

**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry
Proposed Timber Harvest Summary
Name: Abby Road**

Date Posted: January 5, 2009
End of Comment Period: February 20, 2009

Region: Western
Recreation District: SBK
Forest Management District: SBK
State Forest: Sandisfield
Closest Road: Town Hill Rd.
Town: Sandisfield

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Stand Description:

Stand one is a 25 acre oak-hardwood type dominated by white ash, red maple, red oak, and yellow birch. This is a small sawtimber stand with an average diameter of 13". Relative stand density is 70% of average stands for this type. The stand is fully stocked with a basal area (BA) of 130 sq ft. Stand age is approximately 75 years old with an understory component of white ash, sugar maple, beech, and red oak seedling and saplings. More than 60% of the understory plots taken were adequately stocked with desirable species. Tree quality in the stand is good with 80% of trees in all size classes in acceptable growing stock (AGS). Stand topography is gently sloping, with some wet depressions on the west edge, and along the state boundary to the east. There has been no treatment of this stand since DCR acquired the property.

Stand two is a 30 acre hemlock hardwood stand dominated by hemlock, sugar maple, yellow birch, white ash, and red maple. The small-medium sized sawtimber stand has a relative stand density 116% of the expected average for stands of this type. BA in the stand is 175 sq ft. with only 33% of trees in all classes in AGS. Only 25% of understory plots were fully stocked with desirable species. Much of the hemlock in the stand is in the pole and small sawtimber size classes with roughly a third of it in AGS. Topography in the stand is gently sloping with some poorly drained wet areas scattered throughout the stand, mostly in the poorly drained hemlock areas. There has been no treatment of this stand since DCR acquired the property.

Stand three is a 25 acre oak-pine and oak-hardwood stand dominated by white pine, red maple, red oak, black cherry, and beech. The pine is more prevalent on the tops of the two knolls

contained in the stand, but is also present in the oak-hardwood type between the knolls. It is a medium sized sawtimber stand with an average diameter of 16.5". Mature pine, left over from old field succession, account for more than half of the 160 sq ft. of basal area in the stand, and more than half of the pines are of unacceptable growing stock (UGS). The oak, maple and cherry in the stand are of better quality, with approximately 70% of the stems in AGS. Understory stocking in the stand consisted mainly of red maple, red oak, beech, and white pine; of the 12 plots measured, 7 were adequately stocked with healthy seedlings. Topography in the stand is undulating with small knolls and well drained slopes in between. Stand age is around 90-100 years old and there have been no previous silvicultural treatments.

Aesthetic, Recreation, Environmental and Wildlife Considerations:

Aesthetic: There are several stonewalls throughout the proposed sale area and also a few cellar holes, both of which will be buffered and preserved during the timber harvest. We do not anticipate a need to cross any stonewalls during the harvest and we should be able to operate around them easily enough. The forest here was probably harvested once, after the fields from the early 1800's first reverted to forest in the late 1800's, with the timbering occurring around the 1940-50's. The entire area has been unmanaged since 1965, when the Water Resource's Division of DCR first acquired the property. To promote good logging aesthetics all slash will be kept to a minimum within 100' of the town road.

Recreation: The area to be managed receives very little public use. The road accessing the area is a town road that is no longer used by any residents since it's blocked by a beaver pond before there are houses to service. The town does not currently maintain the road on a continual basis. There is snowmobile use in the winter but it is not an authorized trail, and unless the beaver pond freezes, there is no access to an authorized trail. Besides hunters and the occasional hiker, cross country skier or mountain biker, Abbey Road gets little use from the public, and will remain that way unless the private land on the north side of the road is developed and creates a need for the town to maintain the road for new residents.

Environmental: There are no designated forest reserves, high conservation value forests or designated scenic by-ways in or near this part of Sandisfield State Forest. There are not any other known highly sensitive public issues that this proposed timber harvest area might impact.

Wildlife: The area has not been designated as having any rare animals or plants and there are no NHESP sites currently present within a mile or more of the proposed harvest. Wildlife inhabiting the forest here is what one can expect throughout the local region and includes bear, deer, bobcat, fisher, and the occasional moose. The area surrounding the proposed harvest is heavily forested and any small openings created by the harvesting will provide valuable habitat diversity in the immediate area.

Sale Layout:

The proposed harvest area has good access from the town road as it borders all three stands to the north. Several small landings will be utilized along Abbey Road to reduce the impact of skid roads in the woods. A small wetland separating stands 2 & 3 will be avoided and buffered

appropriately. The town road currently crosses the wet area with a stable, hard bottom. The road was recently improved for the private log job, now complete, that occurred adjacent to the proposed harvest area. The forester will determine the additional road work needed to complete the operation at a later date in the planning process. Skid roads will be laid out in a manner that insures the best possible protection for the residual stand and soil structure, by minimizing erosion and compaction, and by following forestry best management practices (BMP's). The forester will determine the boundaries of the wet areas, seeps, and draws before timber marking commences. There are no anticipated stream crossings in the proposed sale area.

Silviculture:

The silvicultural treatments that will be applied to all three stands will include both commercial thinnings and group selection harvests. BA will be reduced from an average of 155 sq ft. to 80-100 sq ft./acre on average across all three stands. The stands are all currently overstocked and mostly UGS will be cut, except for areas where AGS needs thinning to promote growth in the best trees occupying the site. Areas targeted for group selection will have a preponderance of UGS and a lack of healthy trees to promote regeneration. Small ¼ to ½ acre openings will be created to provide growing space for new regeneration. The openings will be small enough so that a continual forest canopy is still maintained, with the occasional small opening that will mimic a natural blowdown condition.

The objective of the harvest is to thin the forest and leave a more diverse, healthy, fully stocked stand of high quality hardwoods and some softwood. The average of 8,000 bd ft./acre currently present will be reduced to around 4000-5000 bd ft./acre, or about a third of the current stand volume will be removed.

Park Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Regional Director: _____

Date: _____

District Forester: _____

Date: _____

Attached: Topographic map showing location of Forest Products Sale Area

Map of proposed harvest area

