

## Explanation of how areas that may be analyzed as “recommended wilderness” are displayed on the May 2017 Management Area maps

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In July 2016, the National Forests in NC shared a draft Wilderness Evaluation report, an initial identification of areas to be analyzed in alternatives in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as well as draft maps that spatially displayed these alternatives.

The Forests asked for feedback on both the evaluation report as well as the initial identification of areas for recommended wilderness. Considerable feedback was received on both the evaluation of individual areas as well as the initial composition of wilderness recommendations by alternative. The updated May 2017 maps are intended to reflect the Forest’s latest thinking on geographic areas and management areas, as well as public input on which areas could be analyzed in a draft EIS alternative as “recommended wilderness”. Maps display not just the areas recognized by the Forest Service last summer, but the areas recommended for inclusion and exclusion since then.

**These maps represent the latest public input, however the Forest Service is not currently proposing all of these areas for inclusion in an alternative. Rather, we will continue to work with the public to develop alternatives to be analyzed in the draft EIS.**

The following list of areas were not identified by the Forest Service for analysis in summer 2016, but the agency received specific comments from members of the public advocating that they should be included in the range of alternatives for wilderness recommendation. They are represented on the May 2017 maps as “Areas Proposed by the Public for FS Analysis since summer 2016.”

- Overflow
- Terrapin
- Tellico Bald
- Wesser Bald
- Middle Prong
- Daniel Ridge
- Cedar Rock
- Cheoah Bald
- Siler Bald
- Dobson Knob

Additionally, we received comments that the following areas should have different boundaries than what the Forest Service had displayed on the 2016 maps. In some cases, people were advocating for larger areas to be analyzed for wilderness recommendation and in a few cases we received comments that a smaller area should be analyzed. For areas that were advocated for being larger, the entire inventory and evaluation area is displayed on the updated maps – the Forest Service did not attempt to draw an alternate analysis area. For areas that were advocated for being smaller, a dotted line indicates a refined boundary that was specifically proposed by the comments we received.

Comments indicated that the following areas needed to be larger than what was displayed on 2016 maps:

- Shining Rock
- Tusquitee Bald
- Mackey Mountain
- Craggy Mountains
- Unicoi/Upper Bald River
- Southern Nantahala Extensions

Comments indicated that the following areas needed to be smaller than what was displayed on 2016 maps:

- Yellowhammer Branch
- Joyce Kilmer Ext. 2
- Snowbird

We also received resolutions from multiple county governments that they were not supportive of any new wildernesses in their respective counties. Avery, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey counties have all passed resolutions opposing wilderness designation. The alternative which reflect this desire for no new recommended wildernesses is displayed on the maps by the composition of other management areas (Interface, Matrix, and Backcountry).

While some members of the public advocated for analyzing the entire inventory of potential additions to wilderness in an alternative, we only included areas on the map where we received site specific comments.

The May 2017 management area maps do not represent a particular alternative or the Forests' preferred alternative. They are simply meant to represent some of the options being further considered. This is not a proposed plan.

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