



FACT SHEET



United States Department of Agriculture
Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

United States Department of Interior
Web: <http://www.doi.gov>

Making a Difference Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests - South Carolina



The Healthy Forests Initiative provided the tools necessary for the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests to develop an effective, simple, and quick method for first thinning young pine stands and to retain the receipts from the timber sales to accomplish resource work already identified in the NEPA process. The First Loblolly Pine Thinning Project would not have been possible without the expanded stewardship contracting authority enacted as part of HFI in 2002.

Approximately 25,000 acres on the Francis Marion and 200,000 acres on the Sumter National Forests are composed of overstocked stands that need thinning and burning to reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health. Fragmentation of the forests and increasing urbanization make prescribed burning more difficult. In addition, markets are not currently in place for extensive use of biomass, i.e., wood chips.

The first thinning of the pine plantations stewardship project had two objectives:

- Develop an effective, simple, and quick method of first thinning young pine stands
- Retain the receipts from the timber sales to accomplish resource work already identified in the NEPA process

The method developed for first thinnings was to measure volume by weight rather than by marking, which is a calculated estimate. This effective, simple, and quick method reduces risk factor for purchasers. Purchasers once unwilling to bid on young first thinnings are now competing for these sales.

The expected outcome includes healthier stands, improved wildlife habitat, reduced wildfire danger, and reduced risks from Southern Pine Beetle infestations.

This proposal included five timber sales in fiscal 03 and one in fiscal 04. Four of the sales from fiscal 03 have been awarded for a total of 2,100 acres. The sales are expected to be completed by the end of 2006. The fiscal 04 sale - FM Barnette Island for 423 acres - has been advertised.

One fiscal 03 sale (Co-op Pond) was completed July 16, 2004. Proceeds from this sale (\$34,772.03) were retained specifically to fund the following on-the-ground activities. The work was completed through a contract with the National Wild Turkey Federation, a non-profit organization headquartered in Edgefield, SC.

- Prescribed burned 1,328 acres to improve wild turkey habitat, Long Cane Ranger District, Sumter National Forest
- This is the first time that prescribed burning was done in the forests by a contractor. (Contract costs \$25,431.20, \$19.15 per acre)
- Improve wildlife opening on about five acres, Prices Bottom Wildlife Opening, Long Cane Ranger District, will be completed later this summer. (About \$5,500)

Money from the Co-op Pond sale (\$3,841) also helped fund the final project in the prescribed fire and wildlife habitat improvement stewardship proposal that included one sale.

- This small timber sale removed pine from a 62-acre hardwood stand. (Retained receipts from this small sale were \$594.)
 - This sale and related projects, such as planting chufa, will improve habitat for wild turkeys. The contractor for this project is also the National Wild Turkey Federation. Expected completion is spring 2005.
 - Total project cost is \$4,435.

HFI provided the tools that the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests needed to accomplish more burning than would have been possible with appropriated funds.

For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/hfi/> or <http://www.doi.gov/hfi/newhfi/>

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