# EXHIBIT A

Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan)

AMENDMENT #4

Effective May 2017

**POSTING NOTICE:**

There are two pages with this posting notice.

Page 2-27-a should be inserted before page 2-27

Page 2-73-a should be inserted after page 2-72

**EXPLANATION:**

The purpose if this amendment is to include 7 new standards (new page 2-73) and modify 2 existing standards (page 2-27-a) to Chapter 2 of the LRMP that would provide for protection of threatened and endangered bat species.

**FW-090** ~~Unless necessary for insect or disease control or to provide for public and employee safety, standing snags or den trees will not be cut or bulldozed during vegetation management treatments unrelated to timber salvage. For timber salvage treatments, all live den trees, and a minimum of five snags per acre from the largest size classes will be retained. Distribution of retained snags may be clumped.~~

Unless necessary for insect or disease control or to provide for public and employee safety, standing snags or den trees will not be cut or bulldozed during vegetation management treatments unrelated to timber salvage. For timber salvage treatments, all live den trees, and an average of five of the largest suitable snags (snags with exfoliating bark) per acre will be left. Snags in the early stages of decay should be selected over older snags whenever possible. If possible, these snags should be clumped into groups instead of spread throughout the harvest area.

**FW-091** ~~In even-aged regeneration areas where at least two snags per acre are not present or cannot be retained as residuals, at least two standing snags per acre will be created from the larger diameter classes within the original stand. In addition, a minimum of five of the largest diameter living trees per acre will be retained to provide potential future snags during the early and middle stages of stand development. Distribution of snags and live residuals may be scattered or clumped at stand scale. Live den trees are not to be used for snag creation, but may count toward live residuals.~~

For all timber harvest involving even-aged management and two-aged management (Appendix F, LRMP)

- Retain all snags in cutting units unless they are an immediate hazard.
- Sales will be designed (landing and skid trails) to avoid snag removal when possible.
- When an average of five snags per acre is not present create snags from the dominant and co-dominant trees to reach an average of five snags per acre throughout the unit.
- To meet basal area requirements priority will be given to trees that exhibit characteristics favored by roosting Indiana bats or other federally endangered bat species while still meeting stand prescription objectives.
- Snags closer to the forest edge will be favored over those out in the middle of a large expanse. Snags do not count toward the required residual basal area.
- Residual basal area will be clumped or left in travel corridors.
- Live potential bear den trees will be retained and not be used for snag creation (See standard FW-010).

For clearcutting (even-aged management) and clearcut with reserves (two-aged management).

- A minimum of 15 $ft^2$ (square feet) of overstory basal area will be maintained for units greater than 10 acres. Overwood will not be removed.

For seedtree and shelterwood (even-aged management) and seedtree with reserves and shelterwood with reserves (two-aged management).

- A minimum of 20 $ft^2$ of overstory basal area will be maintained. Overwood will not be removed.
- Windthrow protection will be provided to an average of five snags per acre by retaining all trees within 20 feet of these snags. Trees left for windthrow protection may count towards the required basal area.
- Snags selected to receive windthrow protection are those most suitable for use by Indiana bats or federally endangered bat species, i.e., yellow pine and oak snags of the largest size classes with exfoliating bark.

Bat Species

**FW-233**. Trees known to have been used as roosts by Indiana bats or other federally endangered bat species are protected from cutting and/or modification until they are no longer suitable as roost trees, unless their cutting or modification is needed to protect public or employee safety. Where roost tree cutting or modification is deemed necessary, it occurs only after consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**FW-234**. No snags (standing dead trees) will be cut for fuel wood from April 1 through August 31.

**FW-235**. Snags are not intentionally felled from April 1 through August 31 unless needed to provide for immediate safety of the public, employees, or contractors. Exceptions may be made for projects such as insect and disease control, salvage harvesting, and facility construction. Exceptions will require evaluation by a qualified individual (i.e. biologist or other individual approved by the district biologist) for current Indiana bat or other federally endangered bat species use and may require coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**FW-236**. For non-silvicultural projects which include, but are not limited to prescribed fire line construction, right of way clearing, hazard tree removal and recreation area management, currently suitable Indiana bat or other federally protected bat species roost trees will be felled from September 1 through March 31. This standard shall apply only to those parts of the Forest that are deemed to be within the range and provide suitable habitat for federally endangered bats. The Forest will coordinate with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the range and suitable habitat of endangered bats based on the most up to date information, at least annually. If tree removal occurs between April 1 and August 31, the trees shall be evaluated by a qualified individual (i.e. biologist or other individual approved by the district biologist) to determine if the snag is being used by Indiana bats or other endangered bat species and may require coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**FW-237**. During all silvicultural treatments, retention priority is given to the largest live available trees that exhibit characteristics favored by roosting Indiana bats or other federally endangered bat species while still meeting stand prescription objectives.
*Note: A typical roost is located under exfoliating bark of a dead ash, elm, hickory, maple, oak, poplar or pine although any live or dead tree that retains large, thick slabs of peeling bark is suitable. Average diameter of maternity roost trees is 45 cm (18 in) and average diameter of roosts used by adult males is 33 cm (13 in). Height of the tree (snag) is greater than 3m (10 ft.), but height of the roosting tree is not as important as height relative to surrounding trees and the position of the snag relative to other trees, because relative site is unimpeded by vines or small branches. The tree is typically within canopy gaps in a forest, in a fence line, or along a wooded edge. Primary roosts usually are not found in the middle of extensive open fields, but often are within 15m (50 ft.) of a forest edge. Primary roosts usually are in trees that are in early-to-mid stages of decay (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2007).*

**FW-238**. Compliance of Indiana bat and other federally endangered bat species standards will be monitored. The Forest will submit an annual report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service documenting compliance with Standards. The documentation will include the amount of timber harvesting and amount of prescribed burning on the Forests that year.

**FW-239**. Monitoring for Indiana bats and other federally protected bat species will be conducted through acoustic surveys and mist netting efforts or other methods acceptable to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Acoustic survey routes and areas for mist netting surveys will be developed in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The Forest will work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and other partners to complete an average of five mist netting nights per year on or adjacent to National Forest Land.