



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Brasstown Ranger
District

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Date: June 25, 2004

Dear Forest User,

The Brasstown Ranger District is proposing a Forest Stewardship Project on the Davenport Mountain area near Lake Nottely in Union County. The project area includes 1465 acres in Compartments 407, 408, and 416.

The purpose and need for this project is to restore the area to a more natural appearing landscape. This will be accomplished by restoring approximately 800 acres to shortleaf pine-oak forests. In addition to moving the area towards the desired conditions, this project also will address a number of Forest Plan goals and objectives related to the maintenance and restoration of native ecosystems, providing a diversity of wildlife habitats, providing high quality recreational opportunities, and reducing risks to wildfire.

The Davenport Mountain area lies within Management Prescription 7.E.1, Dispersed Recreation Areas that has an emphasis of moderate to high recreation use and is managed to provide a variety of recreation opportunities in a setting that provides quality scenery as viewed from Lake Nottely. The primary public uses of the area currently are hunting, fishing access, and the five-mile Davenport Mountain ATV Trail. The desired condition for this area is to provide a landscape that is naturally appearing with variations in native tree sizes and ages. Over the years, changes to the surrounding forested area, both natural and human-caused, have altered the native forest composition of the area. Several outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) have impacted this area, by eliminating many of the native shortleaf pine (SLP).

Approximately 337 acres of the area are in young white pine plantations, many of which were established following SPB outbreaks. The plantations that have trees large enough (239 ac.) will be thinned by commercial timber sale. The remaining 98 acres will be pre-commercially thinned. All of these pine plantations will then be prescribed burned and have shortleaf pine and oak seedlings planted in the thinned portions of the plantations. There is also 18 acres of SPB-killed loblolly pine plantation identified for site preparation by prescribed burning and planting with shortleaf pine and oak seedlings. In addition, there is a 40 acre, 13-year-old mixed Virginia pine and shortleaf pine plantation that will have the Virginia pine pre-commercially removed to begin the process of converting this stand to a mixed shortleaf pine-oak stand.

Approximately 2 –3 years following planting, these SLP and oak seedlings will be released from competing vegetation using herbicides. Treatment of the competing vegetation will improve survival and growth rates of the planted seedlings.



The area also includes approximately 402 acres of upland oak stands and upland oak-shortleaf pine stands on low to moderate moisture soils. The Oak-SLP stands have had shortleaf mortality because of the SPB. These areas will be treated over a period of up to about 10 years with a commercial timber sale, prescribed burning, and spot follow-up treatment with herbicides with the objective of creating an oak or oak-pine woodland community. Desired conditions include a very variable high canopy cover density, a low but variable density of midstory and understory canopy, and a species-rich herbaceous or small woody cover on the ground. Remnant SLP that survived the SPB will be favored for retention during the timber sale to retain the representation of this important native species in the oak-pine ecosystem.

The thinning would remove the most stems along ridge crests, upper slopes, and the hotter southerly or westerly-facing slopes; an intermediate number of stems on middle and lower slopes or cooler easterly or northerly-facing slopes; and leave stream-side zones (riparian areas) unthinned. One or more prescribed burns would follow the thinning. As needed, the herbicide treatment would follow one or more prescribed burns and would be to reduce the vigorous sprouting of established rootstocks of shade tolerant and fire intolerant plant species that take up light, water, and nutrients from desired herbaceous ground cover. These species have encroached into the oak and oak-pine fire maintained ecosystems over the past 80 years of fire exclusion.

Complete listings of stands and treatments are attached.

There also are several related activities that are proposed for the area. These include:

- The renovation of 10 acres of existing wildlife openings to establish clover and other cool season species beneficial to wildlife. This would require the use of herbicides to control the existing fescue.
- The creation of fish attractors/cover structures in selected coves of Lake Nottely adjoining the Davenport Mountain area using brush and recycled Christmas trees.
- The targeted control of invasive exotic species using selective herbicide applications or other methods such as mechanical removal. These include Nepal Grass, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, periwinkle, autumn olive, sericia lespedeza and fescue.
- The establishment of a permanent firebreak around urban interface property boundaries for a distance of approximately 2 miles. This will primarily be accomplished by reducing fuel loading along the property line through commercial thinnings and mechanical treatments.
- The relocation of the portion of the existing Davenport Mountain ATV trail that uses Forest System road 143A to reduce user conflict and improve visitor safety.
- Road maintenance activities on FS Road 143 that will include blading, graveling and the replacement of 2 culverts and the installation of a new gate.

It is anticipated that the project will be developed under the authorities of the Healthy Forest

Restoration Act. A preliminary meeting involving local landowners, state agencies, and other stakeholders and potential collaborators was held in May 2004. Input provided from this meeting was used in the development of this proposal. Additional opportunities for public involvement such as public meetings and/or open houses will occur as this project develops.

Your specific comments to the proposed actions will help identify key issues and possible alternative ways of meeting the project's purpose and need. The key issues and alternatives will help focus the environmental analysis of the proposed actions. To have your comments considered in our planning process, please return your comments to me by July 25, 2004. You may respond to the Brasstown Ranger District office at the above address. You may also provide your comments by fax at (706) 745-7494 (Brasstown R.D.), or e-mail your comments to jshenderson@fs.fed.us or jwentworth@fs.fed.us.

If you have any questions about this project please direct them to Sheldon Henderson or Jim Wentworth on the Brasstown Ranger District.

Thank you for your time and interest in the management activities on the Brasstown Ranger District of the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alan Polk

ALAN POLK
Brasstown District Ranger

Enclosures

The following table is a listing of stands and proposed treatments to begin converting pine plantations back to shortleaf pine/oak stands for the Davenport Mt. Stewardship Project. There is a total of 239 ac. for commercial thinning, 138 ac. of pre-commercial thinning and 18 ac. of non-stocked stands for planting to shortleaf pine/oak.

Comp/Stand	Forest type	Age Year	Acres	Treatment
407/03	White Pine	1983	14	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
407/06	White Pine	1983	20	“
408/01	White Pine	1983	31	“
408/02	White Pine	1992	34	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/03	White Pine	1983	14	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/09	Virginia Pine-Shortleaf Pine	1990	40	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn
408/11	White Pine	1992	10	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/14	White Pine	1988	19	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/16	White Pine	1990	13	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/17	White Pine	1982	16	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/19	White Pine	1984	22	“
408/20	White Pine	1983	28	“
408/21	White Pine	1962	15	“
408/23	White Pine	1992	12	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/29	White Pine	1964	7	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/30	White Pine	1988	14	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant

408/31	White Pine	1985	20	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
408/32	Loblolly Pine	SPB spot	10	Rx Burn, Plant
408/33	White Pine	1983	20	Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
416/02	White Pine	1962	13	“
416/10	White Pine	1988	15	Pre-Commercial Thinning, Rx Burn, Plant
416/24	Loblolly Pine	SPB spot	8	Rx Burn, Plant

The following table is a listing of stands and proposed treatments for converting existing oak and oak-pine stands to oak or oak-pine woodland communities for the Davenport Mt. Stewardship Project (402 acres).

Comp/Stand	Forest Type	Age Year	Acres	Treatment
416/04	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1910	55	Thin& Rx Burn
416/05	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1902	44	“
416/06	Loblolly Pine- Hardwood	1978	27	“
416/07	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1947	39	“
416/08	Shortleaf Pine	1927	15	“
416/09	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1927	10	“
416/11	Shortleaf Pine	1927	15	“
416/12	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1927	20	“
416/13	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1978	60	“
416/15	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1910	52	“
416/20	Red Oak-White Oak- Hickory	1927	30	“
416/22	Southern Red Oak- Yellow Pine	1927	20	“
416/23	Southern Red Oak- Yellow Pine	1927	15	“