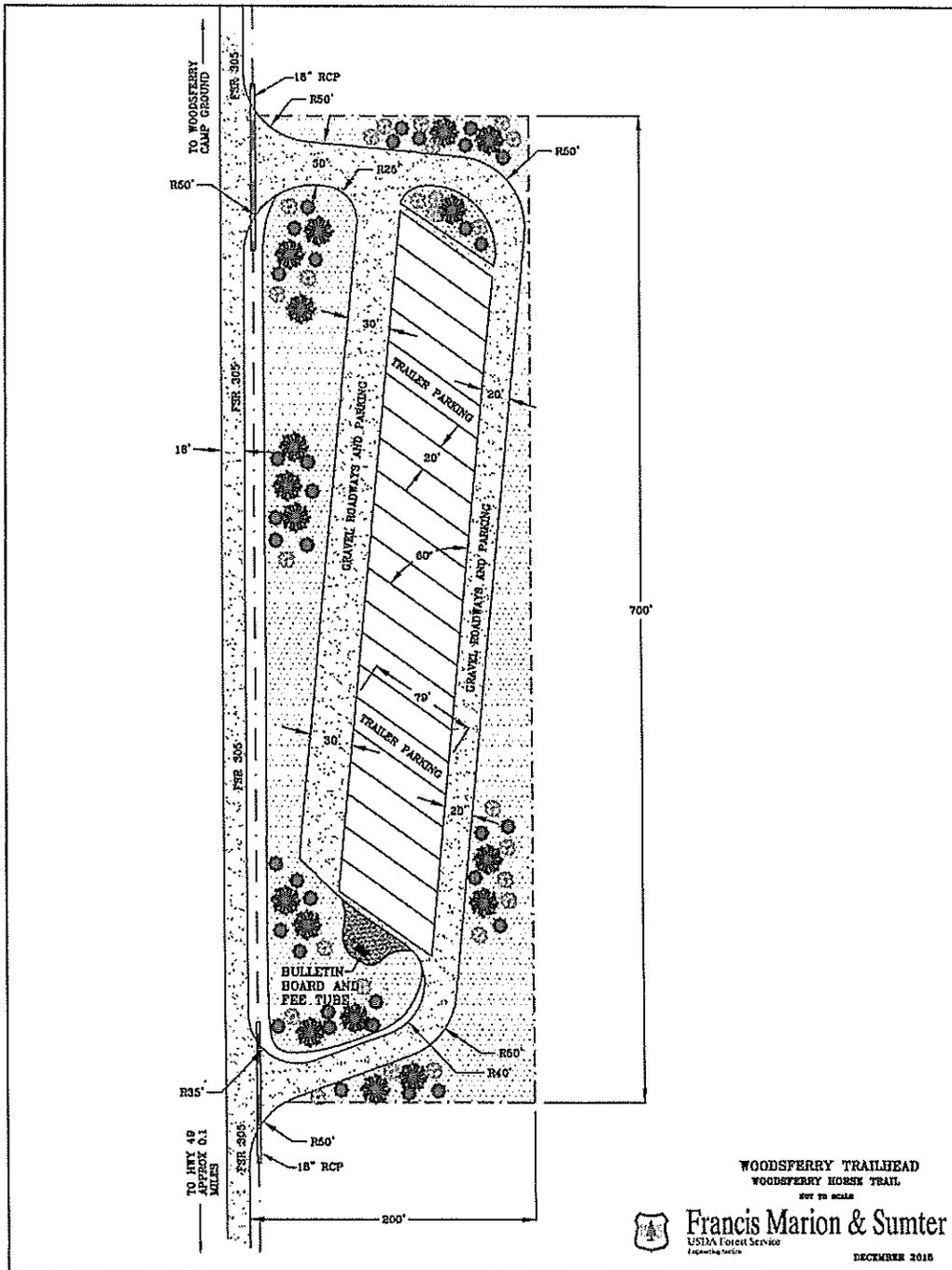
Table 1. Summary of Proposed Project Compartment and Stands, Trailhead Construction Project for the Woods Ferry Horse Trail, Enoree Ranger District, Sumter National Forest			
Comp	Stand	Acres	Proposed Action
7	12	1.5	Construct connector trail, tying the trailhead to the existing trail system.
7	13	3.5	Construct trailhead parking area for the Woods Ferry Horse Trail
Total		5	

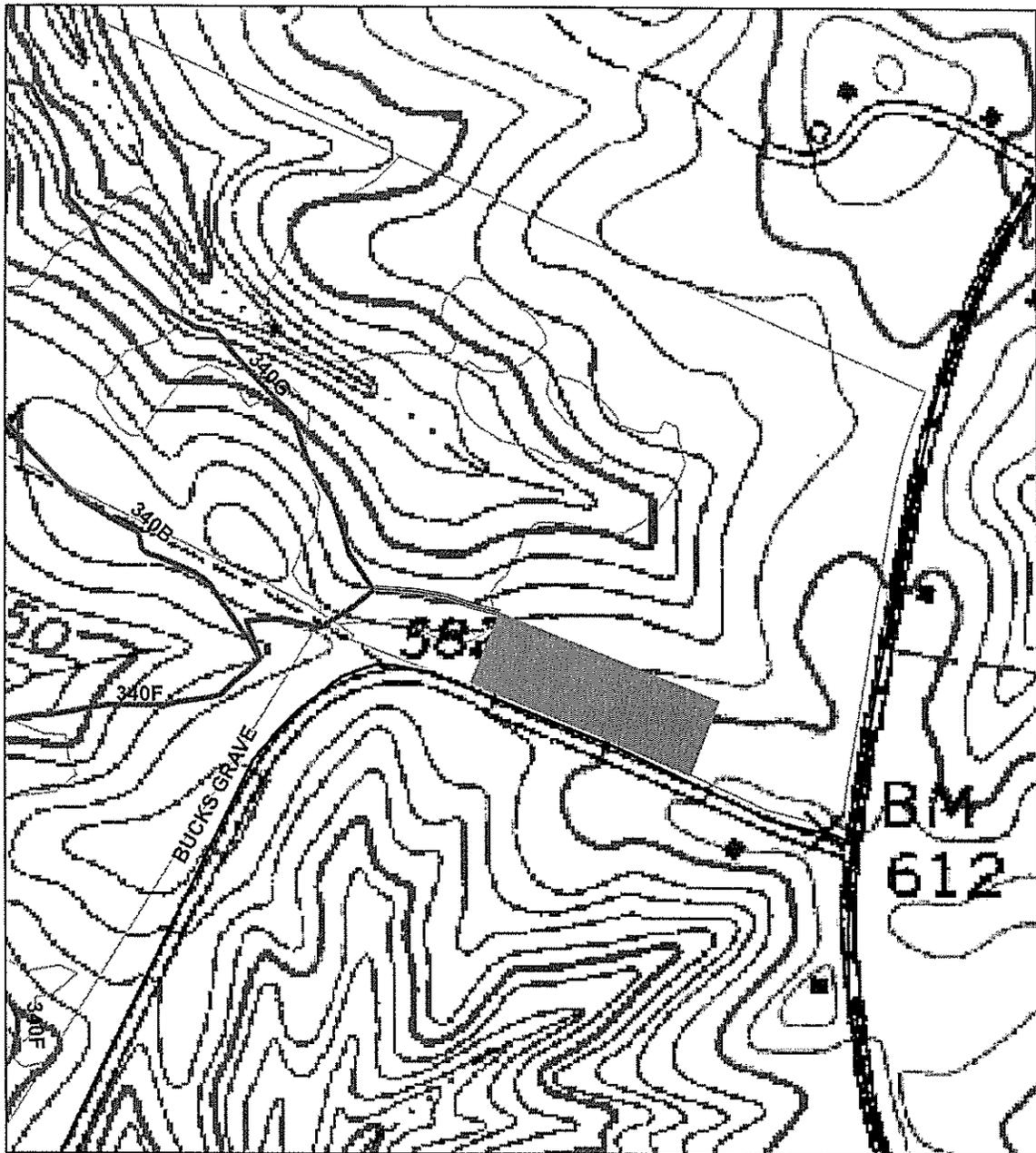


Location Map

New Trailhead Site
Woods Ferry Horse Trail

Decision Notice and FONSI-Woods Ferry Trailhead Parking Project

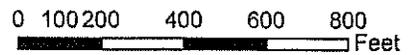




Legend

-  WF_TH_Access
-  WFTrails20140723
-  Conceptual New Trailhead
-  FmsGisLibrary.DBO.Road_WithInfraAttributes
-  FmsGisLibrary.DBO.FsVegSp_Stand

Woods Ferry Trailhead Relocation



Design Criteria

Forest-wide standards found in the Forest Plan will be followed during implementation of this project. In addition, *South Carolina Best Management Practices for Forestry* (2003) and *National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands* (2012), collectively referred to in this document as BMPs, and *Soil and Water Conservation Practices Guide for R8* (2002) will also be followed.

The following site-specific mitigation measures apply to alternative 2.

1. Directionally fall trees away from Georgia aster sites that will be designated by the biological staff.
2. Keep logging equipment and heavy machinery outside of Georgia aster sites designated by the biological staff.
3. Herbicide application methods within 40 feet from threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) species locations will use those methods which minimize or eliminate drift, including cut stump application, or direct foliar application using a wicking technique.
4. Erosion control measures, such as a silt fence, will be utilized as needed until the area is stabilized.
5. Mix water will be carried to the site by the contractor or workers.
6. Trucks containing herbicide or tank mixed herbicide will not be allowed to park within 200 feet of a stream or pond.

Reasons for the Decision

I considered the environmental effects of the alternatives in making my decision. The reasons for selecting Alternative 2 were:

- It provides a larger parking lot to accommodate large trucks and trailers that equestrian rider's use.
- The overall trail experience would be enhanced by providing easy access and ample parking for recreational users.
- In making this decision, I also considered the Forest Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) regulations. Other documents that I considered in making my decision were the Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation.

Alternatives Considered

One other alternative was considered in detail in the Environmental Assessment.

Alternative 1 (No Action)

Only projects covered under previous environmental decisions will be implemented. I did not select this alternative because of the need to have a larger parking area to accommodate the larger trucks and trailers for the equestrian trail.

Public Involvement

This proposal was listed in the Planning, Appeals, and Litigation (PALS) database as project Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_esp.php?project=48172 On December 4 2015, a scoping letter and the proposed action were sent to interested agencies, groups and individuals that have expressed interest in the proposed action. Two letters were received with positive feedback.

No key issues were identified by the interdisciplinary team (IDT).

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

Forest Plan Consistency

The decision is consistent with the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan Sumter national forest (Forest Plan). Forest-wide goals, objectives, and standards and management prescriptions are described in Chapter 2 and 3 of the Forest Plan.

National Forest Management Act (NFMA)

The potential environmental, biological, esthetic, engineering, and economic impacts have been assessed (EA, Chapter 3, pages 8-31). Project implementation will be carried out in a manner that protects soil, water, fish, wildlife, recreation, and esthetic resources and the timber resource (EA, Chapter 3 and Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE)).

Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE)

A BA/BE was completed on February 1, 2016. In addition, the Forest Service evaluated the potential impacts to sensitive species. This list of species is established by the Regional Forester and is used in project evaluation to insure that projects are not likely to impact sensitive species that could cause it to be federally listed in the future. The following determinations were made in the BA/BE relative to potential impacts to threatened, endangered and sensitive species:

Sensitive Species

Bald eagle-NO IMPACT

Georgia aster-NO IMPACT

Heritage Resources

The project area was reviewed by the Forest Archaeologist and a determination was made (June 30, 2015) that there would be no impacts to heritage sites. This project is consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, South Carolina Department of Archives and History and the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. The MOU was developed to comply with the terms of the Programmatic Agreement concerning the management of historic properties on national forest lands in the Southern Region, which was executed on November 19, 1992 and to satisfy the National Forest's responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Further consultation with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office on this project is not necessary.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have determined that Alternative 2 will not have a significant effect on the human environment based on the significance criteria of both context and intensity as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act in 40 CFR 1508.27. This alternative with design criteria and monitoring best meets the Purpose and Need as stated in the Woods Ferry Trailhead Construction Project Environmental Assessment (EA). I have concluded that an environmental impact statement is not necessary based on the following factors:

Context

The physical, biological, and social effects are limited to the project area and immediate adjacent areas, which are analyzed in Chapter 3 of the EA. All actions are consistent with the *Revised Land and Resource Management Plan*, Sumter National Forest and all environmental effects are within the range disclosed in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revised Sumter National Forest*.

Intensity

1. Both adverse and beneficial impacts of the selected alternative are discussed and there are no significant adverse effects of the selected alternative. (EA, pages 8-31)

2. The assessment describes the risks associated with each of the alternatives. Public health and safety will be minimally affected by the selected alternative. (EA, pages 25-26)
3. The analysis identified no significant impacts to any unique areas. [Chapter 3, pages 8-31 and Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE)]
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be controversial based on public involvement and with input from the interdisciplinary team. (EA, Chapter 1, page 4, Public Involvement and Issues)
5. There will not be any highly uncertain effects that involve unique or unknown risks. The use of manual, mechanical and herbicide activities have been used on the District on other projects and are commonly used for vegetation management in the Southeast. (EA, Chapter 3, 8-31)
6. This project will not set precedence for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about future projects. (EA, Chapter 3, pages 8-31)
7. There are no known significant cumulative effects from this project and other past or reasonably foreseeable projects in the area. (EA, Chapter 3, pages 8-31)
8. There are no impacts on any proposed or listed National Historic places or any loss or destruction of any scientific, cultural or historic places. (EA, Chapter 3, pages 27-28)
9. A BA/BE was completed on February 1, 2016. Consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is not necessary since there will be “No Impact” to federally listed species. There will be no impacts to Bald eagles and Georgia aster.
10. The actions do not threaten a violation of federal, state, or local environmental laws. (EA; section 1.2, Forest Plan direction, page 3; Chapter 3, pages 8-31 and BA/BE), Decision Notice, Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations, pages 8-9).

Administrative Review or Objection Opportunities

This project was subject to objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218, and a legal notice of the opportunity to object was published on April 13 2016, in the Newberry Observer newspaper, Newberry, South Carolina and sent to those who provided comments during the project’s development. No objections were received specific to this project decision.

Implementation

This decision may be implemented any time after the date of signature.

Contact

For further information on this decision, contact Carrie Miller, 20 Work Center Rd, Whitmire, South Carolina 29178; (803) 321-2981; fax (803) 637-5247.

Decision Notice and FONSI-Woods Ferry Trailhead Parking Project



for H. Scott Ray
Acting District Ranger
Enoree Ranger District

6/10/2016

USDA's Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.