

Dear Forest Neighbor:

The US Forest Service is proposing to implement the **Three Lakes Aspen Hardwood Project** on the Mio Ranger District of the Huron-Manistee National Forests. The Three Lakes Aspen Hardwood Project proposes to meet natural resource management objectives with a variety of activities. These objectives are based on multiple-use management in compliance with the Forests' Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan, 2006).

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to comment on the **Draft Environmental Assessment** and help identify issues, concerns, or opportunities associated with this project and its surrounding area.

#### Project Location

The proposed actions are located on National Forest System lands in Mentor Township, Oscoda County and Rose, Goodar Townships, Ogemaw County Michigan. The legal descriptions of the proposed actions are as follows:

- Township 24N, Range 3E, Sections 6-8
- Township 24N, Range 4E, Sections 2-5, 8-12, 13-15
- Township 25N, Range 3E, Sections 31
- Township 25N, Range 4E, Sections 13, 24, 25, 27-29, 33, 34, 36

Please refer to the attached maps for specific locations of proposed actions. Maps can also be viewed at the following website:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/hmnf/landmanagement/projects>

#### Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of the Three Lakes Aspen and Hardwoods Project is to move the project area towards the desired future condition set forth in the Forest Plan for Management Areas 2.1 and 4.4. This includes managing timber resources, creating early successional habitat (forest openings) for wildlife, suppressing non-native plant species infestations, and eliminating unacceptable impacts to wetland areas and rehabilitating illegal ORV play areas.

1. Reduce life-threatening and property-damaging wildfire potential (FP III-4.2-2)
2. Produce high volumes of timber products and improve growing conditions for residual timber stands that are thinned (FP III-4.2-2)
3. Increase the amount of early successional wildlife habitat within the management areas (FP III-4.2-2)
4. Suppress non-native invasive plant species (NNIS) infestations within or adjacent to the treatment areas (FP II-4)
5. Determine if existing Forest Service Roads (FSR) are needed for public or administrative use. Roads that are not necessary will be obliterated (FP II-39)

#### Proposed Actions

1. Clearcut and naturally regenerate 628 acres of aspen.
2. Thin 84 acres of red pine to reduce fuels, promote growth of residual stand, and produce timber products.
3. Shelterwood cut and or thin 464 acres of hardwoods to promote growth of residual trees and establish advanced regeneration in understory.
4. Clearcut 23 acres of a mature red pine plantation and replant with red pine.
5. Suppress non-native invasive plant species (NNIS) within and adjacent to the treatment areas, temporary roads, and nearby forest openings as needed and as funding permits. NNIS would be treated with herbicides, biological controls, mechanical, and/or manual means.
6. Prescribe burn 325 acres to reduce hazardous fuels and maintain wildlife openings.
7. Maintain 50 acres of forest openings through mechanical treatments and/or prescribed burning. Seed and/or plant flowering plants and shrubs to improve plant, pollinator, and wildlife habitat.
8. Reclassify FSR 4582 as dual use.
9. Reclassify from level 2 to level 1 (administrative only) 1.1 miles of FSR 4620 to protect wetland areas.
10. Decommission Maltby Hills Trail Head to prevent illegal hill climbs and protect natural resources. Removing trailhead includes decommissioning 4.98 miles of Maltby ORV Trails, 1.1 miles of trail rerouted and reclassify FSR 4582 as dual use.

#### Comments

We would like your input concerning the **Draft Environmental Assessment**. The input you provide will be factored into the analysis as we look to identify issues and/or concerns and develop alternatives to the proposed action.

Written or hand-delivered comments may be delivered to District Ranger, USDA Forest Service, Mio Ranger Station, 107 McKinley Road, Mio, MI 48647-9314, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Comments may be submitted via telephone during business hours by calling (989) 826-3252 or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (TTY). Comments may be faxed to (989) 826-6073, or e-mailed to [comments-eastern-huron-manistee-mio@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-huron-manistee-mio@fs.fed.us)

E-mail attachments must be readable by Microsoft Office 2007 or Adobe formats. For timely consideration of your comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment, please send us your comments within 30 days from the date when the project public notice appears in the Oscoda County Herald and include the following information:

1. Name, address, organization represented and title (if appropriate);
2. Title of project for which comments are being submitted (Three Lakes Aspen & Hardwood Project);
3. Specific facts and supporting reasons you believe should be considered in reaching a final decision.

Individuals or entities who have submitted timely, specific written comments regarding a proposed project during any designated opportunity for public comment will have standing to object. Comments received in response to this project will become a matter of public record and will be used to refine the proposed action, resource analysis, and design criteria.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit such comments will not have standing to object to the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 218. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request that a submission be withheld from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the submission will be returned and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

If you have any questions, or need further information about this proposal, please contact Brad Bolton at the Mio Ranger Station (989)826-3252, ext. 3315.

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