



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

National Forests
In Mississippi
Forest Supervisor's Office

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Dear Planning Participant:

We released the revised Land and Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the National Forests in Mississippi. The revised Plan will guide management activities on the 1.2 million acres of national forest system lands in Mississippi for the next 10 to 15 years. The Plan is the result of a collaborative effort between National Forest managers, partner agencies, conservation organizations, and interested members of the public.

Enclosed with this letter is a compact disc containing a copy of the following planning documents:

- Land and Resource Management Plan
- Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Final Environmental Impact Statement Appendices
- Record of Decision

These planning documents are also available on-line at www.fs.usda.gov/mississippi. Printed copies are also available upon request.

The revised Plan establishes a strong commitment to an all-lands approach to conserve high priority forest ecosystems and landscapes in Mississippi. The Plan promotes achievement of many state-wide goals and objectives including: restoration and management of longleaf pine within its historical range; suppression and eradication of non-native and invasive plants and pests; restoration of fire-adapted lands and reduction of risk of wildfire impacts; protection and enhancement of water quality; protection, conservation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources; and management of forests to mitigate and adapt to global climate change.

A legal notice announcing the release of the revised Plan and its associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents will also be published in our newspaper of record, the Clarion-Ledger, on or near the same date as the Federal Register notice.

Highlights of the Plan include:

- Improving and restoring whole native ecosystems by converting plantings of loblolly and slash pines to native longleaf pine, shortleaf pine, and hardwoods at about 2,300 acres annually. These species are more resilient to extreme weather events such as hurricanes and can sequester more carbon than the loblolly plantations.
- Maintaining a diversity of tree ages, from regeneration to old growth, to support a sustainable mix of ecological conditions across the landscape. The overall strategy is to have a distribution of old growth stands in all ecological systems, with approximately 10 percent of each forest ecosystem in old growth conditions.



- Protecting species diversity, including 10 Threatened and Endangered species, by enhancing and maintaining species habitat and ecosystem diversity. The Nature Conservancy, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks have been partners on identifying native ecological systems and species needs throughout the revision process.
- Restoring historic fire regimes and reduce fuel loadings by maintaining current level of prescribed burning averaging approximately 200,000 acres annually.
- Maintaining a steady flow of timber products (90 million board feet annually) from restoration and forest health practices.
- Public safety and environmental protection are the main priorities for managing and sustaining the roads, trails, and facilities that make up forest infrastructure.

The National Forests in Mississippi encompass about 1.2 million acres of land and consist of six forests: Bienville, Delta, Holly Springs, Homochitto, Tombigbee, and De Soto (which also includes the Chickasawhay Ranger District).

For more information, visit the website: www.fs.usda.gov/mississippi, or contact the Forest Supervisor's office at the address or phone number listed at the top of this letter.

Sincerely,



MARGRETT L. BOLEY
Forest Supervisor