

NATURAL RESOURCE RESTORATION IN THE SOUTHEAST MISSOURI LEAD MINING DISTRICT: PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS AND SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Missouri Trustees (Trustees) for natural resource damage assessment and restoration (the State of Missouri acting through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Department of the Interior acting through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture acting through the U.S. Forest Service) recently completed the “Natural Resource Restoration in the Southeast Missouri Lead Mining District: Property Acquisitions and Supplemental Environmental Assessment (Dec. 2015)” (Supplemental EA). The Supplemental EA and the project proposals describe the restoration projects proposed by the Trustees to restore, rehabilitate, replace, and/or acquire the equivalent of injured natural resources and the services they provide in the Southeast Missouri Lead Mining District. The Supplemental EA also considers the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the environment of the specific activities described in the suite of restoration project proposals. The Supplemental EA tiers off of the Southeast Missouri Ozarks Regional Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (SEMORRP and EA), which analyzed different Alternatives for achieving the purpose of having a Restoration Plan that enables the Trustees to restore, rehabilitate, replace or acquire the equivalent of any injured natural resources in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act.

After careful consideration of the proposed restoration projects, the SEMORRP and EA, the Supplemental EA, and public comments, the Trustees have decided to implement the suite of proposed restoration projects.

For the reasons summarized below and based on the information in the SEMORRP and EA, the *Natural Resource Restoration in the Southeast Missouri Lead Mining District: Property Acquisitions and Supplemental Environmental Assessment* (Dec. 2015), and the projects record, the Department of the Interior has determined that the proposed action to implement selected restoration projects to restore, replace and acquire the equivalent of injured resources in the Southeast Missouri Ozarks is consistent with Alternative D and is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. An Environmental Impact Statement will, accordingly, not be prepared and DOI is issuing this FONSI for the proposed action.

Reasons:

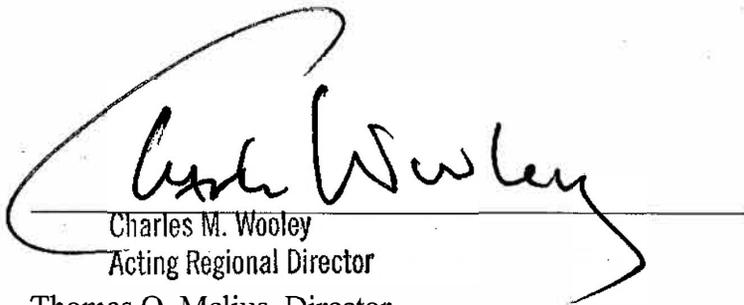
1. There are no known or anticipated endangered, threatened or candidate species or designated critical habitat that will be adversely affected by the implementation of this suite of restoration projects (Intra-Service Section 7, Endangered Species Act Consultations). Implementation of the proposed projects will further protect and

potentially aid in the recovery of certain species by improving terrestrial habitats and water quality in the project areas.

2. Implementation of the proposed action will not result in negative impacts to historic or cultural resources in the project area. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as defined in 36 CFR Part 800 has and will continue to be followed as the projects are implemented (Requests for Midwest RHPO NHPA Clearances).
3. Projects involving preservation of habitats through acquisition of land are only from willing sellers or participants. Neighbors adjacent to land purchased for preservation under this Supplemental EA will retain all of their current rights to their land. Since habitat preservation will be through fee title acquisition with willing sellers who will be paid fair market value, acquisition procedures will have little or no impact on the market price, or on landowners who choose not to sell. (Sections 3 and 5 of the SEMORRP and EA).
4. Restoring fire on the landscape is a critical ecological process for many species, including Eastern bluebird and Le Conte's sparrow, and for improving the long term resilience of the open woodlands, savannahs, and Ozark grasslands. Prescribed fires will be strategically designed to benefit woodland and savannah dependent species. The burns will be conducted in accordance with existing laws and regulations and will take care to protect any imperiled species.
5. Control of non-native invasive species will be performed in a manner that protects sensitive and/or imperiled species. The objective of non-native invasive species control is to enhance native habitats so that they support diverse, endemic fauna and flora. Often non-native species out-compete native species or otherwise dramatically alter habitats. Removal of these nuisance invasive species will allow desirable native species to thrive without significant negative repercussions.

Supporting References:

1. The Southeast Missouri Ozarks Regional Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment
2. Natural Resource Restoration in the Southeast Missouri Lead Mining District: Property Acquisitions and Supplemental Environmental Assessment (Dec. 2015)
3. Intra-Service Section 7, Endangered Species Act Consultations
4. Request for Midwest RHPO NHPA Clearances

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charles M. Wooley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C". A horizontal line is drawn across the signature, starting from the left edge of the signature and extending to the right.

Charles M. Wooley
Acting Regional Director

Thomas O. Melius, Director
Region 3, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Responsible Official

