DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Reedy Project - Timber Sale
USDA Forest Service – Region 8
Sumter National Forest
Long Cane Ranger District
McCormick and Greenwood Counties, South Carolina

Decision
I have decided to implement alternative 2. This alternative including design criteria best meets the Purpose and Need as stated in the Reedy Project (Timber Sale) Environmental Assessment (EA).

Alternative 2 is described below:

Seed Tree Regeneration (1,275 acres)
This silvicultural method leaves 10 to 12 predominantly loblolly pine trees/acre as a seed source to regenerate the stand. Desirable hardwoods will be retained where possible. The seed trees would be removed in approximately three to five years once the understory is fully stocked with desirable tree seedlings.

Roller Drum Chopping of the Seed tree Units
This treatment will be performed after the removal of the merchantable trees except for the 10 to 12 seed trees/acre and hard/soft mast producers ten inches and greater in diameter. Drum chopping decreases the amount of competition from early pioneering species, exposes a limited amount of soil surface area for seed germination and helps decomposition and nutrient cycling of recent cut stems in the seed tree units.

Herbicide Treatment of Seed Tree Regeneration Areas
Chemical release of desired seedlings will occur in the first and third year after harvest. A foliar spray mixture containing 1/2 ounce of imazapyr herbicide; one ounce of water soluble dye spray pattern indicator and 1/2 ounce of limonene adjuvant or equivalent per gallon of water will be used. The mixture will be selectively applied by hand application methods to target vegetation by speckling the leaf surfaces during the period of mid-June through September of the second or third growing season. Estimated application rates will be 10 gallons of mix, including 5 ounces of Arsenal AC or equivalent (0.16 pounds of imazapyr per acre). There will be no broadcast application of herbicides.

The hack- and- squirt method will be used to treat targeted vegetation (greater than six feet tall) using imazapyr (Arsenal AC or equivalent) and triclopyr (Garlon 3A or equivalent) herbicide that is sprayed/injected into cuts made into the cambium layer with a manual cutting tool (such as an axe or sandvik). The herbicide mixture used will be 50 percent triclopyr, 50 percent water, plus 6 ounces of Arsenal AC per gallon of water. All treated areas will be monitored for further follow-up treatments after the initial treatment. All treated vegetation will be left on-site to decompose.
*NOTE: Commercial herbicides/adjuvant/dyes (Garlon 3A, Arsenal AC, Cidekick, and Bullseye) represent those formulations that are commonly used for the proposed forestry treatments. However, other equivalent formulations may be used for implementation of treatments. Equivalent formulations will include any other brand name herbicides that have an equivalent proportion of the specified active ingredients.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Compt/Stand</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Prescription</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,275</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Connected Actions**

**Skidding, Decking and Hauling of Logs**

Harvested trees will be skidded with heavy equipment to landings where they will be loaded onto log trucks then transported to processing plants. Existing skid trails and landings from previous timber harvest activities will be used during skidding and loading operations. Site-specific design criteria along with Forest Plan standards and guidelines will be used to limit soil impacts and protect streams from sedimentation. Typically, skid trails and landings are water-barred and re-vegetated to reduce soil erosion.

**Seed Tree Removal (1,275 acres)**

Seed trees will be harvested after stands are fully stocked with desirable tree regeneration. This normally occurs about three to five years after the initial timber harvest but will only be done when the area has been satisfactorily restocked with trees.

**Road Maintenance**

System road maintenance activities such as but not limited to grading, spot surfacing with crushed stone, replacement of damaged and non-functional culverts and brush removal to enhance visibility may be necessary to ensure safety and prevent environmental degradation during vegetation
management activities. Approximately 22 miles of national forest system roads will be maintained during timber harvest operations and 0.3 miles of temporary roads will be used.

**Erosion Control Measures**

Design criteria will be used to reduce or prevent erosion during timber harvest operations. Surface drainage structures such as dips, water-bars and water lead-outs, seed/fertilizer and will be utilized as needed to minimize erosion and delivery of sediment to stream channels from skid trails, temporary roads and log landings.

**Design Criteria**

Forest wide standards, goals and objectives in the Forest Plan; *South Carolina's Best Management Practices for Forestry* (BMPs) (SCFC, 2003); and *Soil and Water Conservation Practices Guide, Southern Region*, (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2002) will be followed in implementation of this project. In addition, the following site-specific design criteria will be included with the action alternative in order to reduce adverse resource impacts.

1. Project activities will avoid effects to known historic properties and unevaluated archeological sites. The eight unevauated sites (38MC2398, 38MC2399, 38MC2423, 38MC2433, 38MC2438, 38MC2446, 38MC2515, 38MC2505) and two historic period cemeteries (38MC1261, 38MC1700) will be marked with painted boundaries to be protected from ground disturbance.

2. Identified PETS species location will be avoided during site disturbing activities associated with logging and follow-up cultural treatments.

3. Temporary roads and skid trails will be located in such a manner to roll with the terrain to avoid unnecessary water concentrations. Drainage dips and lead outs will be incorporated in construction of temporary roads to ensure that erosion from concentrated flow is minimized and does not reach streams.

4. Gully crossings will be avoided and surface drainage will be designed to avoid discharging directly into gullies.

5. Areas of exposed soil, such as skid trails and log decks, will be seeded, fertilized and mulched after operations are completed. Where practical, seed mixtures will include native grasses and legumes or other desired non-native species beneficial to wildlife.

6. Trees will not be harvested within gullies or on steep slopes adjacent to gullies unless needed to promote stabilization or recovery efforts.

7. Perennial and intermittent streams that could be affected by logging operations will be identified on sale area maps and protective measures will be specified in the timber sale contract.

8. Herbicide mix water will be carried to the site by contractors or workers.

9. Trucks containing herbicide or tank mixed herbicide will not be allowed to park within 200 feet of a stream or pond.
10. Hardwood inclusions to be protected within and adjacent to harvest units will be identified on the ground and on the sale area map of the timber sale contract.

11. To prevent damage to residual trees, do not operate drum choppers closer than five feet of seed trees and residual mast producers.

12. Do not operate drum choppers during saturated soil conditions.

13. Disturbed road cut and fill slopes will be re-vegetated to the extent possible to reduce adverse visual impacts.

14. Flowering and other visually attractive trees will be left in harvest units where possible.

15. Logging operations will not take place during the weekend during the peak use summer recreation season for compartment 238 stand 8, compartment 240 stands 1 and 7 and compartment 254 stand 5.

**Decision Rationale**

In making my decision, I considered how well alternative 2 will meet the purpose and need to regenerate mature slow growing loblolly pine forest stands and reduce susceptibility to beetle attack.

My other reasons for selecting alternative 2 are:

- ✓ It will promote better distribution of early successional stage/age classes to benefit wildlife habitat and improve vegetative diversity.

- ✓ It will maintain or restore vegetative composition, structure, function and productivity over time of forest ecosystems and associated communities.

- ✓ It will provide a sustainable supply of wood products.

**Other Alternatives Considered**

Following is the other alternative developed and analyzed in the EA.

**Alternative 1: No Action**

Under the no-action alternative, current management activities would continue in the project area. Ongoing management actions include: previous timber harvest decisions, road maintenance, southern pine beetle suppression, non-native species control, prescribed burning and wildlife opening maintenance.

I did not choose this alternative because it did not meet the purpose and need nor the desired condition for the 10.B. prescription as outlined in the *Revised Land and Resource Management Plan Sumter National Forest* (Forest Plan). This alternative would have fostered persistent slow growing stand conditions that would be at high risk to southern pine beetle attack and mortality.
Public Involvement

The proposal is listed in the Planning, Appeals and Litigation (PALS) data base project number 37241. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during the scoping process. Scoping began September 29, 2011 and ended on October 17, 2011. One comment was received during the scoping period. The 30-day notice and comment period began on February 9, 2013 and one letter was received from the public. Responses to these comments are located in the project file.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

Forest Plan Consistency

The actions are consistent with the Forest Plan and the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the EIS for the Suppression of the Southern Pine Beetle, Southern Region. This decision is consistent with the forest wide direction (pages 2-1 thru 2-31) for riparian area management, water quality, aquatic habitats, soil and air, wildlife habitat, vegetation, forest health, wood products and special forest products, recreation, fire management and heritage resources. The projects are feasible and reasonable. The project meets the Forest Plans’ overall standards which help to move closer to the forest’s desired condition, goals and objectives while protecting the environment.

Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended by National Forest Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1604)

The actions for this project comply with the requirements of 16 U.S.C. 1604 (g)(3)(E) and 16 U.S.C. 1604 (g)(3)(F)(1-5). A Responsible Official may authorize site-specific projects and activities on NFS lands to harvest timber only where:

16 U.S.C. 1604 (g)(3)(E)

- Soil, slope, or other watershed conditions will not be irreversibly damaged (EA pgs. 23-51);
- Protection is provided for streams, stream-banks, shorelines, lakes, wetlands and other bodies of water from detrimental changes in water temperatures, blockages of water courses and deposits of sediment where harvests are likely to seriously and adversely affect water conditions or fish habitat (EA design criteria in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 Environmental Consequences); and
- The harvesting system to be used is not selected primarily because it will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest output of timber (EA pgs. 6-7 and Chapter 3 of the EA).

16 U.S.C. 1604 (g)(3)(F)(1-5)

- The interdisciplinary review has been completed and the potential environmental, biological, aesthetic, engineering and economic impacts on each advertised sale area have been assessed, as well as the consistency of the sale with the multiple use of the general area;
- Cut blocks, patches, or strips are shaped and blended to the extent practicable with the natural terrain;
- These cuts are carried out according to the maximum size limits for areas to be cut in one harvest operation as required by 16 U.S.C. 1604 (g)(3)(F)(iv);
• Timber cuts are carried out in a manner consistent with the protection of soil, watershed, fish, wildlife, recreation, and esthetic resources and the regeneration of the timber resource (EA Pgs. 9-22 and Chapter 3).

**Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE)**

A BA/BE was completed for this environmental assessment. It concluded the proposed action is "NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT" the federally threatened and endangered Wood Stork. The proposed action would have BENEFICIAL IMPACTS to sensitive species Bachman’s sparrow and Georgia aster. The proposed action will have "NO IMPACTS" to sensitive species, namely, Indigo bush, Piedmont aster, Sweet pinesap, Oglethorpe oak, Lanceleaf trillium and Nodding trillium. The following determination was made for Bald eagle a sensitive species, "MAY IMPACT INDIVIDUALS BUT NOT LIKELY TO CAUSE A TREND TOWARD FEDERAL LISTING OR A LOSS OF VIABILITY".

**Heritage Resources**

Heritage resource surveys were conducted in the area of potential effects and consultation was initiated with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (THPO) and the South Carolina Archives and History Center, State Historic Preservation officer (SHPO).

Known historic properties and unexplored archaeological sites will be avoided during site disturbing activities.

The SHPO determined that there would be no adverse effects on historic properties in a letter dated September 21, 2012. In the letter, they stated that "Since the two sites that require additional testing or research to determine their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places will be avoided during planned timber harvests and by any ground disturbing activities, our office concurs that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed undertaking."

The THPO determined in response letters sent to the Forest Service October 12, 2012 that no important cultural resources will be affected by the project.

**Travel Analysis**

A project-level travel analysis and report (TAP) was completed for this project following direction contained in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7712.4. Road work to be done with this project has been informed by the TAP which is located in the project record.
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have determined that alternative 2 of the Reedy (Timber Sale) Project Environmental Assessment (EA) will not have a significant impact on the human environment based on the significance criteria of both context and intensity as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 40 CFR 1508.27. Alternative 2 including design criteria and monitoring as established in the Forest Plan best meets the Purpose and Need as stated in the EA. The project does not constitute a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This determination is based on the following factors:

A. CONTEXT

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

There are no known significant irreversible resource commitments or any significant irretrievable losses of timber production, wildlife habitats, soil productivity or water quality.

B. INTENSITY

1. Both adverse and beneficial impacts of the selected alternative are disclosed in the EA (EA pages 23 through 112).

2. Public health and safety will be minimally affected by the selected alternative (EA pages 102 thru 104 and Appendix C –Herbicide Risk Assessments).

3. The analysis identified no impacts to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas (EA pages 23 thru 112).

4. There are no highly controversial effects based on consultation with others, on past experiences with similar projects and on effects disclosed in the EA. The effects of the project are not likely to be a source of substantial scientific controversy (EA pages 23-112).

5. This action is similar to many past actions, both in the treatment area and adjacent areas. Based on this past experience and the environmental analysis, there will not be any highly uncertain effects that involve unique or unknown risks (EA pages 23 thru 112).

6. This project does not set a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. The decision made about activities within this project area does not commit me to actions on lands outside the project area (EA page 7).

7. There are no significant cumulative effects between this project area and other projects currently implemented or planned on the Long Cane Ranger District or
adjacent areas. All known activities which are likely to occur in the reasonably foreseeable future have been identified in the EA. Direct, indirect and cumulative effects are disclosed in the EA (EA pages 23 - 112).

8. No significant impacts are foreseen on any proposed or listed National Historic places or any loss or destruction of any scientific, cultural or historic places (EA pages 97-98). The South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurs that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed undertaking (letter from the SHPO on September 21, 2012). The THPO determined in response letters sent to the Forest Service dated October 12, 2012 that no important cultural resources will be affected by the proposed project.

9. No significant impacts on any endangered or threatened species or their habitat is foreseen. The Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE) documented a “NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT” for Wood stork. The proposed action would have BENEFICIAL IMPACTS to sensitive species Bachman’s sparrow and Georgia aster. For other sensitive species a determination was made that there will be “NO IMPACTS” to Indigo bush, Piedmont aster, Sweet pinesap, Oglethorpe oak, Lanceleaf trillium and Nodding trillium. The following determination was made for Bald eagle a sensitive species, “MAY IMPACT INDIVIDUALS BUT NOT LIKELY TO CAUSE A TRENDS TOWARD FEDERAL LISTING OR A LOSS OF VIABILITY” (Appendix A of the EA- BA/BE).

10. The actions are consistent with the Forest Plan and thus do not violate Federal, State or local laws (EA pages 7 and 102-104 and (BA/BE).

Project Implementation and Appeal Rights

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. A written appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date this notice is published in the Index Journal newspaper, Greenwood, South Carolina. The Appeal shall be sent to Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests, ATTN: Appeals Deciding Officer, 4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, South Carolina. Appeals may be faxed to (803) 561-4004. Hand-delivered appeals must be received within normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appeals may also be mailed electronically in a common digital format to appeals-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us.

Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. For further information on this decision, contact Dell Frost, 810 Buncombe Street, Edgefield, South Carolina 29824; (803) 637-5396; fax (803) 637-5247.

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. (36 CFR 215.9)

[Signature]
John (JR) Kirkaldie
District Ranger
Long Cane Ranger District

7/30/2013
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