

**BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST  
LIAISON PANEL MEETING SUMMARY  
APRIL 23, 2009  
DOUBLE SPRINGS, ALABAMA**

**Liaison Panel Members Attendees**

Anthony Hood, Recreation User  
Mark Kolinski, Wild South  
Vince Melinski, Wild South  
Randy Feltman, Logging Interest  
Ron Eakes, Al. WL & Freshwater Fish  
Mike Bagwell, Warrior Mtn. Trail Rdrs  
Brian Martin, TNC  
Dr Charles Borden,  
Barry Baird, Al WL & Freshwater Fisheries

**Additional Attendees**

Rick England  
LC Hall  
Wayne White  
Atheh Wilhite  
David Woodall  
Larry Barkey, Smith Lake  
Advocacy  
Mimi Barkey, Sipsey Wilderness.  
Hiking Club  
John Creed  
Janice Barrett, Wild South  
Jody Butler, City of Moulton  
Jeff Still  
J.D. Snoddy  
Kenneth Sudduth, Jasper Lmbr Co  
James Alexander, Back Country  
Horsemen  
Hank Byrnes

**Forest Service Attendees**

Charles Price, Acting District Ranger  
Tom Counts, District Wildlife Biologist  
Allison Cochran, Wildlife Biologist

Stephanie Love, District Silviculturist  
Kerry Clark, District FMO

## Meeting Agenda

There were two primary objectives for this meeting. There is a pending closure of caves in the eastern United States. This is due to a new disease in bats, termed "White Nose Syndrome, which is resulting in severe die-offs of populations in hibernation caves. There is concern that humans may be spreading this disease as they visit these caves for recreation. Broad public support will be required to implement this closure. The second primary issue is the addition of several new areas to the prescribed fire schedule, and increasing the entry frequency in other areas. Prescribed fire is a central interest of the Liaison Panel members. In addition, updates on our hog control program and the Grindstone Mill/Inman restoration project are timely.

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|------|---|---|
| 6:00 | Welcome   | Charlie Price,<br>Acting District Ranger,<br>USFS, Bankhead         |
| 6:05 | White Nose Syndrome and Related Cave Closures         | Tom Counts/Allison Cochran<br>Wildlife Biologists<br>USFS, Bankhead |
| 6:30 | Update on Hog Control Efforts                         | Tom Counts/Allison Cochran<br>Wildlife Biologists<br>USFS, Bankhead |
| 6:50 | Status Report on the 2009 RxB Program & 2010 Proposal | Kerry Clark, FMO<br>USFS, Bankhead                                  |
| 7:00 | GMI Vegetation Effects Analysis Findings              | Stephanie Love, Silviculturist<br>USFS, Bankhead                    |
| 7:25 | Group Questions or Discussion on Findings             |   |

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|------|---|---|
| 8:00 | Monitoring Team Report/Reminders/<br>Calendar Items | Mark Kolinski,<br>Alabama Program Manager,<br>WildSouth     |
| 8:30 | Closeout  | Charlie Price,<br>Acting District Ranger,<br>USFS, Bankhead |

### **Summary of Discussion:**

Tom Counts and Allison Cochran showed a newsreel video and presented discussion on the spread of the disease. They also discussed positive efforts to involve the caving community. The reaction was positive and the Liaison Committee will be a positive voice in the community supporting closures until more can be learned of the disease.

Tom Counts and Allison Cochran presented capture and kill data on hogs over the past 3 years. They also reviewed hunting season results. Representatives from the Black Warrior WMA also provided positive discussion.

There was strong support for prescribe fire additions and increasing the frequency of burning on some sites. The group encouraged program expansion and asked questions related to completing burning early this year. They questioned why we didn't have additional 2009 burns available with substantial growing season remaining. The bat netting requirement was discussed as well as the total program acres available on the district, and a general understanding was reached.

Stephanie Love presented current conditions and alternatives being considered in the Grindstone Mill/Inman EA. The relationship between alternatives that resulted in more structure improvement vs more restoration was discussed using charts and graphs to clarify. General comments favored improved structure for more immediate wildlife response.

During the open floor question period, several individuals expressed the desire to eliminate the open season for doe hunting that was introduced several years ago. The perception was that the DCNR deferred to the Forest Service on such issues.

This was perhaps the most active issue of the evening. The State's authority to set bag limits and hunting methods was clarified.

The Monitoring Team discussed the upcoming monitoring day the stops to be made. They made their agenda available.

The final order of business was to select the next meeting date. The group agreed that the next panel meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, July 23, 2009 in Moulton, and the meeting was adjourned.

Presentations are attached.

Charles S. Price  
Acting District Ranger