



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Wayne National Forest
Athens Ranger District

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File Code: 1950-1
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Date: April 1, 2003

Subject: Initial Public Scoping for Pine Commercial Thinning

To: Interested Parties

I am writing to invite you to provide comments on a proposed vegetation management project to improve the health and vigor of approximately 700 acres of white pine plantations on the Athens Ranger District, Wayne National Forest. A vicinity map and more specific unit maps of the proposed treatment areas are enclosed.

*You are invited to
comment on this
project.*

Many acres of pine have been planted on the Wayne National Forest since the Forest Service began acquiring land in 1934. The majority of the plantations were established on abandoned farm fields and strip-mined land to stabilize eroding soils and convert the land from open fields to forest. The small size of the tree crowns is evidence that these pine forests are now very crowded. Many trees have already died. Thinning pine plantations improves the health of the stands by increasing resistance to insects and disease and allowing fewer stems to grow stronger.

*Pine was planted to
stabilize the soil.*

We are proposing to thin about 700 acres of pine on the Athens Ranger District to reduce the number of trees per acre, focus growth on the remaining trees, and increase the understory growth for wildlife purposes. All areas will be surveyed for the presence of habitat for endangered plants and animals and for other resource concerns and appropriate mitigation measures put in place.

*We propose to thin
about 700 acres of pine
stands on the Athens
District.*

The proposed treatment areas are located near Stone Church, Indian Run, and Burr Oak. Because of the many township, county, and state roads which traverse the District, no new permanent system roads will be constructed. Approximately 5 miles of temporary road will be built to access log landings, then water-barred, seeded, and closed to all vehicles. Approximately 4 miles of existing roads will be re-constructed to a higher standard and will be left open or will be closed to the public.

*Treatment areas are in
southern Perry County
and the Burr Oak area
of Athens County.*

Some other activities that we are planning during this project include the control of exotic plant species that can take advantage of the disturbance and increased light conditions to spread through the pine stands. We plan to prevent further spread of some species such as tree of heaven by pulling small stems or by cutting followed by treating stumps with herbicides. We plan to grub out thickets of multi-flora rose and other exotic shrubs in selected areas. We plan to create 10-12 waterholes less than half an acre in size in upland areas, and to remove several rows of pines to daylight a short section of State Route 13 north of Glouster.

*We plan to also do
some control of exotic
species and create
some waterholes in
uplands.*



Athens District Pine Thinning, page 2

The 1988 Wayne National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (the Forest Plan) prescribes the number of acres to remain in pine and an annual average pine harvest. This proposal is consistent with direction in the Forest Plan.

***Forest Plan direction
on pine management.***

Please make your comments specific to this proposed action. To ensure that I have an opportunity to consider your concerns, please submit written comments to me or to Marsha Wikle, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at the above address by May 2, 2003. You may also call to discuss this project (see number above) or submit comments electronically. Copies of this scoping notice and maps are available on the Wayne National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne>.

How to comment.

If you have no comments at this time, but wish to remain on the mailing list for this project, please call or write to show your interest. In addition to this initial scoping period, there will be another opportunity to comment when the environmental analysis is made available to the public for the 30-day notice and comment period, anticipated to be in late fall of this calendar year.

***Do you want to stay on
the mailing list for this
project?***

Thank you for your interest in the Wayne National Forest.

/S/GARY L. WILLISON

GARY L. WILLISON
Acting Athens District Ranger