

**BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST  
LIAISON PANEL MEETING SUMMARY  
APRIL 28, 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

**Additional Attendees**

Willard Cole, Forest Service Retiree  
Thomas Tenyah, Alabama A&M Univ.  
Stuart Horn, Wild South  
Hank Burns, Wild South  
Neva Brown, Alabama A&M Univ.  
Wes Stone, Alabama A&M Univ.

**Forest Service Attendees**

Glen Gaines, District Ranger  
Tom Counts, District Wildlife Biologist  
Allison Cochran, Wildlife Biologist

**Meeting Agenda**

The objectives for this meeting is: (1) discuss in more detail the options in forest/woodland restoration, habitat improvements, and improving forest health the Grindstone/Mill Watersheds, Inman Watershed, and Rockhouse/Hoghouse Watersheds, (2) hear an update from the Timber/Thinning Working Group, and (3) hear an update from Alabama A&M University research.

6:00	Welcome	Glen Gaines
6:15	Timber/Thinning Working Group Report	Vince Meleski Mike Henshaw Randy Feltman Dave Borland
6:30	Alabama A&M Research Update Timber Harvest Methods Research	Thomas Tenyah
6:45	Watershed Forest Health and Restoration Planning Inman Watershed Grindstone and Mill Watersheds Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds	Glen Gaines
8:30	Closeout and Schedule Next Meeting	Glen Gaines

## **Timber/Thinning Working Group Report**

Vince Meleski of Wild South provided the group an update of the Timber/Thinning Working Group. The group has collected much baseline information on areas to be thinned, site prepped and restored to native forests, prescribed burned, and mid-story treatments. The group had no negative findings report. Vince provided presentation on before and after for the Wilborn Ford mid-story treatment for restoring fire adapted communities.

## **Alabama A&M Research Update - Timber Harvest Methods Research**

Alabama A&M University is involved in a \$5 million research partnership with the Bankhead National Forest. The University is researching effects of the forest health and restoration program on vegetation, wildlife, soil/water, and human dimensions. Thomas Tenyah provided an overview of the research comparing traditional tree length logging method vs. cut-to-length logging method. The research is comparing the effects on soil, vegetation, and erosion potential. Preliminary findings show there is no overall differences in the methods.

## **Watershed Forest Health and Restoration Planning**

The group continued discussions (from January meeting and April field trip) on the proposed forest restoration work within the Inman, Grindstone, Mill, Rockhouse, and Hoghouse Watersheds covering 12,467 acres on the Bankhead National Forest. Gaines gave a summary of the proposed work in the projects (See attached presentation).

The rate of restoration, restoration methods, and restoring ecological conditions/functions were discussed.

The rate of restoring the desired forest communities were discussed for the current decade. In the Rockhouse/Hoghouse Watersheds the rate of restoration is approximately 11.4% of the loblolly pine converted to desired forest/woodland conditions for this decade. In the Inman Watershed the rate of restoration is approximately 27% of the loblolly pine converted to the desired forest/woodland condition for this decade. In the Mill/Grindstone Watersheds the rate of restoration is approximately 9.3% of the loblolly pine converted to desired forest/woodland conditions for this decade.

The methods named by the group included letting the loblolly naturally die out, thinning loblolly back to open conditions and plant shortleaf or longleaf, remove all loblolly through timber harvest and plant, using small group selection or patch cuts and plant, and through favoring hardwood species during loblolly thinnings where hardwood is desired condition.

The group agreed that for the first decade the rate of restoration should be slow and that the priority now should be on restoring the fire-adapted open woodland conditions/functions and the associated habitats for wildlife and plants.

The next meeting of the Bankhead Liaison Panel will be Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup> in Double Springs.

# The Next Step in Restoring Native Forests and Woodlands Watershed Prescriptions

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## Inman watershed proposed activities

Thinning (DFC Shortleaf Woodlands)	– 682 ac
Thinning (dfc oak/ hickory forest)	– 204 AC
Restoration cut (plant shortleaf)	– 50 ac
Prescribed burning (3 units)	– 2378 ac
Upland wildlife habitat imp.	– est. 8 -10 AC
Mid-story removal treatments	– 162 AC
Watershed improvement work	– est. 4 to 5 AC
Canyon designation	– 100 to 150 ac

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## Mil I / Grindstone Creek Watershed Proposed Activities

- Thinning (dfc shortleaf woodlands) – 230\* acres
- Thinning (dfc oak/ hickory forest ) – 136 acres
- Patch cuts and plant shortleaf – 107 acres
- Patch cuts with natural reg. hdwd. – 10 acres
- Prescribed burning (3 units) – 3090 acres
- Upl and wil dl if e habitat improvement – 19 acres
- Mid-story treatments – 219 acres
- Non-native, invasive species control – 17 acres
- Canyon designation

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## Rockhouse/ Hoghouse Watersheds Proposed Activities

- Thinning (DFC Longleaf Woodlands) – 1034 ac
- Thinning (dfc oak woodlands) – 37 ac
- Thinning (dfc oak/ hickory forests) – 348 ac
- Spb/ Patch cuts & plant to longleaf – 60 ac
- Hurricane Rita II restoration – 88 acres
- Spb and natural hardwood reg. – 24 acres
- Prescribed burning (6 units) – 3222 acres
- Mid-story treatments – 687 acres
- Non-native, invasive plant control – 10 acres
- Upl and wil dl if e habitat imp. – 28 acres

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