

Forest Wide Vegetation Management Project Fact Sheet

The Ozark-St. Francis National Forests have had a long history of stewardship, in the Ozark National Forest since 1908 and the St. Francis National Forest since 1960. In these areas, we manage 1.2 million acres of forest lands. As stewards of the public’s land, we use our experience on the landscape to achieve various management purposes, while striving to meet our Forest Service mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of our forests to meet the needs of present and future generations. New science and technologies have given us more tools to use when planning treatments on the landscape.

ACTIVE MANAGEMENT
 employs the use of silvicultural methods and forest management practices including timber harvesting, thinning, planting, prescribed fire, non-native invasive species control, and other practices that improve wildlife habitat and forest health to reach desired forest objectives and future conditions.

WHAT’S NEW?
 A different planning approach is being taken with this project. Rather than repeating our analysis on many smaller project areas, we are analyzing the effects to resources from vegetation management activities on a **landscape scale**. Our objectives are to continue to maintain and improve watershed and ecological conditions across the Forests and provide economic opportunities for local communities. These objectives would **increase the Forests’ resilience** to disturbance (insect, wildfire, storms, etc.), **restore connectivity** for wildlife throughout the landscape, and **provide wood** for local markets. This project will continue to build upon the restoration work already completed and would further shift the Forests’ landscape toward the desired future conditions outlined in the **2005 Ozark-St. Francis National Forests’ Revised Land and Resource Management Plan**.



Right: Pine woodland after midstory removal.

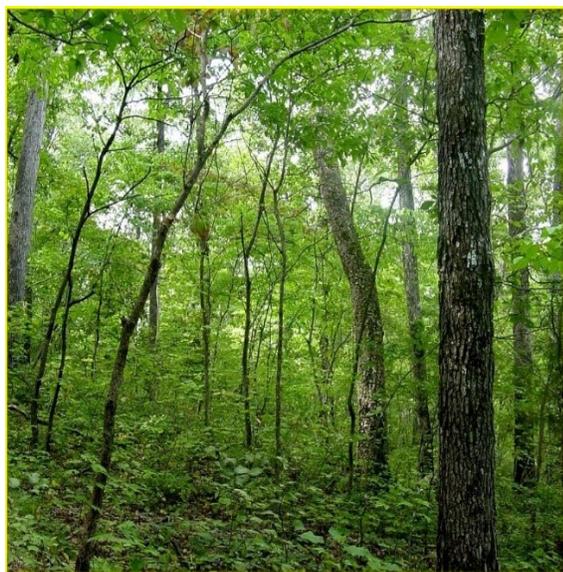
Left: Indiana bat habitat: untreated to left of road, treated to right of road.

- PROPOSED VEGETATION TREATMENT CATEGORIES:**
- ⇒ Commercial Timber Harvest
 - ⇒ Regeneration Harvest
 - ⇒ Timber Stand Improvement
 - ⇒ Wildlife Stand Improvement
 - ⇒ Openings
 - ⇒ Planting
 - ⇒ Non-Native Invasive Plants Treatment
 - ⇒ Prescribed Burning



OVERVIEW: The number of acres treated annually across the Forest would not differ greatly from what is described in the Forest Plan, and the landscape would still be dominated by mature stands of native trees. One goal of this project is to add flexibility by removing constraints and incorporating new and evolving science to respond to shifting conditions and address damage caused by natural disturbance events. For this project, we would develop a decision tree so it is clear how we are making management decisions on the forest landscape based on specific conditions we encounter. With this approach, more focus would be given to implementing work, and we could rapidly respond to changing conditions, achieving more effective, meaningful outcomes.

To accomplish forest health and wildlife objectives across the landscape, active vegetation management tools (e.g., tree cutting, prescribed fire, and reforestation) and connected activities (e.g., temporary road and fire line construction) will be proposed and analyzed. Site-specific prescriptions would assign a series of treatments based on what is needed to improve conditions and achieve desired future conditions. Many management constraints are already outlined in the Forest Plan, and additional measures will be considered within this proposal to protect sensitive resources from the impacts of management actions.



Above: Unhealthy, typical mature hardwood stand without treatments



Below: Healthy, typical mature hardwood stand after thinning and burning

WHAT ABOUT NEPA?

While this project may appear different from past projects, the analysis would still be conducted according to the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

We want to hear from you!

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