

USDA FOREST SERVICE, OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST, KENTON, WATERSMEET AND IRON RIVER RANGER DISTRICTS, BARAGA, HOUGHTON AND IRON COUNTIES, MICHIGAN; T43N R35W Sec 1-10, 15-18, 20-22, 27, 28; T44N R35W Sec 1-36; T45N R35W Sec 1-36; T46N R35W Sec 1-36; T47N R35W Sec 1-36; T48N R35W Sec 6-8, 18-21, 23-36; T49N R35W Sec 31-32; T43N R36W Sec 4; T44N R36W Sec 24-28, 33-36; T45N R36W Sec 1-36; T46N R36W Sec 1-3, 4, 9-16, 22-28, 32-36; T47N R36W Sec 1-2, 10-15, 22-27, 33-36; T48N R36W Sec 1-5, 8-15, 23-26, 36; T49N R36W Sec 3, 7-10, 16-22, 26-34, 36; T44N R37W Sec 1, 12; T45N R37W Sec 12-15, 22-25; T49N R37W Sec 13, 24-25. SILVER BRANCH VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT (VMP). Trevor Hahka, Bessemer and Watersmeet-Iron River District is announcing the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Silver Branch VMP and the start of the formal 30-day public comment period.

The project includes about 177,772 acres (127,828 acres under National Forest jurisdiction) in Baraga, Houghton and Iron counties, Michigan. The project proposal contains activities to achieve multiple resource goals, objectives and desired conditions described in the 2006 Ottawa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan while providing goods and services to the public and neighboring Tribal nations. Included in this project proposal are vegetation treatments (i.e., timber harvest) to promote forest health, desired tree species distribution, composition and age classes; old growth classification refinement; wildlife habitat enhancement; hazardous fuel reduction; aquatic habitat improvements; transportation system maintenance and improvement; recreation improvements; and gravel pit expansion.

The EA and associated maps for the Silver Branch VMP are available upon request and online at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/ottawa/projects>.

Comments may be mailed to Trevor Hahka, District Ranger, Ottawa National Forest, E23979 US Highway 2 East, Watersmeet, MI 49969; faxed to: 906-358-4000; or hand delivered to the Watersmeet-Iron River District Office comment drop box near the entrance doors. Electronic comments in acceptable formats (text or email, Adobe portable document format and formats viewable in Microsoft Office applications) may be submitted to: comments-eastern-ottawa@usda.gov (please add "Silver Branch" VMP in the subject line). Comments would be most useful if submitted by 11:59 p.m. central time within 30 days of this legal notice. It is the commenter's responsibility to ensure evidence of timely receipt.

For further project information, please contact Christopher Kovala, Team Leader, at (906) 852-3500; or e-mail: christoper.kovala@usda.gov.

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