



File Code: 1950-3

Date: June 1, 2007

Dear Interested Party

You are receiving this letter because you have expressed an interest in the Allegheny Wood Products (“AWP”) Easement proposal. On 23 December 2005, the Forest Service announced the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public review. A copy of the DEIS is available on the Forest’s website at:

www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf/environmental/nepa_documents/nepa_index.htm.

This letter provides notice of an additional opportunity to comment on the proposal. Several letters asked for more information on AWP trail maintenance and improvement activities on the Blackwater Canyon Trail. In response, we requested and received information from AWP concerning the nature and frequency of trail maintenance activities and the type of equipment they plan to use on the Trail.

To give you an opportunity to comment on the additional information, we are attaching it and posting it on the Forest website for your review. We invite you to submit comments you may have concerning the use of the AWP information about planned trail maintenance and improvement activities on the Blackwater Canyon Trail. There is no need to repeat or resubmit comments you have already made on the EIS since those comments are already being considered. Comments will be accepted for 30 days following the publication of the updated Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. We anticipate publication will be on June 15, 2007.

Please send written comments to Clyde Thompson, Forest Supervisor, Monongahela National Forest, at 200 Sycamore Street, Elkins, West Virginia, 26241. Send electronic comments to comments-eastern-monongahela-potomac@fs.fed.us. Electronic comments should have ‘Allegheny Wood Products Easement EIS’ on the subject line. The acceptable formats for electronic comments include Microsoft Word (.doc) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). Faxed comments should be sent to (304) 637-0582, or you may provide comments by phone to Bill Shields, NEPA Coordinator, at (304) 636-1800, ext. 287. Comments may also be hand delivered between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, to the Supervisors Office in Elkins, West Virginia.

For additional information please contact Bill Shields, NEPA Coordinator, at (304) 636-1800, ext. 287, or at comments-eastern-monongahela-potomac@fs.fed.us. You may also contact David Ede, Planning Staff Officer, at the Supervisors Office address listed above or at (304) 636-1800, ext. 233.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and



considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments may not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215.

Only those who submit timely comments will have standing and thus be accepted as appellants. Those who submitted during the original comment period between December 23, 2005 and February 7, 2007 do not need to submit additional comments to have standing. To be eligible for appeal, each individual or representative from each organization submitting comments must either sign the comments or verify their identity upon request.

Thank you for your interest in the Monongahela National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Clyde N. Thompson
CLYDE N. THOMPSON
Forest Supervisor



February 27, 2007

Mr. Clyde Thompson
Forest Supervisor
Monongahela National Forest
200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Clyde:

I am writing to follow-up on our phone conversation concerning AWP's anticipated forest management - related uses of the easement along the abandoned railroad grade on the north side of the Blackwater River in Tucker County. Some examples of activities would be access for timber cruising, marking and harvesting; periodic inspections to evaluate the success of timber stand improvement, thinning or regeneration harvests; insect or disease outbreak evaluation and overall forest health analysis; road maintenance/improvement activities; and fire suppression activities.

The frequency and duration of the activities could vary greatly from once a month during routine inspections of the road and adjacent forestland to daily use during timber harvests. Assuming reasonable weather conditions, I would anticipate daily use (Monday -Friday) of the grade for a two to six month period. After an initial harvest AWP would retire the harvest area for a lengthy period. Assuming no significant event (forest fire, insect or disease outbreak, or severe windstorm) which would require a salvage operation, we would plan another entry for the next timber harvest in ten to fifteen years. The initial road improvement activities would be accomplished during the initial timber harvest. After that, periodic inspections of the road would involve driving a pickup or ATV along the road and would take no more than one to two hours. Outside of major damage to the road by a significant storm event (a lesser risk after we have improved the presently un-maintained railroad grade), routine maintenance of the road should be able to be accomplished with a small dozer, grader, and backhoe and should have a minimal affect on the recreational use of the grade. Some examples of routine maintenance would be cleaning out the ditches, opening plugged culverts, re-grading the road surface, and application of gravel.

Please review this information and let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely

Kelly S. Riddle

Vice President of Forest Resources

Main Office

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Petersburg, WV 26847

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ALLEGHENY WOOD PRODUCTS, INC.



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P.O. Box 130
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(304) 329-3895
April 5, 2007

Mr. Clyde Thompson
Forest Supervisor
Monongahela National Forest
200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Clyde:

I am writing to follow up on your request for additional information concerning AWP's proposed easement on the abandoned railroad grade on the north side of the Blackwater River. Several variables can affect the amount of time needed to upgrade the railroad grade and conduct timber harvesting, including inclement weather, mechanical breakdowns, number of logging crews, etc.

Currently the railroad grade is in a terrible state. Sink holes, erosion, and slippage of the Forest Service hillside are creating dangerous conditions. It is basically impossible for the public to remain only on the federal side of the grade. If an easement is granted, reconstruction of the road will make this area safer and more usable for the general public, the USFS and AWP.

It is our intention to perform the initial reconstruction activities during the harvesting operation and this entire process could take approximately six months. However, if we need to conduct the reconstruction process first due to seasonal harvesting conditions, I anticipate the grade to be completed within a two-month period. Work in this area would be conducted five days a week (Monday through Friday).

The road construction efforts could include re-grading (removal of brush and small trees and initial smoothing of the surface) with a dozer, ditching the upper side using an excavator, installing culverts where necessary, and applying limestone where needed. It is anticipated that the road will be widened to ten to fifteen feet on each side of the center line in the curves and less on the straight sections and will be ditched on the upper side of the trail. AWP will work with the USFS to maintain and protect the historical structures. If necessary, temporary "bridges" could be utilized over sensitive areas to help reduce the weight. Best management practices will be used to ensure that continued erosion of the grade would be minimized.

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Sawmills
Dry Kilns

Dimension
Panels

Mr. Clyde Thompson
Forest Supervisor
Monongahela National Forest
April 5, 2007
Page 2

The primary use of the road during harvesting operations will be for pickup trucks or ATVs to transport workers, tri-axes and/or tractor trailers to haul logs to the mill. The entire length of the road could be utilized. Logging will be conducted using conventional logging equipment, including skidders, bulldozer, sawbuck and log loader. It is possible that some sections of the grade could be skidded on depending on the availability of adequate landing sites.

Following the initial road reconstruction and harvesting, AWP will monitor the area periodically to ensure maintenance of the road and the health of the forest. It is anticipated that harvesting will occur approximately every 12 – 15 years.

We look forward to working with you to successfully implement this easement to accomplish all of our collective goals.

Sincerely,



Kelly S. Riddle *KS*
Vice President Forest Resources

Cc: John Crites Sr.
John Crites Jr.