

**BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST
LIAISON PANEL MEETING SUMMARY
NOVEMBER 9, 2006
MOULTON, ALABAMA**

Liaison Panel Member Attendees

Kevin Holsonback, ADCNR
Ron Eakes, ADCNR
Randy Feltman, Logger
Anthony Hood, Recreation User
Bill Snoddy, Treasure Forest Landowner
Dave Borland, The Nature Conservancy
Vince Meleski, Wild South
Mike Henshaw, Alabama Coop. Extension Service
Mary Lee Ratliff, Recreation

Additional Attendees

Daryl Lawson, Alabama A&M Univ.
Nevia Brown, Alabama A&M Univ.
Stuart Horn, Wild South
Hank Burns, Wild South
Neva Brown, Alabama A&M Univ.
Wes Stone, Alabama A&M Univ.
Mark Kolinski, Wild South
Ted Kuzma, Wild South
L. C. Hall, Resident
Janice Barrett, Wild South

Forest Service Attendees

Glen Gaines, District Ranger
Stephanie Love, Silviculturist
Allison Cochran, Wildlife Biologist
Jessica Blackwell, Forester

Meeting Agenda

The main objectives of this meeting were: (1) review and discuss purpose and need statements for the public scoping for the Grindstone/Mill Creek/Inman Watersheds and the Rockhouse/Hoghouse Watersheds; (2) introduce the planned 2007 prescription inventory work for the Corinth, Upper Rock/Long Branch, Payne, and Elam Watersheds will be introduced; (3) here the Timber/Thinning Working Group Report; (4) review and discuss proposal for the Payne Creek Shortleaf Demonstration Area; and (5) review panel business, including items to address in 2007.

6:00	Welcome	Glen Gaines Bankhead, USFS
6:15	Liaison Panel Purpose and Vision	Glen Gaines
6:30	Panel Membership Needs	Glen Gaines
6:45	Timber/Thinning Working Group Report	Vince Meleski Mike Henshaw Randy Feltman Dave Boreland

7:00	Southern Pine Beetle Report	Glen Gaines
7:15	Watershed Forest Health and Restoration Planning FY2007 Environmental Assessment and Decision-Making - Initial Purpose & Need Grindstone/Mill Creek/Inman Rockhouse/Hoghouse FY2007 Prescription Inventory Corinth Elam Longbranch/Upper Rock Payne	Stephanie Love Bankhead, USFS
8:20	Payne Creek Demonstration Project Proposal	Jeremy McDonald Bankhead, USFS
8:35	Other Business	Glen Gaines
8:45	Closeout and Schedule Next Meeting	Glen Gaines

PANEL BUSINESS

Review of the Panels Mission

Glen Gaines reviewed the mission of the panel which states "The Bankhead Liaison Panel is made of individuals that represent a diverse cross section of public interests on the Bankhead National Forest. The goal of the panel is to: (1) Learn about projects, plans, health and status of the Bankhead National Forest, (2) Communicate clearly with other Liaison Panel members about each others preferences and interests, and (3) Consider, discuss, and provide possible solutions to a variety of issues on the Bankhead. The panel aspires to develop solutions that are acceptable to all panel members or at least to a large majority of the members. The panel meetings are open to the public and the meetings provide a forum for the public to come together to learn, discuss, and help resolve difficult land management issues." The group agreed the mission is still valid and current.

Membership

Members who have not been to any recent meetings will be contacted to determine their interest in continuing on the panel. The Forest Service will send a letter and state the 2007 upcoming topics to all members of the panel.

Contacts will be made with newly elected county commissioners to invite them as members of the panel. In addition, the panel recommended the addition of a forester,

representative from the Smith Lake Association (Mr. Matheson), and a representative from Alabama Water Watch.

2007 Topics of Interest

The panel was interested in the following topics being discussed in 2007:

- Prescribed Burning - the effects of fire in canyons, steep slopes, and fire rotations
- Water Quality
- Horseback Riding - the role of the Bankhead National Forest
- Trails - Exploring development of an extended hiking trail outside the Sipsey and develop day-use trails (ie highlighting nature features such as water falls) and look for new nature watch opportunities - such as viewing towers
- Improve Signing - review directional/information signs for visitors and trial-users and explore education/interpretive signs related to the forest restoration effort

During the discussion there was a concern generated regarding reports of increasing turbidity in streams coming out of the Bankhead. The Alabama Water Watch data was cited. There was concern that the activities associated with the Bankhead restoration work, including prescribed burning, may be contributing to this. In preparing the meeting notes, the online data from Alabama Water Watch (<https://aww.auburn.edu/>) was reviewed by Glen Gaines. It listed two (2) active monitoring sites in Winston County - both on Smith Lake. There were no active monitoring sites listed for streams in the Bankhead National Forest for Winston or Lawrence Counties. The water quality topic will be brought to the panel for the group to explore in 2007 and the Alabama Water Watch will be contacted regarding their information and to participate in these discussions.

TIMBER/THINNING WORKING GROUP REPORT

Vince Meleski of Wild South presented the report for the Timber/Thinning Working Group. The group visited 4 sites that included:

Growing season burn - the group gathered baseline information.

The Moreland mulch site - the group gathered baseline information.

Southern pine beetle spot - this was a cut and remove site. There was discussion led by Charlie Mackaravitz on the impact of SPBs and a SPB predator, the clarid beetle.

Longleaf woodland site - the group gathered baseline information.

Vince will be attending a collaboration conference in Oregon to serve on a panel discussing successful collaboration projects.

SOUTHERN PINE BEETLE UPDATE

Glen provided the group with a final update on this past years southern pine beetle (SPB) outbreak. There were a total of 75 SPB spots this past year. Twenty spots, totaling approximately 58 acres, were suppressed with cut and remove (salvage timber sale) techniques and 6 spots, totaling around 7 acres, were treated with cut and leave methods.

The remaining spots were being monitored or are inactive. The Bankhead is planning for an active summer in 2007 for SPB.

WATERSHED FOREST HEALTH AND RESTORATION PLANNING

Stephanie Love provided the proposed purpose and need statements (attachment 1) that will go to the public in December as part of the public scoping to determine issues concerning planned work in the Grindstone/Mill and Inman Watersheds and in the Hoghouse/Rockhouse Watersheds.

The panel recommended the following changes to the purpose and need:

- Use the term "ecological restoration"
- Use "Southern Cumberland Plateau" rather than "Cumberland Plateau"
- Use the term "develop" or "facilitate" rather than the term "provide" as it relates to restoration - because it's going to take time and the DFC will not be achieved immediately.
- Be sure that the concept of "diversity of communities" is expressed

There was desire to better express why the project was being proposed -what does it mean to people? This type information will be provided in the environmental document as it is developed.

PAYNE CREEK SHORTLEAF PINE DEMONSTRATION AREA

Jeremy McDonald presented a proposal to establish a shortleaf pine/bluestem demonstration area (Attachment 2) adjacent to Highway 33 just north of the Sipsey River. The group discussed the concept and found the project to be promising. The panel supported moving forward with establishing the area to facilitate public education on this type work.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Bankhead Liaison Panel will be held Thursday, January 25, 2007 in Double Springs, Alabama.

ATTACHMENT 1. PRESENTATION ON FY2007 DECISION-MAKING FOR THE GRINDSTONE/MILL AND INMAN WATERSHEDS AND ROCKHOUSE/HOGHOUSE WATERSHED FOREST HEALTH AND RESTORATION WORK



FY 2007 TIMELINES

Finalize P and N Statements	Nov 2006	Nov 2006
Scope Proposal to the Public	01 Dec 2006	30 Dec 2006
Revise Preferred Alternative	01 Feb 2007	28 Feb 2007
Form Alternatives	01 Feb 2007	28 Feb 2007
Send Draft EA to the Public	Mar 2007	Mar 2007
Issue EA Decision Notice	Apr 2007	Apr 2007
Issue Analysis	01 Jan 2007	30 Jan 2007



Proposed Activities

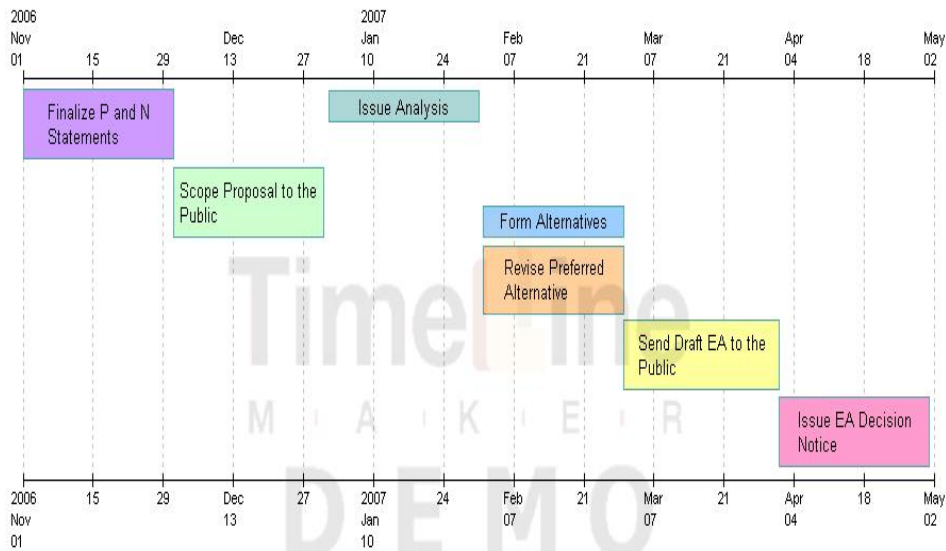
Rockhouse/Hoghouse LLP & Upland Hwd DFC

- Thin 778 acres (LLP DFC)
- Thin 437 acres (Upland Hwd DFC)
- Patch-Cut 63 acres and Plant to LLP
- Midstory treatments on 762 acres
- Improve 28 acres of Upland Wildlife Habitat including an emphasis area for quail in Blackpond
- Rx Burn 3222 acres

Grindstone/Mill and Inman SLP, Oak-Pine & Upland Hwd DFC

- Thin 1166 acres (SLP DFC)
- Thin 456 acres (Oak-Pine & Upland Hwd DFC)
- Patch-cut 72 acres and plant SLP
- Midstory treatments on 463 acres
- Improve 29 acres of Upland Wildlife Habitat including an emphasis area for quail in Inmanfield
- Rx Burn 5468 acres
- Canyon surveys completed and submitted the FS

Environmental Analysis Process for Watersheds Rockhouse/Hoghouse, Inman and Grindstone/Mill





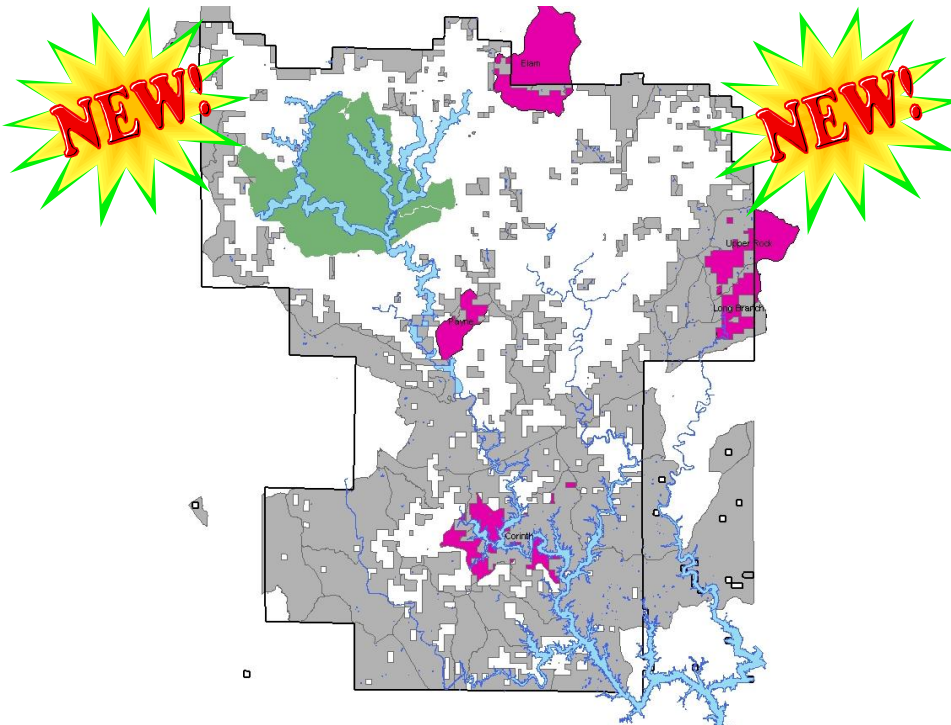
Let's Get Started by Finalizing the P and N Statements

Rockhouse/Hoghouse LLP & Upland Hwd DFC

- The purpose of this project is to restore forests native to the Cumberland Plateau Region, specifically fire adapted longleaf pine and oak woodland communities. Restoration opportunities will be focused in upland stands greater than 45 years old to maintain and improve overall forest health. The project will provide forest communities as well as plant and animal habitats, especially those of fire-dependent species, uncommon on other lands in the Cumberland Plateau.

Grindstone/Mill and Inman SLP, Oak-Pine & Upland Hwd DFC

- The purpose of this project is to restore forests native to the Cumberland Plateau Region, specifically fire adapted shortleaf pine and oak woodland communities. Restoration opportunities will be focused in upland stands greater than 45 years old to maintain and improve overall forest health. The project will provide forest communities as well as plant and animal habitats, especially those of fire-dependent species, uncommon on other lands in the Cumberland Plateau.



ATTACHMENT 2. PAYNE CREEK SHORTLEAF PINE/BLUESTEM DEMO AREA

This is our desired future condition for the area.



Payne Demo Area



DFC Shortleaf - Pine & Pine/Hardwood Woodlands
Intermediate Thin 50-70 Acres
BA Range is 123-145BA/Ac

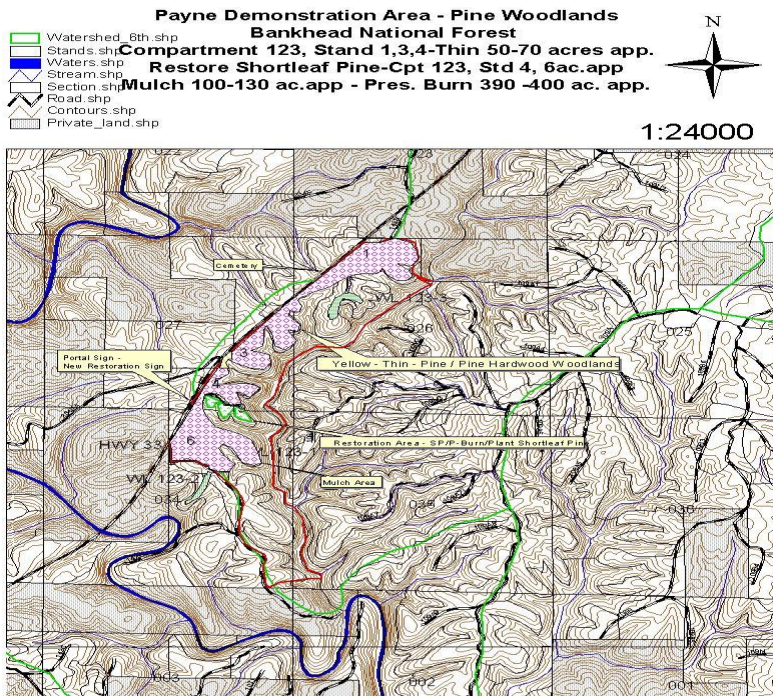
Midstory Removal 100-130 Ac.



Midstory Work - Pine Woodlands
Midstory Work - Pine Woodlands



DFC Shortleaf Pine Woodlands Restoration Area 6 acres



Outdoor Classroom



- * Universities
- * Classroom Tours
- * Public can stop and read interpretative signs on the way through the Forest
- * Educate the public about how we are currently trying to restore native ecosystems throughout the Forest

It will be easily accessible for the General Public.

