



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

National Forests in North Carolina
Pisgah National Forest
Grandfather Ranger District

109 E Lawing Dr
Nebo, NC 28761-9827
828-652-2144

File Code: 1950

Date: October 4, 2007

Dear Interested Members of the Public and Forest Users:

After a lengthy analysis process, I have reached my decision on the Globe Project. I recognize there has been considerable interest and concern regarding the project and therefore my decision was not an easy decision to reach. In reaching a decision on a controversial project such as the Globe Project, I rely on the goals, direction, and standards prescribed in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Plan, Amendment 5 and the analyses located in the project record and documented in the EA as the basis for my decision. I hope you will take the time to review my decision and my rationale for the alternative I selected as well as the alternatives I did not select.

Enclosed you will find the signed the Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Globe Environmental Assessment (EA) within the Grandfather Ranger District. The DN describes in full the alternative selected for this project as well as selected mitigating measures and project design features. We have enclosed the DN & FONSI; however, due to the high volume of paper needed to print the EA along with the Agency's response to comments, I am making these documents available on the National Forests in North Carolina web site at: www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/nepa/nepa.htm. If you wish to receive a hardcopy of any of these documents you may contact us by phone at: 828-652-2144 or e-mail at: comments-southern-north-carolina-pisgah-grandfather@fs.fed.us.

My decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. Those who provided comments or otherwise expressed interest in the proposed action by the close of the comment period(s) have eligibility to appeal the decision (as per the recent *The Wilderness Society v. Rey* ruling). Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. A written appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date this notice is published in *The McDowell News*, the Grandfather Ranger District's newspaper of record. The appeal shall be sent to National Forests in North Carolina, ATTN: Appeals Deciding Officer, 160 Suite A Zillicoa Street, Asheville, North Carolina, 28801. Appeals may be faxed to (828) 257-4263. Hand-delivered appeals must be received within normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appeals may also be mailed electronically in a common digital format to: appeals-southern-north-carolina@fs.fed.us. For further information on this decision you may contact Michael Hutchins, Pisgah National Forest NEPA Coordinator at 828-682-6146.

I appreciate the input provided by concerned members of the public on this project.

Sincerely,

JOY W. MALONE
District Ranger

Enclosure





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Southern Region
Forest Service

October
2007



Globe Project

Decision Notice

And

Finding Of No Significant Impact

**Grandfather Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest
Avery, Caldwell, and Watauga Counties, North Carolina**

Decision Notice
& Finding of No Significant Impact

Globe Project

USDA Forest Service
Grandfather Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest
Avery, Caldwell, and Watauga Counties, North Carolina

Decision and Rationale

Decision

Based upon my review of the alternatives, I have decided to select a modified **Alternative D** (Selected Alternative) of the Globe Project Environmental Assessment (EA – see Section 2.2.4, Chapter 2) on the Grandfather Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest and the Project Design Features listed in Section 2.4, Table 3.12, Chapter 3; Appendix A; and Appendix F of the EA. The modification would change the seasonal road closure to January 1 – March 31. The Selected Alternative will:

- ◇ Harvest about 212 acres using the two-age regeneration harvest prescription (15-20 ft² average basal area retained per acre in the Frankum Creek area and 30 ft² average basal area retained per acre in the Thunderhole area where cutting units are potentially visible from one or more viewpoints near the town of Blowing Rock). Average size of cutting units in Thunderhole area is 11 acres.
- ◇ Use and maintain the existing road system. As part of road maintenance, daylight approximately two miles of Frankum Creek Road (FSR 188) by harvesting merchantable timber within 15 feet of both sides of the vegetative edge of the road. This action is for road maintenance reasons due to higher maintenance level assigned to this road and not for wildlife reasons.
- ◇ Develop approximately 1.5 miles of new temporary road to access stands 13-18, 14-9, 14-12/13-11/13-21, 33-11, 35-11/35-23/35-1, 37-5a, 37-5b, 37-9, 38-7, 39-4/39-13, and 14-1. Following harvest activities, temporary roads, skid roads, and log landings will be appropriately shaped, waterbarred, disked and seeded with an erosion-control seed mix. All new temporary roads will be permanently closed and any new stream crossings on these roads are considered temporary and will be removed.
- ◇ Improve about 0.8 miles of existing old woods roads to access stands 13-7/13-19 and 14-12/13-11/13-21. Following harvest activities, existing unauthorized roads will be placed on the Forest's Transportation System as authorized roads, stabilized (i.e. shaped, waterbarred, and seeded with an erosion-control seed mix) and closed for administrative use only. These roads could be used again in approximately 10-15 years to access additional stands for management—future NEPA analysis will be necessary prior to entry.
- ◇ Create up to 12 acres of permanent grass and forb habitat.
- ◇ Three years following harvest, regenerated stands would be checked for overcrowding and/or desired species composition. If needed, herbicides (Glyphosate and Triclopyr) and/or manual thinning methods would be used to achieve desired stocking and composition.
- ◇ Use herbicides (Glyphosate and Triclopyr) to control/manage invasive exotic plants along Forest Service Roads (FSRs) and log landings (about 5 acres).
- ◇ Plant individuals or groups of old variety apple trees in log landings.
- ◇ Designate 311 acres (total) of small patch old growth communities in compartments 12 (50 acres), 13 (50 acres), 14 (50 acres), 35 (108 acres), and 37 (53 acres).
- ◇ Daylight approximately two miles of Frankum Creek Road (FSR 188) by harvesting merchantable timber within 15 feet of both sides of the vegetative edge of the road – action is for road maintenance reasons due to higher maintenance level assigned to this road and not for wildlife reasons.
- ◇ Re-install a gate on the Thunderhole Road just before China Creek that was damaged by members of the public and seed the area with a

wildlife and wild flower mix (about 3 acres). The gate is proposed to reduce impacts to wildlife, recreation, aquatic resources, and water quality.

- ◊ Re-install a gate at the entrance to Thunderhole Road which would be seasonally closed for wildlife, non-motorized recreation, and road maintenance. As stated earlier, I have modified this action to change the seasonal road closure to January 1 – March 31 to better provide access for fishing and other appropriate recreational uses.

Project Design Features

In order to ensure that scenic values are maintained and the visual quality objectives for the area are met or exceeded, I am requiring the following project design features for units in the Thunderhole Creek portion of the project, which are the units potentially visible from around the town of Blowing Rock:

- 1) Maintain an un-cut 100 foot buffer from edge of state road-- Stands 35-1/35-23;37-5b; 37-9;
- 2) Maintain an average of 30 rba/ac minimum in harvest area—all stands
- 3) Locate unit boundary one tree height below ridge—Stand 33-11
- 4) Burn or lop & scatter slash to within 2 feet of ground for 100 feet beyond edge of road or trail.—Stands 37-5a;38-7
- 5) Feather upper unit boundary over a 100 foot distance—Stands 33-11; 37-9; 39-4/39-13; 39-15.
- 6) Maintain uncut vegetative screen at least one tree height below road—Stands 33-11; 39-4/39-13.
- 7) Screen log landings from view, and restore as close to original contour as practical—Stands 33-11; 35-1/35-23; 37-5a; 37-5b; 37-9; 38-7; 39-4/39-13; 39-15.
- 8) To extent practical, burn or lop & scatter slash to within 4 feet of ground for 150 feet below cable landings or utilize for firewood gathering—Stand 33-11.
- 9) For 50 feet beyond state road, restore temporary roads and bladed skid trails to original contour, and plant native shrubs at entrance to mask disturbance—Stand 37-9.

(For more detail see Section 3.7.3.5, Chapter 3 in the EA.)

The following project design features are also required for the project (see also Section 2.4, Chapter 2 and Appendix F in the EA):

- ◊ Marking guidelines would include priority residual tree species of; white oak, red oak, hickory, black oak, and chestnut oak, where they occur. In addition, two 12 inch diameter or larger diameter black gum species would be left as residuals within every 10 acres, where they occur. (Purpose is for wildlife habitat and vegetation diversity).
- ◊ Stand 37-5b exhibits a large boulder complex with evidence of woodrat nesting use between the existing woods road within the stand and State Road 1367. Any harvesting would exclude this area and trees immediately surrounding this boulder complex would be left during harvest and any subsequent release work planned. (Purpose is for habitat protection of a Forest Concern wildlife species).
- ◊ To reduce the possibility of spreading invasive plants, known populations of *Miscanthus sinensis*, *Paulownia tomentosa*, *Celastrus orbiculatas*, and *Ailanthus altissima* should be treated prior to disturbance activities. *Miscanthus sinensis* was found along Forest Service Roads. All populations total less than one acre. Control of *Miscanthus sinensis*, *Paulownia tomentosa*, and *Ailanthus altissima* is most easily and effectively done by herbicide (Glyphosphate). (Purpose is to reduce spread of non-native invasive plant species).
- ◊ Temporary crossings of ephemeral streams would include temporary bridges or armoring with stone or brush.
- ◊ Native plants would be used in permanent wildlife improvements and roadside erosion control. (Purpose is to reduce spread of non-native invasive plant species).
- ◊ Exclude a 150-foot area near station 8+50 on the Frankum Creek Road from daylighting to provide protection to the *Cabystegia catesbeiana ssp. sericata* (Catesby's false bindweed) population. (Purpose is for habitat protection of a Forest Concern botanical species).

Monitoring

The following monitoring will be implemented for the project:

- ◇ National objectives include reducing impacts from invasive species and improving the effectiveness of treating selected invasive species on the Nation's forests and grasslands. Survey areas would be established to monitor control efforts. Survey areas would be established before control treatment, checked during treatment, and within nine months after treatment. A post-treatment evaluation report would be completed and filed in the project file. Purpose is to monitor effectiveness of treatments.

In addition, in recognition of the high level of public concern about potential impacts I am requiring the following additional monitoring actions during and after implementation of this project:

- ◇ Forest Service Landscape Architect will meet with District personnel to discuss tree marking specifications, and landing/cable corridor layout. Purpose is to review leave tree density and road, landing, and cable corridor screening.
- ◇ Forest Service Landscape Architect will meet on site with sale administrator during harvest of stands 33-11, 35-1, & 35-23. Purpose is to review leave tree density, screening buffers, and slash treatment.
- ◇ Forest Service Landscape Architect will conduct photo monitoring from analyzed viewpoints immediately after harvest, and 1, 2, & 5 growing seasons after harvest. Purpose is to insure compliance with assigned Visual Quality Objectives (VQO), and to develop a remediation plan if VQO's are not met.

My decision is based on a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk.

Rationale

The purpose and need for the proposal is disclosed in Section 1.4, Chapter 1 and summarized below:

- ◇ Improve habitat conditions for species such as eastern wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and white-tailed deer by dispersing early successional habitat (ESH) across the landscape. This also serves as foraging habitat for black bear. Periodically creating a regulated amount of 0-10 year age class in MAs 3B and 4A (Forest Plan, page III-31) accomplishes this.
- ◇ Add to the designated network of old growth communities across the landscape that serves as permanent reservoirs of biological diversity (Forest Plan, pages III-26 and III-27).
- ◇ Control/manage pest populations with pesticides (Glyphosate and Triclopyr herbicide) (Forest Plan, page III-52). Specifically, to reduce infestations of non-native invasive plants.

I believe the Selected Alternative will move the resources in the project area towards the desired future condition, achieving the purpose and need for the project while considering the public's concerns. (See Appendix H for public comment themes and the Agency's response.)

In reaching my decision, I began by once again reviewing the purpose and need for the project and all of the alternatives presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA). I then carefully weighed the effects analyses of the alternatives analyzed in detail, the public comments I received on the proposal, and the Agency's response to comments. The Globe Project Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) conducted field surveys, database queries, and other localized analysis in order to determine effects the alternatives analyzed in detail could have on the area's ecology, including threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. During their analyses, the IDT took a hard look at past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions that could be combined with expected effects from the Globe proposal. I believe they provided me sufficient analyses and conclusions to make a reasoned decision.

Direct overstory vegetation management (timber harvest) will take place on less than two percent of the ~11,225-acre analysis areas (AAs).

I recognize there continues to be public concerns about this project, especially visual impacts to the Thunderhole area as seen from Blowing Rock. The Forest Plan, Amendment 5 (1994) designated the Thunderhole area as Management Area 4A, a prescription which places emphasis on managing for quality scenery *In Management Area 4A, permit timber production, modified to emphasize visual quality and wildlife habitat.* Because of public concerns, we have done additional detailed studies of visual impacts which are documented in the project record. These included taking additional photographs of the project area in both leaf-off and leaf-on condition and comparing these actual photographs with previous computer simulations. We also visited and took pictures of three recent timber projects that are similar in size and design to the proposed Globe project units. Two of these units were in the viewshed of the Blue Ridge Parkway. This information was used to ensure that recent two aged timber harvest, with appropriate design features do in fact meet or exceed our planned visual quality objectives. Photos of these recent two aged units are available for viewing on our Forest web site at www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/nepa.

With the above required project design features, the recent monitoring, and required future monitoring, I am confident that any impacts to the scenic values surrounding the Blowing Rock area will be limited and of short duration.

The other highly ranked public concern is how old growth is defined and whether it will be significantly impacted by this decision. My decision is consistent with Forest Plan standards - designating 311 acres of small patch old growth communities, and ensuring over 5,100 acres of designated old growth communities will be maintained (>45% of the two analysis areas). No harvest will take place in designated old growth communities, or in Forest Plan initial inventory old growth communities. As a result of this project, there will be no reduction of acres in stands averaging greater than 100 years of age in the project area. I have reviewed the 1997 Southern Region old growth conservation and restoration report, and believe the Forest Plan standards used in this decision to be even more stringent in designating old growth.

My decision is based on a review of relevant scientific information as contained in the project

record. I believe the effects analyses support my decision and are based on the best available science.

Other Alternatives

In addition to the Selected Alternative, I considered three other alternatives in detail: Alternative A – No Action, Alternative B – Proposed Action, and Alternative C. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in Section 2.5, Chapter 2.

Alternative A – No Action

Under Alternative A, current management plans, such as existing wildlife management, wildfire suppression, general road maintenance, and special use permit operations, would continue to guide management of the project area (see Section 2.2.1, Chapter 2). I did not select this alternative for several reasons. This alternative would not have provided early successional habitat conditions for wildlife species; designated small patch old growth; re-installed gates on the Thunderhole Road; used herbicides to control/manage non-native invasive plants; nor provided habitat conditions for improving hard mast species.

Alternative B – Proposed Action

Alternative B was developed following scoping to move resources in the area towards the desired future condition using active management and to meet the Purpose and Need—this alternative was my initial preferred alternative. Following public involvement, I carefully weighed the project's objectives and issues identified by members of the public and decided that the project's objectives could be achieved in a different manner than Alternative B. I believe retaining additional basal area in stands within the Thunderhole Creek area is important to address scenic issues identified as well as establishing a seasonal closure at the entrance to the Thunderhole Road. For these reasons, I did not select Alternative B.

Alternative C

Alternative C was developed to address comments received during scoping. It proposed the same actions as Alternative B with one exception; it proposed daylighting about 15 feet either side of the Thunderhole Road FSR 4071 to improve wildlife habitat. Again, after carefully weighing the

project's objectives and issues identified by members of the public, I decided the project's objectives could be achieved in a different manner than Alternative C. I believe retaining additional basal area in stands within the Thunderhole Creek area is important to address scenic issues identified as well as establishing a seasonal closure at the entrance to the Thunderhole Road. For these reasons, I did not select Alternative C.

Alternatives Not Considered

Section 2.3 of the EA disclosed five alternatives I considered but eliminated from detailed study along with rationale for why they were not considered. Since they were not considered in detail in the EA, they were not considered in the range of alternatives for my decision.

Public Involvement

The proposal was listed in the January, April, July, and October 2006 editions of the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). The proposal was provided to members of the public, government agencies, and private organizations by mailing a scoping package to over 100 members of the public who had previously requested to receive such information and a 30 day scoping period ran from January 18, 2006, thru February 20, 2006, when a legal notice was published in *The McDowell News*, the Grandfather Ranger District's newspaper of record as per 36 CFR 215.5(b)(2)(i).

Information on the proposal was also provided in other formats: (1) a press release was provided to *The Blowing Rock* on January 19, 2006, inviting comments on the Globe project proposal (to our knowledge it was not printed). (2) The same press release was printed in the January 23, 2006, edition of *The Watauga Democrat*; the January 26, 2006, edition of *The Watauga Mountain Times*; and the February 16, 2006, edition of *The High Country News*. (3) Information on the Globe project proposal was posted online at www.themountaintimes.com on January 26, 2006.

During the initial 30-day scoping period (January 18, 2006, to February 20, 2006) a total of eight comments were received.

On April 13, 2006, several members of local and regional environmental organizations met with Forest Service employees to discuss the proposal.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.2 and 215.5(b)(1)(iv), a 30-day Notice and Comment period was initiated on July 12, 2006, when a legal notice was published in *The McDowell News* informing members of the public the EA was available for review. On August 1, 2006, a press release was issued stating the Forest Service would host an open-house meeting in Blowing Rock, North Carolina on August 9, 2006, to discuss aspects of the proposal. On August 2, 2006, District Ranger Joy Malone mailed a notice to the Grandfather Ranger District's mailing list stating she would consider comments from the end of the 30-day Notice and Comment period thru August 18, 2006. Following the 30-day Notice and Comment period, the additional comment period, and up to issuance of the November EA, 1,282 total comments were submitted on the proposal.

On August 9, 2006, Forest Service officials hosted a public information meeting at the Blowing Rock, North Carolina town hall—244 members of the public signed in at the meeting.

In August and September 2006, Forest Service staff also provided briefings to Blowing Rock town officials, Watauga County officials, and several staff of North Carolina's congressional delegation.

On September 6, 2006, a press release was made available to local media informing the public that the Forest Service [d]ecided to develop an additional alternative for the project. *The additional alternative will be designed to respond to issues raised about the scenic quality of the Thunderhole portion of the project area potentially visible from Blowing Rock.*

On November 30, 2006, a 30-day Notice and Comment period on the new alternative and revised EA was initiated when a legal notice was placed in *The McDowell News*.

Two open house meetings were hosted by members of the Forest Service; one on December 4, 2006, in Collettesville, NC, and the other on December 7, 2006, in Blowing Rock, NC. A total of 35 people signed in at the open houses. The Globe project received over 1,800 comments on the proposal. Appendix H of this decision notice discloses information on comments received and the Agency's responses.

On February 8, 2007, Forest Service representatives met in the field with representatives of environmental organizations and a member of

the public to discuss old growth characteristics in and near stands 38-7 and 33-11.

The final revised EA (September 2007) is available at www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/nepa/nepa.htm.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.* My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action (Section 2.2.4, Chapter 2).
2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.* There will be no significant effects on public health and safety and implementation will be in accordance with project design features, and for herbicide use will adhere to Material Safety Data Sheets and Product Labels (Air Quality, Global Warming, and Herbicides themes, Appendix H; Section 2.4 Chapter 2; Section 3.4, Chapter 3; and Appendix F).
3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.* There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area, because there are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in the project area, nor are there local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (Section 3.12, Chapter 3). The Blue Ridge Parkway is nearby but none of the project is visible from this most visited national park unit. The Blowing Rock, one of North Carolina's better known travel attractions, is adjacent to the project area, but project design features have been identified to ensure that the scenic values of the forest as seen from Blowing Rock are not significantly degraded.
4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly*

controversial. Controversy with this element is related to scientific controversy about effects of the project. The degree of effects on the quality of the human environment are not expected to be highly controversial because this project is similar in design and intensity to others that have taken place on the Grandfather Ranger District in the past [including the Upper Johns River and Upper Mulberry Analysis Areas (AAs)] and effects of those similar past actions are well known—there have been no unexpected impacts when anticipated and observed effects have been compared. However, I do recognize the level of public disagreement about the project, specifically the amount of old growth designated and potential effects to scenery and property values.

I realize there is disagreement concerning what members of the public believe is old growth communities and what members of the public believe is not old growth communities and have considered information on old growth habitat provided by members of the public including Drs. Runkle, Evans, Haney, and Weakley. However, I believe my decision does not significantly affect old growth communities because the Forest Plan has designated more than 45% of the 11,225 acres in the analysis areas as old growth communities, providing a network of old growth communities in the area; the 212 acre harvest proposal would not cut any stands averaging greater than 100 years in age; and old growth is a community and not an individual tree (see Rationale section above; Section 3.11 and Appendix C, EA; and EIS Required and Old Growth themes, Appendix H). I find the designated old growth in the AAs along with the additional 311 acres that would be designated with my decision more than meets the Forest Plan's old growth strategy standards and would not significantly affect old growth attributes and associated wildlife.

I also recognize many members of the public and some locally elected officials are concerned my decision may have significant impacts to scenic resources with subsequent impacts to tourism and property values, specifically from harvesting in the Thunderhole Creek area (Upper Johns River AA). My decision will not

- significantly affect scenic resources, including scenic resources in the Thunderhole Creek area because the prescribed harvest methods were designed to address scenic concerns forest-wide; project design features have been developed to further reduce any long-term impacts to scenery; average harvest stands would be nine acres in the AAs; and only about 1.7% of the 5,887 acre Upper Johns River AA would be harvested. My review of documentation of conversations with real estate agents from Blowing Rock Properties, Inc. and Blowing Rock Realty, and the Watauga County Tax Administrator indicates that harvesting National Forest System lands in the AAs in the past 10-15 years did not decrease property values and tax receipts. During that time indications are that overall property values have increased. The past harvesting was a clearcut prescription and the Globe Selected Alternative would not use clearcut prescriptions; therefore, the effects to scenery would be much less than what has occurred in the past 10-15 years (see Rationale section above; Section 3.7.3.4, Chapter 3; Scenery, Property Values, and Recreation/Tourism themes, Appendix H; and Sections 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.2, 3.7.3, Table 3-16, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.3, 3.10.5, 3.11.2, 3.12.2, and 3.13.2 Chapter 3).
5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (Air Quality, Global Warming, and Herbicides themes, Appendix H; and Sections 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.2, 3.7.3, Table 3-16, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.3, 3.10.5, 3.11.2, 3.12.2, and 3.13.2, Chapter 3). Photo documentation of three similar recent two aged harvest units has made me confident that the design features and leave basal area requirements specified for the Globe project will result in all visual quality objectives for the project to be met or exceeded within two growing seasons (Partial Retention VQO, Section 3.7.2).
 6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because the project is site specific and effects are expected to remain localized and short-term (Sections 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.2, 3.7.3, Table 3-16, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.3, 3.10.5, 3.11.2, 3.12.2, and 3.13.2, Chapter 3).
 7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.* Analyses disclosed for each resource that cumulative impacts are not expected to be measurable, long-term, or could combine with impacts of other past, ongoing, or reasonably foreseeable future actions in the AAs (Cumulative Effects theme, Appendix H; and Sections 3.1.2.5, 3.3.3, 3.4.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.2, 3.7.3.5, 3.10.5, 3.11.2.2, 3.12.2, and 3.13.2, Chapter 3).
 8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.* The action will have no effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Archaeology/Cultural/Heritage theme, Appendix H; and Section 3.6, Chapter 3). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (Archaeology/Cultural/Heritage theme, Appendix H; and Section 3.6, Chapter 3). A heritage report was completed for this project in August 2006 that recommended no further archaeological investigation be conducted in connection with this project. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office concluded on October 2, 2006: *We concur with this recommendation since the project will not affect significant archaeological resources.*
 9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.* A Biological Evaluation (BE, Appendix A) was completed for this project on November 9, 2006, that concluded for threatened and endangered (T&E) species,

There would be no adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to any T&E plant, aquatic, or wildlife species populations or their habitat. The BE concluded for sensitive species: *This proposal may impact individuals of Regional Forester's Sensitive species white leaf sunflower (Helianthus glaucophyllus) and Carolina hemlock (Tsuga caroliniana). These impacts would not lead towards federal listing or loss of Forest viability. The current records for Regional Forester's Sensitive dragonfly species Macromia margarita and Ophiogomphus edmundo are within larger, more riverine type habitats than what is present within the aquatic activity areas. These species could be present within the aquatic AA of the Johns River which is well away from the bridge installations on Frankum Creek. Since the stream crossings are located in Frankum Creek, which is a tributary to Mulberry Creek, Macromia margarita and Ophiogomphus edmundo would not be impacted by the project proposal. According to personal communication with Sarah McRae, North Carolina Heritage Program Freshwater Ecologist, the record of Macromia margarita for Caldwell County is unclear but most likely is from the lower reaches of Wilson Creek or the Johns River. Based on activity area surveys and habitat preferences, there would be no impacts to Macromia margarita or Ophiogomphus edmundo as a result from the implementation of the proposal. This proposed action is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability across the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest for either species.*

Alternative D would have an indirect beneficial effect to nectar species habitat for the Regional Forester's Sensitive species, Diana Fritillary (Speyeria Diana) on 222 acres while there would be negative indirect effects to one acre of habitat. Overall, the proposal is expected to benefit the Diana Fritillary and its habitat across the AAs throughout the next 10 years. Past actions and foreseeable future actions, both on private and public lands may have had negative direct effects on individual larvae however; there have been positive indirect effects to habitat over the AAs. This proposal is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability across the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest. No further botanical, aquatic, or wildlife Regional Forester's sensitive species would be affected by the proposed action. The BE was included within the EA that was provided to members of the public and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in November 2006. The USFWS concluded on December 20, 2006: We have no major objections to any of the

possible alternatives, including the new preferred Alternative, Alternative D. As with our previous comments, based on the information provided in the EA and a review of our records, we concur with your assessment that none of the proposed alternatives will affect federally listed endangered or threatened species or critical habitat. Thus, the requirements under section 7 of the Act are fulfilled. (Section 3.9.1, 3.9.2, and 3.9.3, Chapter 3; and Appendix A).

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA. The action is consistent with the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment 5 (Sections 1.1.1, 1.2, and 1.4, Chapter 1).*

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

My decision to implement the Selected Alternative is consistent with the intent of the long-term goals and objectives listed on pages III-1 and III-2 of Forest Plan Amendment 5. The project was designed to meet land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan guidelines (Sections 1.1.1, 1.2, and 1.4, Chapter 1).

In January 2007, the Forest Service became aware of an old designated landfill disposal site approximately six acres in size, and it appears about ½ - one acre has “migrated” onto National Forest System lands. The site is about ½ mile east of stand 39-15 and along Pack Hill Ridge. The site is currently being evaluated in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Waste Management for materials and possible corrective actions that need to occur. It appears the site has not been used in the last 20 years. The effects of the landfill disposal site have not been analyzed cumulatively with the Globe project's effects because until the State's review is completed, it is speculative to disclose what effects the site may be contributing in the watershed. Following the State's review of the disposal site and any necessary follow-up review by the Forest Service, any required NEPA analysis for corrective actions will incorporate the

Globe project's effects in its cumulative effects analysis.

Administrative Review and Contacts

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. Pursuant to 215.13 and the recent *The Wilderness Society v. Rey* ruling, those who provided comments or otherwise expressed interest in the proposal by the close of either of the two formal Notice and Comment periods may file an appeal on this decision. Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. A written appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date this notice is published in *The McDowell News*, the Grandfather Ranger District's newspaper of record as per 215.5(b)(2)(i). The appeal shall be sent to:

National Forests in North Carolina
ATTN: Appeals Deciding Officer
160-A Zillicoa Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28801.

Hand-delivered appeals must be received within normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appeals may be faxed to (828) 257-4263 or mailed

electronically in a common digital format to: appeals-southern-north-carolina@fs.fed.us.

Pursuant to 215.7(2)(ii), the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal [215.15(a)]; those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

For further information on this decision, contact Greg Van Orsow, Project Leader, Grandfather Ranger District at 828-652-2144 or Michael Hutchins, Pisgah National Forest NEPA Coordinator at 828-682-6146.

Implementation Date

As per 36 CFR 215.9, if no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, the 5th business day following the close of the appeal-filing period (215.15). If an appeal is filed, implementation may occur on, but not before the 15th business day following the date of appeal disposition.

/s/ Joy W. Malone

Joy W. Malone
District Ranger
Grandfather Ranger District

October 4, 2007

Date