



PROJECT PLANNING

Hiawatha National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions

Vol. 11, No. 4

October 2004

ABOUT THIS SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED ACTIONS (SOPA) REPORT

This report provides information on upcoming projects to citizens concerned with management of the Hiawatha National Forest (HNF). Issued quarterly, this report is intended to inform interested members of the public early in the project planning process, so that all comments can be incorporated into final decisions. The report is not intended to be a substitute for other public involvement efforts, but rather to compliment those efforts in order to assure that all those interested may have an opportunity to comment.

This SOPA report lists site-specific projects for which decisions will be documented according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1970. Each project is listed by Ranger District and includes name, location, and a brief description of the project, approximate time frames for soliciting comments (scoping), and primary decision points. A chart listing all projects that have been identified can be found following the listing of new projects. These projects are updated to reflect changes that have occurred since the last report.

This SOPA report is now posted on the internet. The website is:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha>.

Information on NEPA related documents such as scoping letters, decision notices, and decision memos can also be accessed on the web site.

The listed time frames are estimates only and are subject to change. If you have interest in a project please contact the project team leader at the appropriate Ranger District so you can be included in all mailings. If you have any information that has a bearing on the decisions being considered, we encourage you to let us know. Addresses and telephone numbers are listed with each Ranger District's projects.

Occasionally, we receive walk-in requests from the public needing shorter analysis time. Although such projects may not always be described in these SOPA reports, scoping efforts will still be completed prior to final decisions.

HIAWATHA NATIONAL FOREST NEPA UPDATES

Project Mailing Lists: Many of you are on our mailing lists to receive information on new projects that we propose (scoping letters). The number of people on these lists has grown significantly over the last few years. We appreciate the interest in projects on the HNF, however, our mailing and reproduction costs have also increased. In these scoping letters we request that you respond back to us if you would like to remain on the mailing list for that project. If we don't hear from you, we remove your name from that project mailing list. We do this in order to reduce our mailing and reproduction costs, especially for environmental assessments, and to send information to those who are interested in

the project. You can be assured that you will receive all mailings for a specific project, preferably by sending us your comments, or by contacting us by phone or email. If you do not respond to a specific project and your name is removed from that project mailing list, you will still receive information on future projects, because we retain your name on our master list for scoping on all projects. In addition, all scoping letters and decisions are posted on our internet site. Please remember that revision of 36CFR 215 now requires you to comment on a project during the official 30-day comment period we advertise in the newspapers in order to retain your standing to appeal a decision. If you have any questions or want to be added or removed from our mailing list, contact: Steve Bateman at 906-786-4062, ext. 335, TDD 906 789-3337, Email sbateman@fs.fed.us; Mary Maercklein at 906-474-6442, ext. 117, TDD 906-474-6570, Email mmaercklein@fs.fed.us; or Lyn Hyslop at 906-643-7900, ext. 152, TDD 906-643-7611, or Email: lhyslop@fs.fed.us.

Comments received in response to solicitation, as part of the NEPA process including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on a proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted

only in very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within a specified number of days.

The dates listed in this SOPA Report are approximate.

Decisions: There were 3 decisions for the Westside of the HNF this past quarter: SBC Fiber Optic Cable Project, Alger Delta Co-op Electric Association Replacement Project, Snowmobile Trailhead on Delta County Road 440.

There were 6 decisions on the Eastside of the HNF this past quarter: Pine Blowdown Project, H-57 Cloverland Electric Underground Permit, Walker Access Permit, Raco Plains Ecosystem Management Project, Wildlife Opening Maintenance Project, and SBC Ameritech Fiber Optic Underground Cable Permit.

Decisions scheduled for this quarter on the Westside of the HNF include: Carmen Project, Fisheries Habitat Improvement Project, Little Ridge Project, Red Pine Overstory Removal.

Decisions scheduled for this quarter on the Eastside of the HNF include: East Red Pine II Project EA, Smithers Scientific Services Inc. SPU Modification EA, Hanson Access Permit, Private Road Easement 1 Project,

Appeals and Litigation: The Thunderbird Project was appealed. The decision was upheld.

Forest Plan Revision: The HNF continues to move forward in revising the Forest Plan. HNF's interdisciplinary team (IDT) has been working hard to complete a variety of tasks in order to publish the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and proposed Forest Plan by March 2005.

The IDT has developed the proposed range of alternatives and is currently analyzing the effects that each of the alternatives will have on the HNF's resources. Each alternative will have a different approach to managing the HNF's resources for the next 10 to 15 years.

Public involvement continues to be very important to forest plan revision. The comments we received helped to identify the need for change topics; were used to identify the significant issues and helped to develop the range of alternatives. Citizens will have an additional opportunity to provide comments on the Forest Plan when the draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan are published. The HNF will then analyze the comments and incorporate any changes into the final Forest Plan.

We have recently posted the August 2004 Forest Plan Revision newsletter on our Internet site. This edition provides an overview of the proposed range of alternatives. For more information on forest plan revision, check out HNF's Website located at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha/revision/rev_welcome.html

If you wish to be on the HNF's forest plan revision mailing list, you may contact us using any of the following methods:

E-mail: r9_Hiawatha_revision@fsfed.us.

Phone: 906-786-4062

Mail: Hiawatha National Forest

Attn: Forest Plan Revision

2727 N. Lincoln Rd.

Escanaba, MI 49829

NEW NATIONAL DATABASE FOR SOPA REPORT UPDATES

As you will notice, our Quarterly Report has a new name, Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA), and the table in the back has a different look. This is because the Forest Service is developing a national database to track key planning information and automatically generate SOPAs in a consistent manner. The attached SOPA table is an interim part of that effort. We hope to have a standardized SOPA format and public access to the database in the late fall/winter.

RAPID RIVER/MANISTIQUE RANGER DISTRICT

RAPID RIVER RANGER DISTRICT

8181 U.S. Hwy. 2
Rapid River, MI 49878
(906) 474-6442
TDD: (906) 474-6570

MANISTIQUE RANGER DISTRICT

499 East Lakeshore Dr.
Manistique, MI 49854
(906) 341-5666
TDD: (906) 341-3514

Project Name: Fisheries Habitat
Improvement Project

Project Description: Part of this project is
also on the Manistique District. Fisheries
habitat improvement activities would place
log cribs and tree drops in the following
warmwater lakes: Clear Lake, Swan Lake,
and Mowe Lake.

County: Alger, Delta

Team Leader: Mark Ammerman

Scoping Starts: 07/13/2004

Expected Decision Date: October 2004

MUNISING RANGER DISTRICT

400 East Munising Ave.
Munising, MI 49862
(906) 387-2512
TDD: (906) 387-3371

NO NEW PROJECTS THIS QUARTER

EASTSIDE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

ST. IGNACE RANGER DISTRICT

1798 West US 2
St. Ignace, MI 49781
(906) 643-7900
TDD: (906) 643-7611

SAULT STE. MARIE DISTRICT

4000 I-75 Business Spur
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783
(906) 635-5300
TDD: (906) 635-9154

Project Name: Wildlife Opening Maintenance Project

Project Description: Project activity would maintain three existing openings totaling 20 acres. Located about 15 miles north of St. Ignace along the Edison Road (FR3309) in T42N, R3W, Section 5; T42N, R4W, Section 1.

County: Mackinac

Team Leader: Steve Sjogren

Team Leader: ssjogren@fs.fed.us

Scoping Starts: August 15, 2004

Decision Date: September 28, 2004