

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Federal Government's patent rights in this invention are assigned to the United States of America, as represented by the Secretary of Agriculture. It is in the public interest to so license this invention as Heritage Fare, Ltd., of Cleveland, Ohio, has submitted a complete and sufficient application for a license. The prospective exclusive license will be royalty-bearing and will comply with the terms and conditions of 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR 404.7. The prospective exclusive license may be granted unless, within thirty (30) days from the date of this published Notice, the Agricultural Research Service receives written evidence and argument which establishes that the grant of the license would not be consistent with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR 404.7.

Michael D. Ruff,

Assistant Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

East Fredericktown Project, Mark Twain National Forest, Bollinger, Madison St. Francis, Ste. Genevieve Counties, MO

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze and disclose the environmental effects of proposed land management activities and corresponding alternatives within the East Fredericktown project area. The East Fredericktown project area is located on National Forest System lands administered by the Potosi/Fredericktown Ranger District east of Fredericktown, Missouri. The legal description of the project area is: Township 32 North, Range 7 East, Sections 11-13; Township 32 North, Range 8 East, Sections 3, 6-11, 15, 18, 19, 21-23, 25, 26, 34-36; Township 33 North, Range 8 East, Sections 3, 6-11, 15, 18, 19, 21-23, 25, 26, 34-36; Township 33 North, Range 8 East, Sections 29, 30, 35, 35; Township 34 North, Range 7 East, Sections, 12, 36; Township 34 North Range 8 East, Sections, 2-4, 9, 17, 19-21, 28-33; Township 35 North, Range 8 East, Sections 9, 11-14, 16, 19-30, 34-36; Township 35 North, Range 7 East, Section 24, Fifth Principal Meridian.

An EIS is being prepared for this project although years of experience have shown that the effects of implementing similar activities in the area are not significant. We do not feel that an EIS is required, however, due to the increase in appeals and litigation and for wise fiscal efficiency, an EIS will be prepared for the East Fredericktown Project.

The purpose of this project is to implement land management activities that are consistent with the direction in the Mark Twain Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and to respond to specific needs identified in the project area. The project-specific needs include: emphasizing the management of shortleaf pine in its natural range on sites where it is recognized as a dominant or characteristic member of the natural community and examining opportunities to minimize adverse impacts from insects and disease on forest vegetation. Other needs include wildlife habitat maintenance and improvement, recreation management, examining road system needs, cleanup of illegal dumps, and associated or connected actions.

DATES: Comments concerning the proposed land management activities should be received within 30 days following publication of this notice to receive timely consideration in the preparation of the draft EIS.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions on the proposed action or request to be placed on the project mailing list to: Katherine W. Stuart, District Ranger, Potosi/Fredericktown Ranger District, PO Box 188, Potosi, Missouri, 63664. E-mail should have a subject line that reads "nepa potosi fred'town" and be sent to: mailroom_r9_mark_twain@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom McGuire, Project Leader/Integrated Resource Analyst, Potosi/Fredericktown Ranger District, PO Box 188, Potosi Missouri 63664, phone (573) 438-5427.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The information presented in this notice is included to help the reviewer determine if they are interested in or potentially affected by the proposed land management activities. The information presented in this notice is summarized. Those who wish to provide comments, or are otherwise interested in or affected by the project, are encouraged to obtain additional information from the contact identified in the For Further Information Contact Section.

The shortleaf pine community on the Mark Twain National Forest is unique to the southeastern United States and

exists nowhere else in the world. Although shortleaf pine is at the northern edge of its range in the southern Missouri Ozarks, it actually achieves its optimum growth rate here. Although shortleaf pine occurs as a co-dominant in other areas of the country, it is the only native pine species in the Missouri Ozarks and the dominant member of the pine community. Historically, shortleaf pine covered almost 6.6 million acres in the Missouri Ozark Highlands but only 10% of that remains today.

As pine was removed from many of the stands during harvest in the 1920s, scarlet and black oaks replaced the more resilient shortleaf pine. Scarlet and black oaks are relatively short-lived species and have been under drought stress in recent years. These drought stresses, coupled with aging stands, and/or defoliation have led to a phenomenon known as oak decline. Oak decline effects range from partial crown dieback to tree mortality.

Proposed Actions

Objectives of the proposed action are to increase the proportion of shortleaf pine in the project area, increase the growth rate of both young and mature pine trees, increase the spacing between trees to open the canopy and allow sunlight to reach the ground, increase the percentage and diversity of native herbaceous ground vegetation, and enhance people's enjoyment of the pine woodlands through various recreation opportunities.

Objectives also include treating area of tree mortality and oak decline and to encourage development of more resilient and diverse mixtures that include shortleaf pine. Part of the analysis will focus on determining the appropriate road system for this project area to support various resource and recreation needs.

The proposed land management activities (proposed actions) include the following, with approximate acreage and road miles estimations:

1. Seed tree harvests (850 acres).
2. Shelterwood harvest (1543 acres).
3. Uneven-aged management (UAM) (362 acres).
4. Overstory removal (65 acres).
5. Thinning and sanitation cuts (1230 acres).
6. Natural reforestation (2666 acres).
7. Timber stand improvement to include release (173 acres).
8. Crop tree release (1607 acres).
9. Prescribed fire for wildlife habitat improvement, wildlife habitat restoration, and hazardous fuels reduction (2327 acres).