

**Three Ponds Prescribed Fire Project**  
**USDA Forest Service, Land Between The Lakes NRA**  
**Trigg County, Kentucky**  
**Request for Comment**  
**October 2008**

The proposed Three Ponds prescribed burn area is located on a peninsula on Lake Barkley in Trigg County, KY, north and east of FSR 203 and 366, respectively. See the map below. The project area contains a mix of upland oak hickory forests and open lands (191 acres forest, 44 acres open lands).

**Purpose and Need for Action**

The project area is within the Prior Creek Oak-Grassland Restoration Demonstration Area. The desired condition for the Three Ponds area is oak grassland. The entire project area has been burned previously, and a soft transition between the forest and the existing open lands is beginning to develop. The project is in keeping with the vision of the LRMP, “*Creation and development of two Oak-Grassland Demonstration Areas will establish open woodland conditions with rich and diverse understories of grasses and wildflowers, sustained by prescribed fire*” (LRMP pg. 24). Oak grasslands form a transition zone between eastern forests and grasslands of the western U.S. They are extremely rare habitats, in large part because of fire suppression and the conversion of lands into agriculture since European settlement. Without fire, oak grasslands in this part of the country convert quickly to forest, thereby eliminating habitat for animals specially adapted to this unique ecosystem intermediate between forest and grassland. This prescribed fire will eliminate excessive leaf litter on the ground and remove shade-tolerant understory trees such as sugar maples, thereby releasing native herbaceous plants and eliminating competition for oak species that are characteristic of this ecosystem. The proposed action will maintain existing native grasses and forbs, and early successional conditions, within the open lands areas by reducing weedy competition from non-native species such as Johnson grass and *Sericea lespedeza*.

The fire will reduce plant litter on the ground in both the open lands and forested areas: excessive plant litter has been found to retard the growth of native open lands plants and diminish the quality of habitat for some early- and mid-successional wildlife species. Fire will enhance wildlife viewing adjacent to the road for dispersed recreation by improving habitat for eastern bluebirds, deer, and turkeys, and nesting habitat for ground-nesting birds including bobwhite quail, Bachman’s sparrows, and blue-winged warblers within the open lands areas. The fire will also enhance hunting opportunities by improving habitat for game species such as deer, turkeys, and quail.

This action will support goals and objectives of the 2007 Open Lands Revised Environmental Assessment (OLEA). These goals and objectives are for the maintenance of early successional habitats and control of non-native invasive and undesirable species. It calls for the use of prescribed fire as one means of maintenance and for controlling non-native invasive species (OLEA 1.3 and 2.1.2).

This project is also instrumental in achieving LRMP Goal 5... “*Use a collaborative approach to maintain and restore: 1) a diversity of plant and animal communities that support viability of associated plants, fish, and wildlife; and, 2) sustainable levels of habitat and wildlife populations*”

*to support public demand for wildlife-related recreation” (LRMP pg. 51-54). It also will support LRMP Goal 7... ”Enhance dispersed recreational and environmental education opportunities throughout the LBL” (LRMP pg. 55).*

This project will help to achieve the following LRMP objectives:

- OBJ5a: In mature oak forests, provide open forest structure on approximately 19,000 acres by the end of the first decade with a long-term objective of 31,000 acres.
- OBJ5b: In mature oak forests, provide woodland structure on approximately 6,000 acres by the end of the first decade with a long-term objective of 30,000 acres.
- OBJ5i: Maintain approximately 10,600 acres in open lands – cultivated and grassland cover types – to support game species, early successional species, and watchable wildlife.
- OBJ5j: Restore and maintain fire regimes and fire return intervals in fire dependent communities by prescribed burning an average of approximately 10,000 acres per year by the end of the first decade, with a long-term objective of 21,000 acres per year on average. Some acres will incur repeat fire application during the planning period.

### **Proposed Action**

The Forest Service is proposing a single prescribed burn of 235 acres in the Three Ponds burn area. See below for a map of the proposed prescribed fire area. This action will make use of existing roads and will require no fire line construction. Hand crews will use drip torches to conduct interior and perimeter ignition.

The category of these actions is Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30, 31.2 Category Number 6, “Timber Stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.”

### **How to Comment**

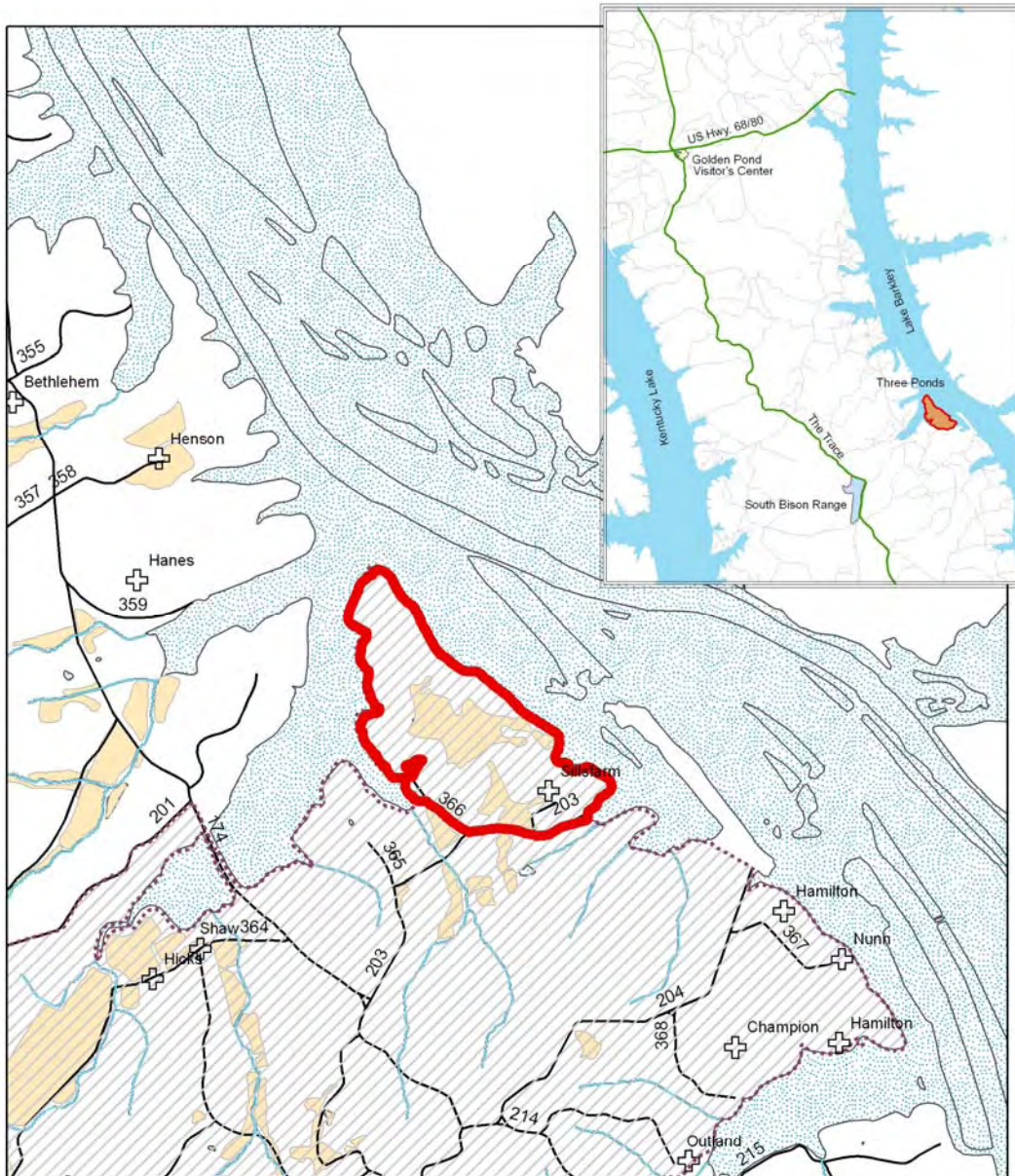
For the Three Ponds project, please send comments by e-mail in common digital format to: [comments-southern-land-between-lakes@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-land-between-lakes@fs.fed.us); please include “Three Ponds” in the subject line. You may also send comments by postal mail to: Steve Bloemer, Land Between The Lakes NRA, 100 Van Morgan Drive, Golden Pond, KY 42211; or telephone (270) 924-2069. Comments can be hand delivered to this address between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. To be most useful, your comments must be relevant to the actual project location, supported by any evidence you can provide, and should be received as soon as possible. Only those providing comments or otherwise expressing interest by the close of the comment period will have eligibility for appeal purposes (36 CFR 215.6). In order to have appeal eligibility, each individual or representative from each organization submitting comments must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request; and, **comments must be postmarked or received within 30 days following the date of publication of the Request for Comments Notice in the legal notices of the Paducah Sun.**

Approved by:

/s/ William P. Lisowsky

WILLIAM P. LISOWSKY

Area Supervisor










## Three Ponds Prescribed Fire Project Area



0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

### Legend

-  Fire boundary
-  Oak Grassland Area
-  Open lands
-  Lake Barkley
-  Stream
-  Road
-  Cemetery