

Information Sheet

Shock Run Prescribed Burn Project

Background Information: The proposed Shock Run Prescribed Burn Project occurs within the same general area as the Shock Run Timber Sale, which was analyzed in the Shock Run Timber Sale Environmental Assessment (EA). The project area is within Pocahontas County, West Virginia, approximately 17 miles northeast of Marlinton, borders SR 84 to the south and SR 92 to the west, Jake's Run to the north, and the West Virginia/Virginia state line to the east.

The Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impacts/Decision Notice (DN/FONSI) for the Shock Run Timber Sale EA was signed in May 2000. That decision included timber harvesting and post-harvest prescribed burning (229 acres), temporary road construction for access (about 0.3 mile), herbicide treatment to control competing understory vegetation (about 204 acres), and wildlife openings/savannah development (9 acres).

The Shock Run Timber Sale EA had a stated goal to favor regeneration of oak species. The prescribed burning was included in the project to help achieve this goal. Deferring the prescribed burning by several years allows for oak seedlings to become established. Once established, these fire-tolerant oak seedlings would survive the prescribed fire while other undesired, fire-intolerant species would not.

All timber harvest on the Shock Run Timber Sale has now been completed, along with the road construction, herbicide treatment, and wildlife openings/savannah development. Prescribed burning has also been performed on five harvest units, totaling approximately 99 acres. Through monitoring, the Forest has determined that all but one of five units meet the desired outcomes and we anticipate similar success with the remaining burns. Thus, this unit will receive another prescribed burn, to ensure the desired results are accomplished. This unit is within Burn D on the attached topographic map. The decision to implement another prescribed burn on this unit is under the 2000 Shock Run Timber Sale EA DN/FONSI.

Prescribed burns are scheduled to occur on the six remaining harvest units in 2009, and the one unit that needs to receive another prescribed burn, totalling approximately 122 acres (These acres are already approved to receive prescribed burns under the Shock Run Timber Sale DN/FONSI 2000). However, as the Forest builds on our prescribed burning experience, we are learning how to better achieve desired outcomes. We are proposing to adjust our burn plans for the remaining Shock Run units in an effort to protect Forest resources, reduce costs and increase safety.

Proposed Action (What and Where): The district is proposing to expand the prescribed burning area beyond the boundaries of the remaining six Shock Run Timber Sale harvest units and the one harvest unit that needs to receive another prescribed burn to make use of geographic features such as roads, ridgelines and drainages to contain the fire. Where needed, we would develop burn control lines (hand and dozer construction) to link these features and contain the fire. By maximizing use of geographic features, we can reduce the relative amount of burn control lines needed, thus saving money and

reducing mechanical disturbance to the forest floor. A broader burn area would also allow for more flexibility in the types of conditions in which we can burn, providing our employees with safer burn conditions and a greater likelihood of success in accomplishing our burn objectives. An additional benefit of the increased burn area would be to develop a more open stand structure that likely existed prior to a period of fire suppression as well as providing improved foraging, brooding and nesting habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

This proposal would result in four separate burn areas totaling 584 acres (This acreage is the addition to the 122 acres, already approved) to the as follows and displayed on the attached map (Map 1-2) :

<i>Burn Area</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Approx. Miles of Burn Line</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>0.62</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>0.51</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>0.12</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>0.29</i>
TOTAL	584	1.54

Purpose Of and Need for Action (Why): The purpose and need for this project is to create burn plans that are safer, more cost-effective, and less complex, thus maximizing likelihood of success in meeting vegetation management objectives. In addition, extending the prescribed burn areas beyond the harvesting units would take advantage of natural features to be used for control lines. The Forest Service’s top priority when implementing the prescribed burns is to ensure the firefighter and the public is safe. The Monongahela National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2006) directs the Forest Service to “make firefighter and public safety the first priority in all fire management activities.” (Forest Plan page II-14).

Preliminary Issues: The affects of the proposal on sensitive, threatened, and endangered species and their habitat is the preliminary issue. Once this public comment period is complete, the team will determine whether or not this is a significant issue to drive alternative(s).

Decision to Be Made: The District Ranger expects to make a decision for this project in December, 2007 on whether to implement the proposed action as described above; to meet the purpose and need through some other combination of activities; or to defer any action at this time.

Comment Form
Shock Run Prescribed Burn Project

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Email (Optional): _____

Comments:

I wish to receive the following documents:

- Shock Run Prescribed Burn EA (approx. 10-20 pages)
- I prefer to receive these documents on a CD