United States Department of Agriculture **Forest Service** **Mark Twain National Forest**
Ava – Cassville – Willow Springs Ranger District
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File Code: 1950-1
Date: January 20, 2004

Dear Neighbor and Interested Parties;

The Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District is proposing to reanalyze the Jim Bald, Guthrie Bald and McClurg Glade Prescribed Burns. The purpose of this letter is to solicit any comments you may have concerning this project.

Location, Setting and Background

The Jim Bald, Guthrie Bald and McClurg Glade Prescribed Burns (approximately 75, 260 and 139 acres, respectively) where previously implemented under a Decision Memo, signed in 1991, which authorized eight separate prescribed burns totaling 1,915 acres to restore native glade habitats. Previous treatments within these eight areas have also included mechanical removal of encroaching eastern red cedar. The three prescribed burns total 474 acres. The Jim Bald and Guthrie Bald burn areas are located in T. 24 N., R. 17 W., Sections 16, 17 and 22, Taney County, Missouri. The McClurg Glade burn is located in T. 24 N., R. 16 W., Section 6 and 7, Ozark County, Missouri (refer to attached map). The project area lies entirely within Management Area 6.2 as identified in the Mark Twain National Forest, Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

The project area is located in the White River Hills subsection of the Ozark Highlands State Natural Divisions. High knobs and long narrow ridges with dolomite glade/woodland balds dominate the landscape. Some of the largest glade complexes in the state occur in this area. Drainages and protected slopes are dominated by mixed-oak forest. Limestone glades, dry-mesic forest and glade savannas represent the majority of the ecological land types. In forested areas post oak, blackjack oak and white oak dominate the overstory, with eastern red cedar dominating the understory. Half of the project area is in open or semi-open glades and savannas (246 acres). Grasses and forbs such as little bluestem, Indian grass and black-eyed susan dominate these areas.

Glade and savanna ecosystems are adapted to a wide range of natural disturbances such as fire. Historically, natural and man-caused fires maintained glades and savannas in early seral conditions. Without fire these areas will revert back to mid and late seral conditions. This would dramatically alter the natural plant and animal diversity found in glades and savannas.

The previous prescribed fire and cedar removal activities resulted in achieving desired condition for the project area. Increases in the diversity and abundance of native grasses, sedges, and forbs are a direct result of such management activities. Monitoring of the prior burns revealed little or no adverse impacts to the physical or biological environment. Impacts to air quality were short, lasting only a few hours. No extraordinary circumstances occurred as a result of the past-prescribed fires.

Propose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the prescribed fire is to continue to maintain the open glade and savanna conditions by reducing the amount of encroaching eastern red cedar and improve the plant diversity, health and vigor of the native grasses, sedges and forbs. In addition to maintaining a healthy glade community, these prescribed fires will help reduce the amount of hazardous fuels and risk of catastrophic fire to private property to the north and east of the project areas.

Project Objectives and Desired Conditions

The Forest Plan outlines the management direction for specialized habitats such as glades (Forest Plan, page IV-56). The minimum percentage of glades in National Forest System lands within the White River subsection of the State Natural Divisions to be managed in open or semi-open condition for Cedar Glade Landtype association is 10%. Currently 36% of MA 6.2 (subsection 4 and 5) that is in the Cedar Glade Landtype association is classified as open to semi-open habitat. This project will continue to maintain 246 acres in open glade and savanna habitats. The majority of the remaining project area will be managed in habitats that have a 20-30 percent grass, forb and shrub ground cover.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to continue to maintain the glade and savanna ecosystem by prescribed burning 474 acres every two to three years. The prescribed burns may be implemented on the same day or at different times, depending on funding, weather conditions and staffing requirements. Firelines exit and will require re-establishment and maintenance in some areas.

Comments

As the federal official on Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District of the Mark Twain National Forest that is responsible for this proposed action, I want to consider your comments before I make a final decision. Substantive comments are most useful; those comments that are within the scope of the proposed action, are specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action and include supporting reasons for me to consider. Enclosed with this letter you will find a comment form for you to fill out and send to the address listed on the form. You may also respond electronically to the following email address: comments-eastern-mark-twain-ava@fs.fed.us (subject line: Ava Prescribed Fire Projects). When submitting comments be sure to include your name, current physical mailing address, title of the proposed action and signature or other verification of identity upon request. This scoping letter and maps are also available on the Mark Twain Website at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/marktwain/projects/project.htm

Thank your for your interest in the management of Mark Twain National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jenny Farenbaugh
JENNY FARENBAUGH
District Ranger
Enclosures (2)

GUTHRIE BALD PRESCRIBED FIRE - STANDS				
COMPARTMENT	STAND	ACRES	ELT	FOREST TYPE
25	224	3	Dry-chert forest	Black oak
25	111	2	Dry-limestone forest	Eastern red cedar & Hardwoods
25	109	4	Dry-limestone forest	Mixed oak
25	94	2	Dry-mesic chert forest	Mixed oak
25	225	16	Dry-mesic chert forest	Mixed oak
25	227	2	Dry-mesic chert forest	Mixed oak
25	105	15	Dry-mesic forest	Eastern red cedar & Hardwoods
25	231	2	Dry-mesic forest	Eastern red cedar & Hardwoods
25	97	26	Dry-mesic forest	Post oak
25	110	3	Dry-mesic forest	Post oak
25	223	2	Dry-mesic forest	Post oak
25	96	5	Glade savanna	Eastern red cedar & Hardwoods
25	101	8	Glade savanna	Eastern red cedar & Hardwoods
25	222	2	Glade savanna	Mixed oak
25	226	6	Glade savanna	Mixed oak
25	93	4	Glade savanna	Post oak
25	100	10	Glade savanna	Post oak
25	229	3	Glade savanna	Post oak
25	108	3	Gravel Wash	Post oak
25	98	38	Limestone glade	Open
25	106	87	Limestone glade	Open
25	107	2	Xeric-chert forest	Post oak
25	95	9	Xeric-limestone forest	Eastern red cedar
25	99	6	Xeric-limestone forest	Eastern red cedar
25	228	1	Xeric-limestone forest	Upland brush

JIM BALD PRESCRIBED FIRE - STANDS				
COMPARTMENT	STAND	ACRES	ELT	FOREST TYPE
25	112	6	Dry-mesic chert forest	Mixed oak
25	87	6	Dry-mesic forest	Eastern red cedar & Hardwood
25	213	2	Dry-mesic forest	Eastern red cedar & Hardwood
25	85	2	Dry-mesic forest	Post oak
25	86	1	Dry-mesic forest	Post oak
25	116	2	Dry-mesic forest	Post oak
25	210	1	Glade savanna	Mixed oak
25	118	3	Glade savanna	Post oak
25	88	1	Glade savanna	Upland brush
25	212	7	Gravel wash	Post oak
25	84	5	Limestone glade	Open
25	114	17	Limestone glade	Open
25	113	13	Xeric-limestone forest	Upland brush
25	211	8	Xeric-limestone forest	Upland Brush

McCLURG GLADE PRESCRIBED BURN				
COMPARTMENT	STAND	ACRES	ELT	FOREST TYPE
27	109	16	Dry chert forest	Post oak
27	107	5	Dry chert forest	Black oak
27	106	6	Dry chert forest	Black oak
27	76	1	Dry mesic forest	Post oak
27	111	15	Dry mesic forest	Black oak
27	108	5	Dry-mesic chert forest	Black oak
27	73	8	Limestone glade	Post oak
27	110	77	Limestone glade	Open
27	105	0	Limestone glade	Open
27	112	7	Limestone glade	Easter red cedar

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

JIM BALD, GUTHRIE BALD AND MCCLURG GLADE PRESCRIBED FIRE PROJECT

You are invited to comment on this proposal. If you have concerns specific to this project, or if you desire to be kept informed please complete this form and mail it to following address. You may also respond electronically to the following email address: comments-eastern-mark-twain-ava@fs.fed.us (subject line: Ava Prescribed Fire Project). If you have any questions, please contact Brian Davidson at (417) 683-4428.

Jenny Farenbaugh – District Ranger
Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District
P.O. Box 188
Ava, Missouri 65608

Please return your comments by March 2, 2004

Name:
Address:
Phone #:

Comments: