



Decision Memo

South Tornado Cleanup

USDA Forest Service

Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area

Stewart County, Tennessee

Purpose and Need:

Through extensive remote sensing and ground surveys, we have identified approximately 3,000 acres of National Forest System lands affected by the tornado event which occurred in December 2021. The timber salvage project is needed to remove damaged trees within the affected stands. This will include fallen trees and standing damaged trees. The primary purpose for removing damaged trees is for public safety. Secondary benefits include stand resiliency against insects and disease and opening the forest canopy to let in sunlight, thus encouraging natural regeneration of the stands. A tertiary benefit of the project will also provide marketable timber for the local economy. The efforts are situated in the far south portion of LBLNRA in Stewart County, Tennessee.

Proposed Action:

Activities would include the following:

- Commercial timber salvage of up to 3,000 acres within the project area. We anticipate only harvesting damaged stands which have been identified within the affected area.
- Return the affected area to a safe condition for public use.

Authority

This project is categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it fits the following category:

Applicable Category: Insect and Disease Infestation. Section 603 of HFRA (16 U.S.C.6591b) (FSH 1909.15, 32.3(5)) (DM Required)

Decision

I have decided to authorize the activities described in the proposed action, including any modifications that resulted from environmental analysis and review of legal and regulatory compliance.

I find that there are no issues which would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether issues might exist:



- ◆ Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – Based on a BA, the proposed project was found not to have significant negative effects to species found within the project area.
- ◆ Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – Based on soil, watershed, and hydrologic review, there are no negative impacts anticipated from the proposed project.
- ◆ Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – There are no Congressionally designated wilderness or wilderness study areas in LBLNRA.
- ◆ Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – There are no roadless areas in LBLNRA.
- ◆ Research natural areas – No established Research Natural Areas exist within LBLNRA.
- ◆ American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – Review of records along with tribal consultation show that any actions from the proposed project should not result in any significant degree of effect.
- ◆ Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – There are **no** known prehistoric heritage sites or historic Native American sites within the areas impacted by the tornados. There are some historic heritage sites within the impacted area. The locations of those known heritage sites have been sent to the team coordinating salvage clean-up. No significant degree of effect is anticipated from the proposed project.

Public Involvement

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the LBLNRA Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. The scoping period was initiated on March 21st, 2022 through April 19th, 2022. The scoping newsletter inviting public comment was sent to state, local governments, stakeholders, adjacent landowners, Native American Tribes and other interested persons. Native American Tribes who were contacted before and during the scoping period include:

Absentee Shawnee Tribe
Cherokee Nation
Chickasaw Nation
Eastern Shawnee Tribe
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians

An electronic mailing through GOV DELIVERY was utilized to increase transparency and reach an additional 322 subscribed individuals.



The following list represents a portion of those who were notified of scoping:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
NRCS
USFWS
National Wild Turkey Federation
The Nature Conservancy
KY Forestry Industry
TN Wildlife Federation
TWRA
TN Forestry Association (TFA)
KY Nature Preserves Commission
Kentucky Lock Resident Office
Kentucky Heartwood
Sierra Club
Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever

This project was made available for meaningful public comment.

No public comments were received during the public scoping period or the immediate days following.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the LBLNRA Land Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with LRMP and HFRA guidance.

LRMP CONSISTENCY

This project is consistent with Goals 1 and 2 of the LBLNRA Land and Resource Management Plan (2004).

Goal 1: Prioritize projects to provide the greatest recreation, environmental education, and resource stewardship benefits.

Goal 2: Emphasize partnerships and cooperation with citizen groups, community businesses, private corporations, tourism organizations, and government agencies.

Administrative Review (Appeal) Opportunities

There is no objection process required under this authority.

Implementation Date

Implementation for this project is anticipated to begin in late April to early May, 2022.



Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Andy Mowrey, Area Planner, LBLNRA, 100 Van Morgan Dr, Golden Pond, KY 42211, 270-924-2131.

Leisa Cook
Area Supervisor

Date

We make every effort to create documents that are accessible to individuals of all abilities; however, limitations with our word processing programs may prevent some parts of this document from being readable by computer-assisted reading devices. If you need assistance with any part of this document, please contact Land Between the Lakes NRA at 270-924-2000.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.