

Rick Williams, RF, PhD Forester



March 29, 2023

Lisa W. Lewis, Kisatchie Forest Supervisor
Kisatchie National Forest
2500 Shreveport Hwy.
Pineville, Louisiana 71360

Re: Kisatchie National Forest Vegetation Management Project

Dear Ms. Lewis,

I am excited to see that the Kisatchie National Forest plans to begin a vegetative management project to fight non-native and problematic native plant species that lessen the ecological functions of the forest. These plant species are vigorous and spread rapidly by outcompeting desirable plant communities. The integrated approach would help restore a more ecologically balanced vegetative component in the upland treated areas.

In the upland forests of pine or mixed pine/hardwood are seeing a tremendous amount of non-native and problematic native vegetation that is reducing or eliminating desirable plants. There are numerous at-risk, threatened, or endangered species that would greatly benefit from treating non-desirable vegetation to favor desirable vegetation and a healthier ecosystem. This condition is true in upland and aquatic areas across the state and Kisatchie National Forest.

Just like in upland areas, it is also important to address aquatic vegetation that is impacting water bodies in Louisiana and in the Kisatchie National Forest including lakes, ponds, and streams. There are many examples of waterways that are no longer navigable due to aquatic vegetation. Those areas, and their associated wetlands, have lost their ecological functions and are becoming biological deserts. Control of both invasive non-native and native aquatic plants would benefit waterbodies and their associated wetland areas improving that habitat for wildlife.

While various treatment methods will be employed, I am glad to see that the use of appropriate herbicides are included in the prescriptions. Herbicide use can greatly reduce the less desirable vegetation while allowing desirable vegetation to re-occupy the site.

There are numerous at-risk, threatened, or endangered species that would greatly benefit from treating non-desirable vegetation to favor desirable vegetation and a healthier ecosystem. This condition is true in upland and aquatic areas across the state and in the Kisatchie National Forest.

I sincerely hope that this Vegetative Management Project is implemented on the selected acres in the Kisatchie National Forest.

Respectfully,

Rich Hillman, RF, P.D.



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