

**BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST  
LIAISON PANEL PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY  
MARCH 15, 2007  
DOUBLE SPRINGS, ALABAMA**

**Liaison Panel Member Attendees**

Kevin Holsonback, ADCNR  
Dave Borland, The Nature Conservancy  
Vince Meleski, Wild South  
Laverne Matheson, Smith Lake Advocacy, Inc.  
Mike Henshaw, Alabama Coop. Extension Service  
Bill Snoddy, Treasure Forest Landowner  
Charles Chandler, Forester  
Harold Lou Allen, Lawrence County Commissioner

**Additional Attendees**

Larry Barkey, Residents  
Mimi Barkey, Residents  
Hank Burns, Wild South  
Janice Kolinski, Wild South  
Caroline Douglas, South Wings

**FS Attendees**

Glen Gaines, District Ranger  
Allison Cochran, Wildlife Biologist  
Tom Counts, Wildlife Biologist  
Blake Addison, Timber Sale Administrator  
Jessica Blackwell, Sale Layout Forester

**Meeting Agenda**

- 9:00            Review and Discuss 2007 Watershed Project Alternatives
- 10:00           Walston Ridge Field Trip - Review and Discuss Mid-Story Removal

**2007 Watershed Project - Discussion on Initial Alternatives**

Glen Gaines presented a summary of the alternatives for the Grindstone, Mill, & Inman Watershed Forest Health and Restoration Project (FHRP) and the Rockhouse & Hoghouse Watershed Forest Health and Restoration Project (FHRP).

**FY 2007**  
**Watershed Forest Health and  
Restoration Projects**  
Alternative Development

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**Watershed Projects  
Alternatives for Analysis**

- Alternative 1 - No Action
- Alternative 2 – Preferred “Rolling” Alternative
- Alternative 3 – Increased Rate of Restoration

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## Grindstone, Mill, & Inman Watersheds

### Alternative 2

Restoration Patch Cuts - 72 ac.  
Site Prep (drum chop) - 72 ac.  
Site Prep Burn - 72 ac.  
Plant Shortleaf - 72 ac.  
Release Shortleaf (Mech.-72ac)

### Alternative 3

Restoration Patch Cuts -186 ac.  
Site Prep (Herbicide) - 186 ac.  
Site Prep Burn - 186 ac.  
Plant Shortleaf - 186 ac.  
Release Shortleaf (Herb.-186ac)

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## Grindstone, Mill, & Inman Watersheds

### Alternative 2

Thinning - 1,622 ac.  
    Shortleaf DFC - 1,166 ac.  
    Oak Woodlands DFC - 456 ac.  
Mid-story Treatment - 1,216 ac.  
    Shortleaf DFC - 946 ac.  
    Oak Woodlands DFC - 270 ac.  
Prescribe Burning - 5,468 ac.  
(2-4 times per decade)  
Canyon Rx - <250 ac.  
Rare Communities - ac.  
(Cliffs, Rock Outcrops & Glades)

### Alternative 3

Thinning - 1,508 ac.  
    Shortleaf DFC - 1,052 ac.  
    Oak Woodlands DFC - 456 ac.  
Mid-story Treatment - 1,102 ac.  
    Shortleaf DFC - 832 ac.  
    Oak Woodlands DFC - 270ac.  
Prescribe Burning - 5,468 ac.  
(3-5 times per decade)  
Canyon Rx - 250ac.

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## Rockhouse & Hoghouse Watersheds

### Alternative 2

Restoration Patch Cuts - 63 ac.  
Site Prep (Herbicide) - 63 ac.  
Site Prep Burn - 63 ac.  
Plant Longleaf - 63 ac.

### Alternative 3

Restoration Patch Cuts - 126 ac.  
Site Prep (Herbicide) - 126 ac.  
Site Prep Burn - 126 ac.  
Plant Longleaf - 126 ac.

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## Rockhouse & Hoghouse Watersheds

### Alternative 2

Thinning - 1,215 ac.  
    Longleaf DFC - 778 ac.  
    Oak Woodlands DFC - 437 ac.  
Mid-story Treatment - 762 ac.  
Prescribe Burning - 3,222 ac.  
(2-4 times per decade)  
Canyon Rx - <382 ac.  
Rare Communities - ac.  
(Cliffs, Rock Outcrops & Glades)

### Alternative 3

Thinning - 1,152 ac.  
    Longleaf DFC - 715 ac.  
    Oak Woodlands DFC - 437 ac.  
Mid-story Treatment - 699 ac.  
Prescribe Burning - 3,222 ac.  
(3-5 times per decade)  
Canyon Rx - 382 ac.

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During the discussion of the alternatives the following items were brought forward or recommended:

The Use of Herbicides - Vince recommended the possibility of using mechanical site preparation or release on a portion of the restoration areas and using herbicides on remaining portion of areas as comparison to the treatments. Laverne emphasized the main concern related to herbicide use (as well as soil erosion) is the possible effects to ground water and streams/lakes quality in the overall watersheds around Smith Lake.

Canyon Allocations - There was discussion as to why there would be differences between alternatives 2 and 3 related to acres in canyons and rare communities - and the reasons rare community allocations were not included as an option in alternative 3. Alternative 3 will reflect the proposed canyon locations and acres from the field inventory conducted by Wild South staff. Alternative 2 will reflect acreages for canyon allocation based on Forest Service staff field review, Wild South inventory, and liaison panel discussions. Acreages not included in the initial canyon prescription could be included in rare community allocations (cliffs & rock outcrops) and riparian prescriptions.

Black Pond/Inman Quail Habitat Emphasis Area - This was highlighted. Vince asked if the woodlands in these areas would have lower residual basal areas than other woodland areas. It is anticipated that the desired conditions for woodlands will not be different, but that additional establishment of native supplemental food sources would be included.

Note: Dave did a good job of relating the 2007 work being planned in the watersheds and how the 2003 FHRP EIS provides the umbrella or framework for the desired forest and woodland communities and the planned restoration work.

### **Mid-story Removal Field Trip**

The group traveled to the Walston Ridge Area to review mid-story removal work that has been conducted for oak/pine woodlands as part of the Upper Brushy Stewardship Project. At issue is the removal of dogwoods as part of this project. The group was requested to provide perspectives, expectations for the outcomes related to mid-story treatments, and ideas on how to address the concerns for dogwoods.

A description of the work aims to remove mid-story trees/shrubs that are less than 6" in diameter at breast height. The group looked at the areas on Mt Olive Road (mid-story treatment completed), Walston Ridge Oak Woodland Demo Area (mid-story planned), and area near Brushy Lake (mid-story is planned).

There was agreement that changes should be made to retain more dogwoods in the areas being treated. The objectives of the mid-story treatments are to accelerate the return to the open woodland conditions and return of fire functions in these woodlands. The group agreed the woodland restoration objectives can be met and dogwoods protected (see actions to be taken).

There was discussion on expectations related to changes in vegetation that will occur in the areas being restored to woodlands. It is expected that some vegetation (including dogwoods and American holly) in these fire-adapted ecosystems will decline as the desired conditions are achieved. While other vegetation associated with the woodland/bluestem communities will increase. The group was on board with these expectations.

Actions to Be Taken:

Dogwoods greater than 4" in diameter at breast height will be retained (rather than 6"). Other dogwood trees not meeting the diameter size may be retained through discussions with contractors on site or by designating groups of dogwood trees for retention.

The next Bankhead Liaison Panel meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 26 in Moulton, Alabama.