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# CHAPTER 2

## FORESTWIDE DIRECTION

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### INTRODUCTION

The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest is one part of the Southern Appalachian ecosystem. This chapter outlines the overall management direction for the Forest within the context of the Southern Appalachian area and the Piedmont ecosystem (for the Oconee NF). The goals for management of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest are consistent with the other national forests of the Southern Appalachian, and consider the conditions and influences of private and other public lands in this region. This direction is organized around the major issues identified by citizens who helped develop the Plan, as well as the physical, biological, and social resources of the Forest.

Forestwide direction is organized under topic headings that represent:

- 12 issues common to all Southern Appalachian National Forests,
- 4 issues specific to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, and
- Several resource areas critical to management of the Forests.

Each topic includes broad goal statements, which describe desired conditions we want to maintain, Objectives express measurable steps we will take over the life of the plan on the pathway to achieve our goal. They usually have both quantity and time.

The vision of the Forest as we wish it to be (that is, a desired future condition) is essentially a compilation of the goal statements. Goal statements are intended to be ambitious. Their value lies in giving us a course even when circumstances change and situations arise that were not foreseen in detail at the time the Plan was written.

While most goals have associated objectives with both quantity and time, some do not. For these, progress toward or even achievement of them is not directly measurable. This imprecision is usually because either: (a) the specific type or extent of project that would move toward attainment of the goal is not presently clear, or (b) initiation of such projects is not within Forest Service control. The value of these goals lies in providing a more complete management framework for future decision making. Some of the values provided include:

- a better understanding by the public of the full range of Forest Service activities,
- a clear reflection of the cooperative nature of much of National Forest management, and
- a stable structure to adapt to changing conditions into the future.

Objective quantities and timing have been set to be within the capability of the land, within the decision space allowed by constraints, and reasonably consistent with historic budgets and future budget expectations. They should not be viewed as a promise to perform exactly as stated or as a contract the Forest Service is obligating itself to meet. Rather they are good faith estimates, the accomplishment of which is not totally within

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our control. The Forest Service receives its budget through an annual appropriation and is not certain of its budget in advance. In addition, we are dealing with dynamic systems and will often - particularly with the overall low level of management - be reactive to natural events beyond our control. Within this uncertainty, the timing of objectives reflects several considerations. Activities that must occur before others can are given a shorter time frame. Activities that have a higher priority are given a shorter time frame than those with a lower priority. And the time frame for objectives reflects a judgment of just how long it could reasonably take to complete the work involved. We have not been easy on ourselves but we have also attempted to avoid a consistent pattern of over-promising and under-delivering. The values of objectives include; (a) a focus on goals, (b) measurable progress, (c) framework for budgeting and work planning, and (d) the basis of a 'report card' on our progress in implementing the plan.

While goals and objectives define where we are headed with management of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, **standards** define the rules we will follow in getting there. Standards are the specific technical resource management directions, and often preclude, or impose limitations on, management activities or resource uses, generally for environmental protection, public safety, or to resolve an issue identified in the development of the Plan. Adherence to Forest Plan standards is monitored during project implementation.

**Numbering for Forestwide Goals, Objectives, and Standards**

- Goals are numbered consecutively throughout this chapter.
- Objectives are numbered to link them to the goal to which they relate.
- Standards are numbered consecutively throughout this chapter with the number preceded by 'FW' (Forestwide).

Forestwide goals, objectives, and standards apply to the entire forest unless superseded by specific management prescription direction. Projects are evaluated to determine if they are consistent with the management direction in the Plan. This evaluation is recorded in the project-level environmental document with a finding of consistency incorporated into the decision document.

Any decisions on projects to implement the Plan are based on site-specific analysis in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This environmental analysis is appropriately documented based on direction in the Council on Environmental Quality publication *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508)* and the *Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook (FSH 1909.15)*.

The Plan is a strategic document providing land allocations, goals, objectives, desired conditions, and standards that must be met. While this direction was being developed, the Forest identified some additional items which would not qualify as Plan direction, but which are important for Plan implementation. These items will either be incorporated into Forest and/or Regional supplements to the Forest Service directives system or made part of a 'desk reference' or 'implementation guide' document

## GENERAL FORESTWIDE DIRECTION

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DIRECTION

This direction is presented in the introductory section, because it applies to most of the issue and resource topics into which the goals, objectives, and standards are organized.

**General Goal:** Maintain natural and cultural resource data in geo-referenced electronic databases.

**General Standard:** Except in the cases noted below, individual management prescription boundaries may be refined at the project level, using appropriate NEPA documentation, to provide logical, manageable boundaries, and better meet the emphasis of the prescription gaining acres or the prescription losing acres. The exceptions are those situations where:

- allocations were made at authority higher than the Regional Forester,
- the change could potentially negatively affect the roadless character of an inventoried roadless area, or
- the change could potentially negatively affect the outstandingly remarkable values of streams meeting suitability requirements of Wild and Scenic River designation (MRx 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.3, and 4.H).

## **TERRESTRIAL PLANTS AND ANIMALS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED HABITATS**

### **BACKGROUND**

This section broadly refers to the distribution, variety, and abundance of plant and animal communities, ecosystems and individual species. Some biodiversity objectives need to be achieved through active multiple-use management, while others can only be achieved through passive management emphasizing 'natural' processes. A diversity of habitat will be provided for the full range of native and other desired species.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL 1**     Contribute to the viability of native and other desirable wildlife species.

**GOAL 2**     A diversity of habitat will be provided for the full range of native and other desired species. Sufficient amounts of interior or late-successional habitat as well as early-successional habitat will be provided to meet needs of all successional communities. Early successional habitat will be well distributed in all forest types, elevations, aspects, and slopes including riparian corridors.

Table 2- 1 identifies the habitat restoration or maintenance objectives relevant to each management indicator species.

**Table 2- 1. Management Indicator Species**

<b>Management Indicator Species</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Related Objective</b>
Red-cockaded woodpecker	Threatened or Endangered	3.3, 3.4, 8.3, 58.3, 3.B-02, 8.D-1thru 8.D-12,
Smooth coneflower	Threatened or Endangered	15.1, 18.1
Wood thrush	Community Indicator Species	3.7, 20.1
Pine warbler	Community Indicator Species	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 7.2, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 58.3
Chestnut-sided warbler	Community Indicator Species	3.4, 3.8
Hooded warbler	Community Indicator Species	3.7, 4.1, 7.1, 21.1, 58.3
Prairie warbler	Community Indicator Species	58.3
Ovenbird	Community Indicator Species	3.7, 20.1
Acadian flycatcher	Community Indicator Species	3.7, 4.1, 7.1,21.1
Swainson’s warbler	Community Indicator Species	4.1, 9.F-01, 9.F-02, 9.F-05, 9.F-06
Scarlet tanager	Community Indicator Species	3.7
Field sparrow	Community Indicator Species	3.4, 3.8, 58.3
Pileated woodpecker	Special Habitat Species	3.7, 7.1
White-tailed deer	Demand Species	Because these species have a wide range of ecological conditions in which they use they will have many related objective and are not ecological indicators.
Black bear	Demand Species	Because these species have a wide range of ecological conditions in which they use they will have many related objective and are not ecological indicators.

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**GOAL 3** Enhance, restore, manage and create habitats as required for wildlife and plant communities, including disturbance-dependent forest types.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1** Within the first 10 years of Plan implementation restore 1,100 acres of shortleaf pine forests on the Chattahoochee on sites where they once likely occurred.

**OBJECTIVE 3.2** Within the first 10 years of Plan implementation restore 1,000 acres of pitch pine forests on the Chattahoochee on sites where they once likely occurred.

**OBJECTIVE 3.3** Within the first 10 years of Plan implementation restore 1,100 acres of shortleaf pine forests on the Oconee on sites where it once likely occurred.

**OBJECTIVE 3.4** Within the first 10 years of Plan implementation restore 10,000 acres of open woodlands, savannas, and grasslands on the Chattahoochee and 1,000 acres on the Oconee. Once created, maintain woodlands, savannas, and grasslands on a five-year burning cycle or less.

**OBJECTIVE 3.5** Within the first 10 years of Plan implementation restore 1,100 acres of mountain longleaf pine and longleaf pine-oak forests within the Southern Ridge and Valley ecological section on sites where they once likely occurred.

**OBJECTIVE 3.6** Within the first 10 years of Plan implementation restore oak or oak-pine forests on 1,250 acres on the Chattahoochee and 550 acres on the Oconee on appropriate sites currently occupied by pine plantations or other hardwood species such as gum and maple.

**OBJECTIVE 3.7** To maintain existing oak and oak-pine forests, reduce stem density on 5,500 acres on the Chattahoochee, and 5,200 acres on the Oconee of these forest types within the first 10 years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 3.8** Create and maintain an annual average of 300 acres above 3,000 feet elevation in early-successional habitats, achieving 3,000 acres within the first 10 years of Plan implementation. This acreage may be comprised of regenerating forests (0-10 years), utility rights-of-way, and open woodlands.

**GOAL 4** Maintain and restore natural communities in amounts, arrangements, and conditions capable of supporting viable populations of existing native and desired nonnative plants, fish, and wildlife species within the planning area.

**OBJECTIVE 4.1** Maintain 1 to 2 percent per decade of the riparian corridor within each 6<sup>th</sup> level hydrologic unit in early-successional forest conditions. Included would be only those prescriptions hosting riparian associated species as identified in the current viability assessment for the Chattahoochee-Oconee NF and prescriptions with early-successional forest habitat objectives

**GOAL 5** Acquire lands containing sites or habitat critical to the conservation of rare communities, federally-listed threatened or endangered species, or species at risk of losing viability within the proclamation boundary of each national forest.

**GOAL 6** Provide habitats for species needing large blocks of contiguous forests, especially where such conditions are not found on other lands within the landscape at ecological section scale.

**GOAL 7** Manage forest ecosystems to maintain or restore composition, structure, and function within desired ranges of variability.

**OBJECTIVE 7.1** Within 10 years of Plan implementation, increase structural diversity by creating canopy gaps within closed-canopied mid- and late-successional mesic deciduous forest, including old growth restoration areas.

- 10,800 acres on the Chattahoochee
- 1,400 acres on the Oconee

**OBJECTIVE 7.2** Within 10 years of Plan implementation, restore 1,100 acres of open pine-oak or oak-pine forest on the Oconee outside the RCW HMA. This is in addition to the quantity to be restored under the habitat goal, above.

**GOAL 8** Contribute to maintenance or restoration of native tree species whose role in forest ecosystems: (a) has been reduced by past land use; or (b) is threatened by insects and disease, fire exclusion, forest succession, or other factors.

**OBJECTIVE 8.1** To maintain shortleaf pine forests on the Chattahoochee in desired conditions:

- Thin over-story trees on an average of 400 acres per year of this forest type.
- Reduce hardwood mid-story on an average of 6,000 acres per year of this forest type.

**OBJECTIVE 8.2** To maintain pitch pine forests on the Chattahoochee in desired conditions:

- Thin over-story trees on an average of 100 acres per year of this forest type.
- Reduce hardwood midstory on an average of 1,400 acres per year of this forest type.

**OBJECTIVE 8.3** To maintain shortleaf pine forests on the Oconee in desired conditions:

- Thin over-story trees on an average of 230 acres per year of this forest type.
- Reduce hardwood midstory on an average of 500 acres per year of this forest type.

**OBJECTIVE 8.4** To maintain loblolly pine forests on the Oconee outside the RCW HMA in desired conditions:

- Thin over-story trees on an average of 1,100 acres per year of this forest types.
- Reduce hardwood midstory on an average of 1,100 acres per year of this forest type.

**GOAL 9** Manage through protection, maintenance, or restoration, a variety of large, medium, and small old growth patches to provide biological and social benefits.

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- GOAL 10** Manage for a diversity of oak species to minimize yearly fluctuations in acorn supplies.
- GOAL 11** Consolidate national forest ownership along riparian corridors (order four streams or greater) to allow greater protection of water quality and provision of habitat for riparian-associated species.
- GOAL 12** Minimize adverse effects of invasive native and nonnative species. Control such species where feasible and necessary to protect national forest resources.
- GOAL 13** Provide breeding, wintering, and migration staging and stopover habitat for migratory birds in ways that contributes to their long-term conservation.
- GOAL 14** Protect or restore the special characteristics of important geological, paleontological, botanical, zoological, cultural, or heritage areas.

## STANDARDS

- FW-001** When regenerating forest stands, except for research purposes, regenerate to native tree species that commonly occur or historically occurred naturally on ecologically comparable sites within the same ecological subsection.
- FW-002** Stands dominated by eastern hemlock are not subject to regeneration harvest during this planning period.
- FW-003** During silvicultural treatments in all forest types, patches of living hemlock greater than one-quarter acre are retained.
- FW-004** Oak forest cover types on mesic sites are not converted to pine forest cover types (i.e., where dominant and co-dominant pine crowns are greater than or equal to 70 percent), but may be managed as mixed oak-pine.
- FW-005** When grazing is used to control vegetation (i.e. permitted grazing allotments), livestock may not expose mineral soil or displace soil by trampling on more than 10 percent of the area.
- FW-006** When foraging by domestic animals is used to control vegetation, combined forage use by wildlife and livestock may not exceed 70 percent of total forage production. This allows 45 percent utilization of grasses and forbs for livestock and 25 percent for wildlife.
- FW-007** Even-aged regeneration areas in or abutting deciduous or mixed forests must include a 50-foot zone along mature forest edges in which intensity of silvicultural treatment decreases, resulting in a transitional or feathered edge.
- FW-008** Retain hard and soft mast producing species during vegetation cutting treatments to the extent compatible with meeting treatment objectives.
- FW-009** For as long as they remain suitable, known black bear den sites will be protected by prohibiting vegetation management and ground-disturbing activities within a minimum of 100 feet around the den.



- FW-010** Potential black bear den trees will be retained during all vegetation management treatments occurring in habitats suitable for bears. Potential den trees are those that are greater than 20” dbh and are hollow with broken tops.
  
- FW-011** Herbicides and application methods are chosen to minimize risk to human and wildlife health and the environment. No class B, C, or D chemical may be used on any project, except with Regional Forester approval. Approval will be granted only if a site-specific analysis shows that no other treatment would be effective and that all adverse health and environmental effects will be fully mitigated. Diesel oil will not be used as a carrier for herbicides, except as it may be a component of a formulated product when purchased from the manufacturer. Vegetable oils will be used as the carrier for herbicides when available and compatible with the application proposed.
  
- FW-012** Herbicides are applied at the lowest rate effective in meeting project objectives and according to guidelines for protecting human (NRC 1983) and wildlife health (EPA 1986a). Application rate and work time must not exceed levels that pose an unacceptable level of risk to human or wildlife health. If the rate or exposure time being evaluated causes the Margin of Safety (MOS) or the Hazard Quotient (HQ) computed for a proposed treatment to fail to achieve the current Forest Service R-8 standard for acceptability (acceptability requires a MOS > 100 or a HQ of < 1.0 using the most current of the SERA or Risk Assessments found on the Forest Service website). Additional risk management must be undertaken to reduce unacceptable risks to acceptable levels, or an alternative method of treatment must be used.
  
- FW-013** Weather is monitored and the project suspended if temperature, humidity, or wind becomes unfavorable for correct application as shown in Table 2- 2.

**Table 2- 2. Weather Restrictions for Herbicide Application**

Application Method	Temperatures Higher Than	Humidity Less Than	Wind (at target) Greater Than
Ground:			
Hand (cut surface)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Hand (other)	98°F	20%	15 mph
Mechanical:			
Liquid	95°F	30%	10 mph
Granular	N.A.	N.A.	10 mph
Aerial:			
Liquid	90°F	50%	5 mph
Granular	N.A.	N.A.	8 mph

- FW-014** Nozzles that produce large droplets (mean droplet size of 50 microns or larger) or streams of herbicide are used. Nozzles that produce fine droplets are used only for hand treatment where distance from nozzle to target does not exceed 8 feet.
  
- FW-015** People living within one-fourth mile of an area to be treated aerially are notified during project planning and shortly before treatment.

- FW-016** No herbicide is aerially applied within 200 horizontal feet of an open road or a designated trail. Buffers are clearly marked before treatment so applicators can easily see and avoid them.
- FW-017** With the exception of treatments designed to release designated vegetation selectively resistant to the herbicide proposed for use or to prepare sites for planting with such vegetation, no soil-active herbicide is applied within 30 feet of the drip line of non-target vegetation (e.g., den trees, hardwood inclusions, adjacent stands) specifically designated for retention within or next to the treated area. Side pruning is allowed, but movement of herbicide to the root systems of non-target plants must be avoided. Buffers are clearly marked before treatment so that applicators can easily see and avoid them.
- FW-018** Triclopyr, 2,4-D, and 2,4-DP are not aerially applied within 300 feet, nor ground-applied within 60 feet, of known occupied Gray bat habitat. Buffers are clearly marked before treatment so that applicators can easily see and avoid them.
- FW-019** No herbicide is aerially applied within 300 feet, nor broadcast ground-applied within 60 feet, of any know threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive plant. Buffers are clearly marked before treatment so applicators can easily see and avoid them. Selective applications to control competing vegetation within this buffer designed to protect TES plants may occur when needed to protect the TES plants from encroachment by invasive plants and when a non-soil-active herbicide is used.
- FW-020** Application equipment, empty herbicide containers, clothes worn during treatment, and skin are not cleaned in open water or wells. Mixing and cleaning water must come from a public water supply and be transported in separate labeled containers.
- FW-021** No herbicide is broadcast on rock outcrops or within sinkholes. No soil-active herbicide with a half-life longer than three months is broadcast on slopes over 45 percent. Such areas are clearly marked before treatment so that applicators can easily see and avoid them.
- FW-022** No herbicide is aerially applied within 200 horizontal feet, or ground-applied within 100 horizontal feet, of lakes, wetlands, or perennial or intermittent springs and streams. No herbicide is applied within 100 horizontal feet of any public or domestic water source. Selective treatments (which require added site-specific analysis and use of aquatic-labeled herbicides) may occur within these buffers only to prevent significant environmental damage such as noxious weed infestations. Buffers are clearly marked before treatment so that applicators can easily see and avoid them.
- FW-023** Herbicide mixing, loading, or cleaning areas in the field are not located in sensitive areas as identified in the project decision document, or within 200 feet of private land, open water or wells.
- FW-024** Pesticide mixing, loading, or cleaning areas in the field are located at least 50 feet from ephemeral streams.

- FW-025** No soil-active herbicide with a half-life longer than three months is broadcast within 25 feet of ephemeral streams. Selective treatments with aquatic-labeled herbicides are allowed. Such areas are clearly marked before treatment so that applicators can easily see and avoid them.
- FW-026** Pine straw or any other mulching material will not be sold as mulch or for any other purpose from areas treated with clopyralid.
- FW-027** A certified pesticide applicator supervises each Forest Service application crew and trains crew members in personal safety, proper handling and application of herbicides, and proper disposal of empty containers.
- FW-028** With the exception of permittee treatment of right-of-way corridors that are continuous into or out of private land and through Forest Service-managed areas, no herbicide is broadcast within 100 feet of private land or 300 feet of a private residence, unless the landowner agrees to closer treatment. Buffers are clearly marked before treatments so applicators can easily see and avoid them.

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## T & E AND SENSITIVE/LOCALLY RARE SPECIES

### BACKGROUND

The Forest Service is charged with creating and maintaining habitat conditions suitable to maintain viable populations of all species native to the planning area. A mix of management prescription allocations provide for a variety of habitat conditions. The Forests will conserve and assist in the recovery of threatened, endangered and sensitive species through maintenance or enhancement of their associated habitats. Emphasis is also placed on minimizing undesired human-wildlife interactions during critical life stages. The integrity of native communities is protected through the management of invasive species. The following goals, objectives and standards are designed to protect, restore, maintain and enhance wildlife and plant populations and communities, while maintaining flexibility to manage other resources.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 15** Contribute to conservation and recovery of federally-listed threatened and endangered species through habitat maintenance and/or enhancement and, where possible, for their reintroduction into suitable habitats, and contribute to avoiding the necessity for federal listing of other species under the Endangered Species Act.

**OBJECTIVE 15.1** The objectives shown in Table 2- 3 are established to contribute to the recovery of threatened, endangered, and candidate plants over the life of the Forest Plan:

**Table 2- 3. Objectives for Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Plants on the Chattahoochee-Oconee NF Over the Life of the Forest Plan.**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Known Populations or Occurrences	Management Objective*
Smooth coneflower	<i>Echinacea laevigata</i>	25	2 and 3
Georgia aster	<i>Aster georgianus</i>	4	2
Small-whorled pogonia	<i>Isotria medeoloides</i>	32	1
Rock gnome lichen	<i>Gymnoderma lineare</i>	1	1
Persistent trillium	<i>Trillium persistens</i>	1	1
Relict trillium	<i>Trillium reliquum</i>	0	4
Green pitcher plant **	<i>Sarracenia oreophila</i>	1	2 and 3
Swamp pink **	<i>Helonias bullata</i>	1	3
Large flowered skullcap **	<i>Scutellaria montana</i>	4	3
White fringeless orchid	<i>Platanthera integrilabia</i>	1	1

\* 1 = Maintain current number of populations/occurrences through protection and maintenance of existing sites.

2 = Increase number of populations/occurrences by improving and/or increasing available habitat and relying on natural recruitment rather than reintroduction and propagation.

3 = Increase number of populations/occurrences with the assistance of reintroduction and propagation efforts.

4 = Species is not currently documented from the forest; efforts will continue to document presence.

\*\* The green pitcher plant and swamp pink sites, as well as two of the large flowered skullcap sites, are not naturally occurring. Plants were planted on NF land after being grown from local, genetic stock occurring on private land.

**OBJECTIVE 15.2** Inventory non-native invasive aquatic species encroaching upon T&E habitat within the first 10 years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 16** Cooperate with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in providing habitat for the re-introduction of native wildlife, including threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

**GOAL 17** Cooperate with Georgia Department of Natural Resources to transplant individuals of State-listed species threatened by destruction on private lands to appropriate National Forest sites.

**GOAL 18** Cooperate with the USFWS, Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and academia in conducting research on National Forest T&E species and their response to management.

**OBJECTIVE 18.1** Cooperate with the USFWS, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, academia and the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance to develop a management plan for the smooth coneflower over the next 3 years.

**OBJECTIVE 18.2** Within six years of Plan implementation, complete necessary studies with other agencies, educational institutions, etc. to determine potential impacts of stocking trout in waters occupied by federally-listed species on Forest Service lands.

**GOAL 19** Contribute to the conservation of State-identified locally rare species in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

## STANDARDS

**FW-029** Sites supporting federally-listed threatened and endangered species or individuals needed to maintain viability of species of viability concern are protected from detrimental effects caused by management actions. Site-specific analysis of proposed management actions will identify any protective measures needed in addition to Forest Plan standards, including increasing the width of protective buffers where needed. Management activities occur within these sites only where compatible with recovery of federally-listed species, or maintenance of individuals needed to maintain species viability on the National Forest.

**FW-030** The USFWS will be given timely notification when an emergency situation such as wildfire, weather-related events, insect outbreak, or disease outbreak has impacted, or appears likely to impact, known locations of Federally-listed species.

**FW-031** As part of recurrent monitoring and any project inventories, include data collection on existing or potential threats such as nonnative invasive species.

**FW-032** Nonnative invasive species shall be controlled with priority given to areas where they are causing adverse effects to federally-listed species, or to individuals of other species needed to maintain their population viability on the national forest. Nonnative invasive species are not intentionally

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introduced near these species or individuals, nor will management actions facilitate their inadvertent introduction.

### **Bat Species**

**FW-033** Gates or other structures that allow for entrance and egress by bats are constructed and maintained at entrances of caves and mines occupied by significant populations of bats to reduce frequency and degree of human intrusion. Forest Supervisor Closure Orders are acceptable as long as monitoring indicates the Orders are effective. If Orders are ineffective, appropriate physical structures must be constructed. Camping and fire building at the entrance to caves, mines, and rock shelters used by these species is prohibited. To discourage human disturbance at these caves, nonessential public access routes within one-quarter mile of cave entrances are closed during periods when bats are present. Human access to caves for educational and recreational use may be allowed during periods when bats are not present. If damage to caves occurs as a result of human use, the caves may be closed to human uses. Access for activities such as surveys and scientific study during times when bats are present is determined on a case-by-case basis.

**FW-034** Prescribed burn plans written for areas near caves or mines that contain bats identify these sites as smoke sensitive targets and plan to avoid smoke entering cave or mine openings when bats are present.

**FW-035** Before old buildings and other man-made structures are modified or demolished, they are surveyed for bats. If significant bat roosting is found, these structures will be maintained, or alternative roosts suitable for the species and colony size will be provided prior to adverse modification or destruction.

**FW-036** Further consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service is conducted on all projects within 20 air miles of known gray bat maternity sites, when these projects may affect canopy cover within perennial riparian corridors or forested lakeshores.

**FW-037** A one-quarter (0.25) mile buffer of undisturbed forest will be maintained around known gray bat maternity and hibernation colony sites and known Rafinesque's big-eared bat maternity, bachelor, or winter colony sites. Cutting of the overstory and midstory is prohibited in this buffer except where the treatment would benefit PETS species conservation..

### **Wood Stork**

**FW-038** In artificial impoundments used by foraging wood storks, water levels are managed to provide for and encourage annual use by this species.

**FW-039** Enhance foraging habitat of artificial impoundments used by wood storks through the stocking of preferred prey fish (sunfish, bullhead, and catfish).

### **Green Pitcher Plant**

**FW-040** Prescribe burn green pitcher plants only in the early spring, and then only when necessary to control encroaching woody vegetation.

**Aquatic Species**

- FW-041** Culverts that are barriers to stream biota passage in waters of aquatic PETS species have priority for replacement over culverts in waters without PETS species
- FW-042** Barriers may be used to prevent the encroachment of undesirable nonnative species.
- FW-043** Aquatic habitat improvements, such as the addition of large woody debris, rock or other native materials in waters occupied by federally-listed aquatic species on Forest Service lands will be for the primary benefit of those listed species.

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## OLD GROWTH

### BACKGROUND

There are many values that people associate with old growth, some of which are measurable and some not. Old growth provides both biological and social values. Old growth and other mature communities provide large den trees for wildlife species such as black bear, large snags for birds, bats and cavity nesters, and large cover logs for other wildlife. Old-growth areas provide for certain recreational experiences, research opportunities, and educational study. Other areas have associated historical, cultural, and spiritual values. Old-growth areas are also a source of large-diameter, high-value hardwoods; which are limited in supply and in high demand for such products as furniture and finish construction work. Old growth community types that occur on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests are shown in Table 2- 4. (For more detail on old growth community types, see Appendix D.)

**Table 2- 4. Old Growth Community Types**

<b>OGTY Code</b>	<b>OGTY Name</b>
02	Conifer/northern hardwood
05	Mixed mesophytic & western mesophytic
13	River floodplain hardwood
21	Dry-mesic oak forest
22	Dry-xeric oak forest, woodland, savanna
24	Xeric pine & pine-oak forest, woodland
25	Dry & dry-mesic oak-pine
27	Seasonally wet oak-hardwood woodland
28	Eastern riverfront forest

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GOAL 20** (a) Provide a well-distributed and representative network of large, medium and small potential old growth blocks in the Blue Ridge Mountains and Southern Ridge and Valley ecological sections.  
(b) Provide a well-distributed and representative network of medium and small potential old growth blocks in the Southern Appalachian Piedmont ecological section.

**OBJECTIVE 20.1** Reserve 5 percent of each 6<sup>th</sup> level HUC that has at least 1,000 acres of National Forest in management that will conserve existing, or provide for the development of future, old growth.



**GOAL 21** Restore formerly existing old-growth community types (composition, not structure) where ecologically appropriate.

OLD  
GROWTH

**OBJECTIVE 21.1** Restore 250 acres of old-growth community type 13 in the Southern Ridge and Valley ecological section within the fifteen years of Plan implementation.

## STANDARDS

- FW-044** In 6<sup>th</sup> level HUCs with 1,000 acres or more of National Forest and less than 5 percent already allocated to old growth or old-growth compatible management, increase the old growth conservation to a total of 5 percent of the National Forest area by identifying additional small blocks of less than 100 acres. Once reserved, these blocks will be managed to protect their old growth characteristics during this Plan cycle.
- FW-045** Additional small old growth blocks are not required to be identified at 6<sup>th</sup> level hydrologic unit scale before vegetation management projects that would negatively affect meeting the old growth criteria occur at smaller scale, such as a sub-watershed or compartment, but incremental progress will be made toward the 6<sup>th</sup> level HUC old growth objective, if not already satisfied, by reserving an amount consistent with the proportion of the watershed included in the project area.
- FW-046** Where vegetation management projects that would negatively affect old growth characteristics are being proposed, and the oldest age class of the affected stands meets the minimum age for their particular old growth type, collect data sufficient to determine if stands meet the four defining criterion for existing old growth. If so, give priority for old growth conservation in satisfying the small block objective during this Plan cycle.
- FW-047** The minimum old growth block size for tracking purposes is ten acres.
- FW-048** In reserving small blocks of future old growth, give first preference to those stands that most-nearly meet the criteria for existing old growth, then decreasing preference with increasing departure from the old growth criteria; that is, quality is more important than block size or distribution within the watershed.
- FW-049** In reserving small blocks in all ecological sections, first priority is given to stands meeting the four defining criteria for existing old growth in the Regional Old Growth Guidance.
- FW-050** In reserving small blocks in the Southern Ridge and Valley ecological section, the secondary priorities for additional representation are in the order of: (1) river floodplain hardwood, and (2) all others.
- FW-051** In reserving small blocks in the Southern Appalachian Piedmont ecological section (Oconee Ranger District), secondary priorities for additional representation are in the order of: (1) eastern riverfront forest or dry-xeric oak forest, woodland, savanna; (2) xeric pine and pine-oak forest; (3) dry-mesic oak forest or mixed mesophytic; and (4) all others.

OLD  
GROWTH

- FW-052** In reserving small blocks in the Southern Appalachian Piedmont ecological section portion of the Chattooga Ranger District, secondary priorities for additional representation are in the order of: (1) dry-xeric oak forest, woodland, savanna; (2) mixed mesophytic; (3) dry and dry-mesic oak-pine forest and (4) all others.
- FW-053** In reserving small blocks in the Blue Ridge Mountains ecological section, the secondary priorities for additional representation are in the order of: (1) river floodplain hardwood, (2) dry and dry-mesic oak-pine, (3) conifer-northern hardwood, and (4) all others.
- FW-054** In the Blue Ridge Mountains ecological section, except for old growth community types 22 (dry-xeric oak forest, woodland, and savanna) and 24 (xeric pine and pine-oak forest, woodland, and savanna), conserve each stand meeting the criteria for existing old growth by not implementing management actions that would result in obvious human-caused disturbance that conflicts with old growth characteristics.
- FW-055** Give priority consideration to meeting woodland restoration objectives in stands meeting the following criteria:
- Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains ecological section
  - Old growth types 22 (dry-xeric oak forest, woodland, and savanna) and 24 (xeric pine and pine-oak forest, woodland, and savanna)
  - The oldest age class at least minimum old growth age.
- In achieving those objectives, leave conditions that meet the criteria for existing old growth in these types when compatible with the purpose and need for specific projects affecting these areas.

## WATERSHED MANAGEMENT (WATER QUALITY, AQUATIC HABITATS, AND SOILS)

WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
(WATER QUALITY,  
AQUATIC  
HABITATS, AND  
SOILS)

### BACKGROUND

“Throughout human history, water has played a central, defining role. It has sculpted the biological and physical landscape through erosion and disturbance. Water has also played a key role in shaping the pattern and type of human occupancy; routes of travel and transportation, patterns of settlement, and the nature and scope of human land-use all owe their characteristics largely to water regimes” (*Water and the Forest Service*, USDA Forest Service, 2000) Georgia is no exception to this role of water in history, as early settlement and trade often centered on water sources and the surrounding watersheds. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, conflicts continue to exist over the supply and quality of water and its associated resources. Water is the lifeblood for human consumption. It also provides habitat for water-dependent species of plants, animals and other aquatic life, which in turn support many terrestrial wildlife species. Basins of five rivers in Georgia (Savannah, Tennessee, Coosa, Chattahoochee, and Altamaha) have portions of their headwaters within the boundaries of the National Forests. As these waters flow downstream away from the Forests, numerous cities and towns withdraw water that is integral to their existence.

Watersheds contain terrestrial, aquatic, riparian, and wetland resources that include both physical and biological components. Riparian and wetland areas, in particular, provide habitat for many wildlife species and provide important links between upland and stream habitats by providing shade, large woody debris and cover. Soils are an integral component of all of these habitats and serve as the primary medium for controlling the movement and storage of energy and water. The physical, chemical and biological properties of soils determine productivity, hydrologic response, site stability and ecosystem resiliency.

A primary mission of the Forest Service is to provide high-quality water in sufficient quantities to meet all needs of natural resource and human requirements. Because several of the river systems within Georgia have headwater sources within the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest proclamation boundaries, it is imperative that the Forests emphasize proper management to ensure that good, clean water is provided to meet these needs.

Water supplies in the southeastern United States are abundant, however expanding urbanization and drought cycles are creating demands that strain supplies. Maintaining water quality requires attention to the impacts that cause degradation. Direct impacts such as mechanical disturbance of slopes, soils, and vegetation may cause erosion and increased sediment delivery to streams. Indirect impacts may include degraded riparian and aquatic habitat, reduced channel stability, and diminished water quality. The maintenance and enhancement of aquatic habitats are also necessary to maintain healthy populations of fish, mussels, and amphibians.

Effective watershed management requires coordination and collaboration at multiple watershed scales. Communication with adjacent private property owners and local and state governments are required to identify pollution sources and impacts. Strategies to resolve watershed impacts require a myriad of solutions and strong partnerships to realize success in maintaining healthy watersheds.

WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
(WATER QUALITY,  
AQUATIC  
HABITATS, AND  
SOILS)

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Water Quality and Soil Protection

**GOAL 22** Watersheds are managed (and where needed, restored) to provide resilient and stable conditions to support the quality of water necessary to protect ecological functions and support intended beneficial water uses.

**OBJECTIVE 22.1** In cooperation and coordination with state and local agencies help prioritize, develop, and implement science-based Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) per the timeframe of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division within budget and staffing capability.

**OBJECTIVE 22.2** Create a forest Geographic Information System wetlands layer within the first 7 years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 23** Manage instream flows and water levels by working with other agencies if possible to protect stream processes, aquatic and riparian habitats and communities, and recreation and aesthetic values.

**OBJECTIVE 23.1** Instream flows needed to protect stream processes, aquatic and riparian habitats and communities, and recreation and aesthetic values will be determined as 6<sup>th</sup> level watershed analyses are completed, if water withdrawal is determined to be an issue in the assessment area.

**GOAL 24** Maintain or restore soil productivity and quality.

**OBJECTIVE 24.1** Soil and water improvement needs are prioritized and restoration work is done annually based on field inventories and assessments. Improve watershed conditions across 500 acres per decade on the Chattahoochee-Oconee NF.

**GOAL 25** Institute effective and consistent watershed management approaches with adjoining National Forests and adjacent landowners to sustain or restore the health of watersheds.

**OBJECTIVE 25.1** Cooperate with Georgia Department of Natural Resources to identify reference streams and/or reference stream conditions within six years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 25.2** Complete an annual average of ten watershed assessments at the 6<sup>th</sup> level HUC or smaller scale on a priority basis. Priority will be given to watersheds where federally-listed aquatic species occur or are within close proximity to Forest Service lands.

**OBJECTIVE 25.3** Within the first eight years of Plan implementation, complete a watershed assessment on each stream or stream segment within the Forest planning area that is listed in the 305(b) and 303(d) reports by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division as not supporting or only partially supporting designated beneficial uses due to sediment-related impairment.

**Aquatic Habitats**

WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
(WATER QUALITY,  
AQUATIC  
HABITATS, AND  
SOILS)

**GOAL 26** Restore and/or maintain aquatic ecosystems in amounts, arrangements, and conditions capable of supporting viable populations of all native and desired nonnative species of aquatic flora and fauna within the planning area.

**OBJECTIVE 26.1** Define habitat relationships for aquatic PETS species or groups of associated species within five years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 26.2** Inventory annually, on a representative sample basis, 10 percent of perennial stream miles for biota (including nonnative species) and/or habitat improvement needs.

**OBJECTIVE 26.3** Within ten years of Plan implementation assess fourth order or larger streams within National Forest ownership for barriers to stream biota passage. Prioritize identified barriers for mitigation.

**OBJECTIVE 26.4** Identify and prioritize streams for restoration of brook trout in cooperation with the Georgia DNR within six years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 26.5** Assess the approximately 300 acres of Forest Service owned lakes and ponds for habitat improvement needs for fish and amphibians within ten years of Plan implementation.

**STANDARDS**

**FW-056** When seeding disturbed soils for revegetation purposes, use only native or non-persistent nonnative species per Region policy.

**FW-057** Proposals for management activities on lakes and reservoirs owned and managed by the Forest Service will be guided by strategies developed for each water body. These strategies will be developed and periodically updated in coordination with State and other appropriate agencies and stakeholders. Strategies will include consideration of water level management, fish stocking, liming and fertilization, aquatic weed control, recreational uses and site-specific issues related to water quality, threatened and endangered species, and species of viability concern.

**FW-058** Only mowing, chopping, shearing, ripping, and scarifying methods of mechanical site preparation are permitted on sustained slopes between 15 and 35 percent. No mechanical site preparation equipment is permitted on sustained slopes over 35 percent.

**FW-059** Mechanical site preparation is not done on sustained slopes over 20 percent with soil erosion hazard classified as moderate or higher.

**FW-060** To limit soil compaction, no mechanical site preparation equipment is used on plastic soils when the water table is within 12 inches of the surface, or when soil moisture exceeds the plastic limit. Soil moisture exceeds the plastic limit if the soil can be rolled to pencil size without breaking or crumbling.

WATERSHED  
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- FW-061** Mechanical site preparation equipment is operated so that furrows and soil indentations are aligned with grades under 5 percent along the contour of the slope.
- FW-062** In mechanical site preparation, windrows and piles are spaced no more than 200 feet apart to limit soil exposure, soil compaction, and nutrient loss from piling and raking. Windrows are aligned on the contour.
- FW-063** When piling in mechanical site preparation, at least 80 percent of the area must retain some ground cover of litter and duff, and soil must not be displaced with dozer blades.
- FW-064** Mitigation for acid rain and other pollution effects is allowed after evaluation on a case-by-case basis.
- FW-065** On all soils dedicated to maintaining forest cover, the organic layers, topsoil, and root mat will be left intact over at least 80 percent of an activity or project area.
- FW-066** Water control structures necessary for the control of surface water movement resulting from soil disturbing activities will be constructed within 30 days of completion of the activity.
- FW-067** Mitigate bare soil exposure prior to any suspension of project activity for 30 days or longer.
- FW-068** On all soils dedicated to growing vegetation, re-vegetation to appropriate species will be completed to a minimum of 85 percent coverage within the first growing season following the completion of project activity.
- FW-069** Prioritize and implement watershed improvement needs based on watershed assessment and stream condition inventories. Highest priority is given to locations with known occurrence of federally-listed aquatic species on National Forest land or within three stream miles below the farthest downstream location of National Forest ownership.
- FW-070** Implement current Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control (Chapter 391-3-6) for all projects as a minimum to meet water quality objectives. Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry (BMPs) will be met or exceeded to meet water quality objectives for silviculture and related treatments.
- FW-071** Water is not diverted from streams (perennial or intermittent) or lakes when an instream flow needs or water level assessment indicates the diversion would adversely affect protection of stream processes, aquatic and riparian habitats and communities, or recreation and aesthetic values.
- FW-072** To protect amphibians and invertebrates, do not stock newly constructed wildlife watering holes or beaver ponds with fish.
- FW-073** Stocking of new nonnative game fish species is prohibited.

- FW-074** Stocking of trout - other than brook trout - in previously unstocked streams or previously unstocked stream segments above natural barriers is discouraged where it will adversely impact the populations or habitat of native aquatic species or communities in that stream. Prior to any stocking, coordinate with the appropriate Federal and/or State agencies to ensure that populations and habitats of native species are maintained.
- FW-075** Watershed assessments, monitoring, and evaluation will be coordinated with adjoining Forests and State agencies at fourth level Hydrologic Units (HUCs) and higher.
- FW-076** Identify and prioritize watershed improvement projects affecting multiple ownerships through collaboration with adjacent landowners.

### **Ephemeral Stream Standards**

The following standards apply forestwide to ephemeral streams, defined in Appendix C. These standards apply to the Ephemeral Stream Zone, identified as 25 feet on either side of an ephemeral stream with evidence of scouring, regardless of slope. Scouring is described as movement of the duff or litter material on the surface due to water movement, exposing the soil below. Ephemeral streams do not have defined channels, flow only in direct response to precipitation and lack riparian areas. They are hydrologically connected to intermittent and perennial streams downstream.

The primary purpose of this Zone is to maintain the ability of the land areas along ephemeral streams to filter sediment from upslope disturbances while achieving the treatments of the management prescription area. In addition, the emphasis along ephemeral streams is to maintain stream stability and sediment controls by minimizing soil disturbance in the stream bottom and maintaining or restoring large woody debris. The overall management direction in this Zone reflects the surrounding management prescription.

- FW-077** Motorized vehicle use in ephemeral stream zones is restricted to designated crossings. Motorized vehicles are allowed outside designated crossings on a case-by-case basis when vehicle entry would create less ground disturbance than cable winching.
- FW-078** A minimum of 20 square feet per acre of basal area of canopy or midstory trees will be left following tree removal activities.
- FW-079** Partial suspension is required when yarding logs over ephemeral streams, unless an improved crossing is used, e.g. culvert or bridge.
- FW-080** The removal of large woody debris is allowed if the debris poses a significant risk to stream flows or water quality, degrades habitat for riparian-associated species, blocks intended recreation access, or poses a threat to private property or Forest Service infrastructure. The need for removal is determined on a case-by-case basis.
- FW-081** New impoundments for wildlife habitat improvements may be allowed with site-specific analysis.

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HABITATS, AND  
SOILS)

- FW-082** Temporary culverts or bridges will be used to cross ephemeral streams where needed to protect channel stability or minimize erosion or scouring. Culverts will be removed when activities are completed, and the ephemeral stream zone will be restored to a natural condition. Stabilize disturbed soils at crossings.
- FW-083** Recreation trails, campsites, and other permanent recreational developments are located, designed, and constructed outside the ephemeral stream zone (25 feet on either side). Those causing unacceptable resource damage will be closed and/or rehabilitated.
- FW-084** Use fuel-break construction and/or mitigation methods that: (a) leave the root mat intact, (b) do not leave bare mineral soil exposed, and (c) do not create landforms that will drain directly into ephemeral streams for 25 feet on either side of ephemeral streams. Such methods include wet lines or use of existing constructed or natural barriers. If fuel-break construction results in breaking the root mat and thus exposure of bare mineral soil and connection to an ephemeral stream, restore the fire break for 25 feet on each side of the stream with re-shaping of the soil surface and placing a soil cover in a timely manner to minimize erosion.



## WOOD PRODUCTS

### BACKGROUND

Reduction in the number of woody stems by felling, top kill in place, removal or some combination of these is essential to achieving some of the desired vegetation composition, structure, condition, and function objectives of this forest plan. When stems are of a species, size, and quality to be in demand by wood-using industry; timber sales are often the most cost-effective means to reach those desired conditions. Therefore timber harvest is permitted for some, but not all, management prescriptions under this Plan. From within those permitting it, an estimate of harvest volume was produced from only those management prescriptions where harvest could be expected to regularly and periodically occur. Those prescriptions were identified in the EIS by alternative and a harvest volume estimate was presented for each alternative.

The specific estimate for this Plan is in Appendix F. That estimate is not a Plan objective. It is for information and to comply with substantive requirements of the National Forest Management Act. Further, the vegetation objectives of this Plan have not been developed for the purpose of furnishing wood raw material to local wood-using industry. There is no objective for any amount of wood volume harvest in this Plan; rather harvest volume is a by-product of management for other purposes. Specific forestwide, management area, or management prescription standards constrain the use of timber harvest. There are several monitoring items for the use of timber harvest.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GOAL 27** Provide a stable supply of wood products within the historic NF market area as an outcome of achieving non-timber objectives.
- GOAL 28** Provide supplies of those wood products where the Forest Service is in a unique position to make an impact on meeting the demand; particularly high-quality raw material for specialty uses.

### STANDARDS

- FW-085** No timber harvesting shall occur on lands classified as not suited for timber production except for salvage sales, harvesting activities necessary to protect other multiple-use values, or harvesting activities needed to meet other (non-timber) desired conditions of the management prescriptions established in this Land and Resource Management Plan.
- FW-086** The maximum size of an opening created by even-aged or two-aged regeneration treatments is 40 acres. For yellow pine, 80 acres is permitted if restoration requires larger openings. Exceptions to these acreage limitations may be permitted following review by the Regional Forester. These acreage limits do not apply to areas treated as a result of natural catastrophic conditions such as fire, insect or disease attack, or windstorm. Areas not managed for sustained yield (for example, meadows; pastures; food plots; rights-of-way; woodlands, savannas, and grasslands) even if within an otherwise suitable prescription, are not subject to these standards

and are not included in calculations of opening size, even when within or adjacent to created openings.

- FW-087** Separate openings created by even-aged regeneration harvest units from each other by a minimum distance of 330 feet (5 chains). However, such openings may be clustered closer than 330 feet as long as their combined acreage does not exceed the maximum opening size. The area between these harvest units must support a stand of vegetation that has grown sufficiently to no longer be classified as an opening, unless the adjacent area is permanently managed as an opening (e.g., meadows, old fields, wildlife openings, roads, and utility corridors) and not managed for sustained yield. An even-aged regeneration area will no longer be considered an opening when the certified reestablished stand has reached an age of five years.
- FW-088** In the seed tree or shelterwood methods of regeneration, residual trees are not removed until the certified reestablished stand has reached an age of five years, and the average height of regeneration is at least ten feet tall.
- FW-089** Regeneration harvests on lands suitable for timber production must be done under a regeneration harvest method where adequate stocking of desirable species is expected to occur within five years after the final harvest cut. (Five years after final harvest means five years after clearcutting, five years after final over-story removal in shelterwood cutting, five years after the seed tree removal cut in seed tree cutting, or five years after selection cutting). The new stand must meet the minimum stocking levels as described in Table 2- 5. These standards apply to both artificial and natural means of stand regeneration. Where natural means are used and stand reestablishment has not been accomplished within three years after committing the stand to regeneration, the stand is re-examined for further treatment needs.

**Table 2- 5. Reforestation Stocking Standards**

Forest Type	Number of Stems Per Acre <sup>1</sup> at End of Third Growing Season		
	Minimum	Desired	Maximum
Loblolly Pine ( <i>Pinus taeda</i> )	200	300-450	600
Shortleaf Pine ( <i>Pinus echinata</i> )	200	300-450	600
Pitch Pine ( <i>Pinus rigida</i> )	200	300-450	600
Hardwood saplings ( <i>Quercus</i> , <i>Carya</i> , etc.)	100	150-250	300
Pine-oak	150	250-400	450
Oak-pine	100	200-250	350
White pine ( <i>Pinus strobus</i> )	100	150-200	350
Virginia pine ( <i>Pinus virginiana</i> )	200	350-450	650
Longleaf pine ( <i>Pinus palustris</i> )	200	300-500	600

1. These numbers are guides and must be used with professional judgement to determine specific restocking numbers of stems per acre for an individual site.

- 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.
- 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.
- FW-092** Recognize offsite species and consider these locations for restoration to more ecologically appropriate communities.
- FW-093** For even-age timber management on lands classified as suitable, methods that maintain stocking levels (stems per acre) and improve growth rates are used.

## AESTHETICS/SCENERY MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

Public concern for the quality of scenery on National Forest System lands in the Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, and Piedmont geographic provinces, is ever increasing. Many sightseers visit the National Forest as part of an interwoven experience with other tourist opportunities. The mountainous Chattahoochee National Forest provides many opportunities for high quality, nature-related and rural culture sightseeing and scenic viewing, as does the Piedmont area on the Oconee National Forest. Scenic features on the Chattahoochee National Forest include the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River, Congressionally-designated wilderness areas (10), the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Coosa Bald National Scenic Area, the Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway, the Ridge and Valley Scenic Byway, the Anna Ruby Falls Scenic Area, and the Ed Jenkins National Recreation Area. The Oconee National Forest offers premier opportunities for wildlife viewing and driving for pleasure. Numerous distinctively scenic and historic "special places" of a more localized importance are also available.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 29** Protect and enhance the scenic/aesthetic values and the Landscape Character of the National Forest lands in the Southern Appalachians, the Ridge and Valley and the Piedmont by meeting all adopted Scenic Integrity Objectives on Forest Service lands within individual management prescriptions.

**OBJECTIVE 29.1** Maintain and update the Scenery Management System. Updates will be accomplished in the course of site-specific project analysis.

**OBJECTIVE 29.2** Within 12 years of Plan implementation, map the seen area for the Forests' existing nationally designated trails, including any trails added since plan implementation, using computerized tools.

**OBJECTIVE 29.3** Within ten years of Plan implementation, raise the scenic integrity in areas where the inventoried Existing Scenic Integrity condition is Low, Very Low, or unacceptably low and improvement is within Forest Service control and otherwise feasible.

**OBJECTIVE 29.4** Within ten years of Plan implementation, improve amenities and views within high use areas, vista points, and along interpretive trails.

**GOAL 30** Provide a variety of Landscape Character themes with the predominant themes being Natural Appearing, Natural Evolving, and variations of these themes.

**STANDARDS**

- FW-094** Meet the Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) of Moderate for the areas seen in the middle ground distance zone of the Appalachian Trail prescription, and manage them for a Natural Appearing Landscape Character theme.
- FW-095** Favor 14-inch and larger trees in a mixture with other smaller sized tree stems when creating spatial diversity along travelways and in recreation use areas.
- FW-096** The Scenery Management System guides protection and enhancement of scenery on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. The Scenic Class Inventory, including Landscape Visibility, Concern Level, and Scenic Attractiveness, is maintained, refined, and updated as a result of site-specific project analysis. The standards under each management prescription in Chapter 3 refer to the Scenic Class Inventory as updated.
- FW-097** The Forest Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) Maps and Scenic Integrity Objectives Tables in each prescription govern all new projects, including special uses. Assigned SIOs are consistent with Recreation Opportunity Spectrum management direction. Existing conditions may not currently meet the assigned SIO.
- FW-100** In areas with very high scenic integrity objectives, management actions are limited to alterations that are low scenic impact.
- FW-101** The Forest Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) Maps and Scenic Integrity Objectives Table will be referenced for all new projects, including special uses.
- FW-102** Maintain consistency between adopted SIOs and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum management direction.
- FW-103** Shape and orient vegetative management openings in the forest canopy to contours and existing vegetation patterns to blend with existing landscape characteristics. Shape and feather the edges in High and Moderate SIO areas. Do not use geometric shapes.
- FW-104** In seed-tree and conventional shelter wood treatments in High and Moderate SIO areas, delay removal of overstory until the certified re-established stand is ten feet or more in height.
- FW-105** Normally apply leave tree and unit marking to not be visible within 100 feet of Concern Level 1 and 2 travel ways and use areas. In these areas remove, burn, chip, or lop slash to be within two feet of the ground.
- FW-106** Design and construction of roads will meet the adopted SIO.
- FW-107** During construction of facilities and/or roads, eliminate or remove from view, to the extent possible, slash and root wads in the immediate foreground in High and Moderate SIO zones except when these materials are used as part of the mitigation measures. Project-specific mitigations may specify a distance defined as 'immediate foreground.'
- FW-108** Cut stems to within approximately six inches of the ground when doing roadside maintenance and utility crossing maintenance at roads and trails.

- FW-109** Exclude gravel pits and borrow areas from the seen area of visually sensitive Concern Level 1 and 2 travelways and use areas.
- FW-110** When consistent with project objectives, favor flowering and other visually attractive trees and under story shrubs when selecting vegetation to be left as a mitigation measure.
- FW-111** When engaged in scenery enhancement activities, plant native wildflowers, shrubs, and/or trees with showy flowers, fall foliage, and/or fruits.
- FW-112** The following trails having National recognition or potential to receive it during this plan cycle are recognized as primary trails.
- William Bartram
  - Anna Ruby Falls
  - Arkaquah
  - Duncan Ridge
  - Jacks Knob
  - Pinhoti
  - Benton MacKaye
  - The AT approach trail from Amicalola Falls State Park to Springer Mountain
- These trails are 'embedded' within numerous management prescriptions, but regardless of the management prescription, the area seen as foreground from these trails will be managed with an SIO of High.
- FW-113** Lands mapped as Concern Level 1 middleground from travelways and use areas will be inventoried as Scenic Class 2 or higher and will be managed for an SIO of Moderate or higher.
- FW-114** Promptly rehabilitate firelines to appear natural in areas of High and Very High SIO.

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES/EXPERIENCES

### BACKGROUND

National forests provide a variety of dispersed and developed recreational opportunities. People are using trails today for much more than backpacking. Mountain biking, horseback riding, and off-highway vehicles are all used on national forest trails. Due to the limited supply and diverse uses, these trails are often congested, and conflicts sometimes occur between user groups. Congestion in recreation use tends to occur on the shores of lakes and streams because these settings are in high demand. Additional user control may become necessary to limit the number of people in overcrowded areas or in biologically sensitive areas.

### Developed Recreation Areas

Developed recreation areas on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests include the following:

Anna Ruby Falls (*in Anna Ruby Scenic Area in MRx 4.F.2*)

DeSoto Falls (*in DeSoto Falls Scenic Area in MRx 4.F.2*)

Keown Falls (*in Keown Falls Scenic Area in MRX 4.F.2*)

Woody Gap (*in MRx 4.A*)

Lake Sinclair  
Oconee River  
Hillsboro Lake  
Andrews Cove  
Brasstown Bald  
Panther Creek  
Fern Springs  
Lake Russell  
Waters Creek  
Camp Wahsega  
Cooper Creek  
Mulky

Morganton Point  
Barnes Creek  
Lake Conasauga  
Hidden Creek  
Pocket  
Lake Chatuge  
Lakewood Landing  
Deep Hole  
Lake Blue Ridge  
Rabun Beach  
Warwoman Dell  
Frank Gross

Sandy Bottoms  
Dockery Lake  
Lake Winfield Scott  
Tate Branch  
Tallulah River  
Dukes Creek Falls  
Willis Knob Horse  
Camp  
Redlands & Swords  
Boat Ramps

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 31** Provide a spectrum of high quality, nature-based recreation settings and opportunities, that reflect the unique or exceptional resources of the Forest and the interests of the recreating public on an environmentally sustainable, financially sound, and operationally effective basis. Adapt management of recreation facilities and opportunities as needed to shift limited resources to those opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE 31.1** Recognize and respond to emerging recreation trends and uses within the Forest recreation niche by periodic assessments.

RECREATION  
OPPORTUNITIES/  
EXPERIENCES

**GOAL 32** Provide for the physical security of the forest visitor commensurate with the recreation setting.

**OBJECTIVE 32.1** Annually identify hazardous trees and plan for removal or mitigation within developed recreation facilities.

**OBJECTIVE 32.2** Develop and keep current cooperative agreements with local emergency services for law enforcement, search, rescue, and recovery operations through periodic review.

**OBJECTIVE 32.3** Provide wildlife-proof trash receptacles in concentrated recreation areas within five years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 33** For Regional Forester Scenic Areas, enhance, restore and create forest habitats as required for wildlife, rare plant communities and historic forest types.

**GOAL 34** Trails do not adversely affect soil and water resources.

**OBJECTIVE 34.1** Prioritize OHV, horse and pack stock, bike, and hiking trails for condition surveys based on their risk of causing adverse effects, conduct surveys, prioritize for remedial action those that are found to be adversely affecting soil and water resources, and correct those situations within five years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 34.2** For trails under Forest Service jurisdiction, bi-annually maintain to established standards:

- 100 percent of designated OHV trails
- 50 percent of trails open to horses
- 50 percent of trails open to mountain bikes
- 33 percent of foot trails

## STANDARDS

### Recreation General

**FW-115** Recreational facilities improvements, expansions, and additions will be within the capabilities of the land and appropriate to the ROS class.

**FW-116** Where recreational uses are negatively affecting Federally-listed species, or individuals of other species that are needed to maintain their population viability on the national forest, uses and/or sites are modified to eliminate negative effects. Recreational uses may be prohibited if the uses are affecting T&E negatively.

**FW-117** All recreation site plans and revisions require Forest Supervisor approval.

**FW-118** Recreation Opportunity Spectrum maps will govern all new projects. Existing conditions may not meet the assigned ROS classes.

**FW-119** Control insect and disease infestations when detected in recreation areas to provide for public safety and to minimize resource damage to the recreation area.



- FW-120** Recreation uses and resource conditions within riparian corridors will comply with the riparian corridor management prescription.
- FW-121** Promptly implement mitigation measures for recreation uses causing unacceptable resource impacts to return conditions to be within acceptable limits, or if not possible, stop the use and rehabilitate the affected areas.
- FW-122** Do not encourage recreation use of rare communities.
- FW-123** The search for treasure trove, that is money, un-mounted gems, precious metals or other high value items deliberately hidden with the intention of later recovery (but not including geo-caching) will only be allowed as authorized by a special use permit, including any specific case by case restrictions.
- FW-124** Recreational metal detecting is not allowed except in areas that do not contain, or would not reasonably be expected to contain, archaeological or historical resources (such as swimming beaches or picnic areas). It must be for lawful purposes (i.e., does not violate the Archaeological Resources Protection Act or *CFR 36 CFR 261.9*). Under these conditions, the collection of items not deliberately hidden with the intention of later recovery is permissible without a permit. Individual management prescriptions may prohibit metal detecting.

#### Trails – General

- FW-125** Forest Supervisor closure orders for existing trails or use areas will be used when necessary to manage environmental impacts and to protect public safety.
- FW-126** OHV use is on designated routes only, that is, no public cross country travel is allowed.
- FW-127** Horse, pack stock, and bike use is on designated routes only, that is, no public cross country travel is allowed. Routes include authorized trails, open roads, and closed roads unless otherwise posted.
- FW-128** Acceptance of existing travelways or creation of new trails will comply with direction within individual management prescriptions.
- FW-129** During active projects, all trails, ditches, and other associated improvements in the project area are kept free of logs, slash, and debris. Any trail, ditch, or other improvement damaged by operations is promptly repaired.
- FW-130** During construction, stabilize trail stream crossing segments that are within 100 feet of the stream measured perpendicular to the stream bank before continuing construction outside this area whenever aquatic T&E species occur within one stream mile downstream of the crossing.
- FW-131** To minimize the length of streamside disturbance, ensure that trail approach sections are aligned at or as near right angles as possible to the stream channel. Locate riparian corridor crossings to minimize the amount of fill material needed and minimize channel impacts.
- FW-132** When the level of recreational trail use has degraded water control structures resulting in sediment reaching a stream, the situation will be

RECREATION  
OPPORTUNITIES/  
EXPERIENCES

mitigated by utilizing all appropriate corrective measures scaled in intensity to the degree of the problem, up to trail closure if necessary.

- FW-133** Prohibit rock climbing at T&E and sensitive plant and animal locations through coordination with recreation and natural resources staff. Divert new and existing hiking trails away from these sites and use barriers and signs to close access, if needed.
- FW-134** New trails other than hiking trails will be located outside of the riparian corridor, except at designated crossings or where the trail location requires some encroachment (e.g., to accommodate stream crossings in steep terrain, etc.). Hiking trails and boardwalks may be considered on a project-level basis, if consistent with riparian corridor desired conditions.
- FW-135** All new stream crossings for system trails will be constructed so that they do not adversely affect the passage of aquatic organisms, or significantly alter the natural flow regime. Exceptions may be allowed to prevent the upstream migration of undesired species.
- FW-136** Where projects to expand the trail system are under consideration, give priority to: (1) the re-use of existing travel ways that meet all applicable plan standards and all Forest Service trails handbook requirements, and (2) the reuse of existing travel ways that can be made to meet the standards more cost effectively than new construction.
- FW-137** Motorized and non-motorized trail reconstruction and relocation within the ephemeral stream zone is allowed when needed to reduce impacts to riparian and aquatic resources.

**Trails - Motorized**

- FW-138** New OHV systems may only be considered in areas that have met screening criteria as shown in Appendix J of the Plan.
- FW-139** Noise emissions from motorized equipment on trails will not exceed 94 dB for all vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1986 and 99dB for all vehicles manufactured before January 1, 1986 as measured by the SAE J1287, June 1998 stationary test. (See Technical Report "Correlation of Off-Highway Motorcycle Sound Test Methods: EPA/SAE" for test results.)
- FW-140** All off-highway vehicles and motorcycles will be required to have factory installed operational spark arrestors when operating on the National Forest.
- FW-141** For operation on open system roads, off-highway vehicles and operators must, at a minimum, be in compliance with applicable State law to operate on National Forest.
- FW-142** Motorized use of the non-motorized portion of the trail system is only permissible: for Forest Service administrative purposes; for emergencies; at road crossings; if a trail is specifically designated for multi-use; or when a trail segment is coincident with an open public road.
- FW-143** New motorized recreation trails are prohibited within the ephemeral stream zone, except at designated crossings or where the trail location requires some encroachment, for example, to accommodate steep terrain.

**FW-144** In case of emergencies threatening life and property (e.g. wildfire or search and rescue), cross-country motorized or non-motorized use, off open and designated roads and trails, is allowable by non-Forest Service personnel subject to prescription direction and the prior verbal approval of the appropriate line officer or their designated acting.

**Trails – Non-motorized**

**FW-145** Development of new hiking trails is constrained by individual management prescriptions.

**FW-146** Camping with horses and pack stock is restricted to designated and posted equestrian camping areas. Refer to Management Prescription 11, Riparian Corridors, standard 11-015 in chapter 3.

**FW-147** Newly constructed horse trails will be a minimum of five miles in length, except when linked with an existing system such as a connector from a new trailhead or interior cross-connection.

**FW-148** New non-motorized trail construction within the ephemeral stream zone is allowed when needed to replace existing trail configuration and improve access.

## WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT/ROADLESS AREAS

### BACKGROUND

In 1964, the United States Congress passed the National Wilderness Act, giving legislated “Wilderness” recognition and designation to specified federally-owned lands. Ten wilderness areas totaling approximately 117,000 acres are located within the Chattahoochee National Forest. Designated wilderness lands are managed to preserve their natural qualities. Once designated, primarily the forces of nature affect these lands. Here humans are visitors, and natural physical and biological forces are normally allowed to proceed unrestricted by human influences. People and their behavior are managed to prevent or reduce unwanted human impact on wilderness values. Wilderness is a place to find solitude and enjoy a primitive and unconfined recreation experience, away from predominating sight and sound of other humans. Visitors are encouraged to practice ‘Leave No Trace’ ethics.

Among Georgia's national forest communities of interest there is a wide spectrum of feelings and values for wilderness designation. Wilderness management concerns include:

- patterns and intensities of uses
- insect and disease management
- fire management, including the use of management-ignited fire
- incorporation of ‘limits of acceptable change’ concepts into plan direction
- mitigation of air pollution effects on wilderness resources

Roadless areas are places that have retained or are regaining a natural, untrammelled appearance – any signs of prior human activity are disappearing or being muted by natural forces. An individual roadless area must be at least 5,000 acres in size and include no more than one-half mile of improved road for each 1,000 acres. Should it ultimately take affect, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) would place restrictions on road construction and reconstruction, and the cutting, sale, or removal of timber that could occur in inventories roadless areas. The exceptions where road construction or reconstruction activities and timber cutting or removal activities would be allowed were identified in 36 *CFR* 294.12 and 294.13 as of September, 2003. Final disposition of the Roadless Rule will include direction to the agency for the long term.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 35** Provide the primitive or semi-primitive recreation experiences that are not available on other land ownerships.

**GOAL 36** Wilderness areas are managed to provide their full range of wilderness resource benefits. Wilderness study areas (areas that have been recommended to Congress for designation) are managed to conserve their roadless characteristics.

**OBJECTIVE 36.1** Develop the various wilderness plans for each existing designated wilderness, or additional wilderness designated prior to that date, within 15 years of Plan implementation. Examples of the required plans are the fire management plan and wilderness management plan.

**GOAL 37** Obtain full public ownership of National Forest lands within wilderness boundaries, including subsurface rights.

**GOAL 38** Manage wilderness, roadless, and other un-roaded areas to provide the social and ecological benefits that only they can offer.

WILDERNESS  
MANAGEMENT/  
ROADLESS  
AREAS

## STANDARDS

**FW-149** The roadless character of inventoried roadless areas will be maintained so as to continue to meet Forest Service roadless area criteria.

**FW-150** Do not exceed the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) standards established in approved Wilderness Management Plans.

**NOTE:** Specific direction for designated Wilderness areas and wilderness study areas is found in Chapter 3 , MRx 1.A and 1.B.

## FOREST HEALTH

### BACKGROUND

In an ecological sense, all of the issues concerning the physical and biological resources of the forests are, at least in part, about forest health. Health is central to the concept of sustainability. This holistic concept of forest health is addressed by the inter-relationships among the various Plan topics. As a separate subtopic, forest health is focused on the management of insect and disease risk of tree mortality in the vegetation communities, the introduction or spread of invasive species, and the effects of air pollutants.

Forest health conditions are not static. Forests change through time in both their susceptibility to forest pests and in the effects following from them. Environmental stressors such as over-crowding, lack of water, pollution, and lack of nutrients increase susceptibility. Within-species and between-species competition is a major stress factor. Trees also change physiologically with age and tend to become more susceptible to some pests. Past land use that has resulted in species growing in locations less than optimum for them (e.g., off site) is another pre-disposing factor. Natural events such as periodic severe drought or storms are additional stresses. Management actions can change the area affected and the severity of effects of some pests. However, the level of management needed often creates concerns about forest pest management.

The prevention, detection, evaluation, and suppression of insect and disease problems on the National Forests in the South is managed with the technical assistance of the Forest Health Protection (FHP) unit of the State and Private Forestry branch of the Forest Service. (See the State and Private Forestry topic.) The FHP Director is on the Regional Forester's immediate staff. A field office in Asheville, NC serves Georgia and other southeastern states. The C-O NF has a designated FHP contact person at the Asheville office for forest health questions or to schedule field visits.

The FHP Unit also has a wider mission. They provide assistance to other Federal land managers; including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corp of Engineers, and agencies in the Department of Defense. They assist cooperating State natural resource management agencies and regulatory agencies. The Unit also administers cooperative forest health cost-sharing programs, provides technology transfer, assists in technology development, and helps monitor the health of the Nation's forests.

Some of the major concerns of forest health include oak decline, dogwood anthracnose, gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, southern pine beetle, nonnative invasive pest plants, and air quality.

Forests and streams located in areas of base-poor bedrock (sandstone and granite) and with elevations above 3,000 feet are being negatively affected by historic and current levels of acid deposition. This is especially true for spruce/fir forests, which do not occur on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest, but are present on national forests on more northern sections of the Southern Appalachians. The two primary acidifying compounds are sulfates and nitrates. Of those two, nitrate deposition is most important in spruce/fir forests. The sources of acidifying compounds are generally located off National Forest lands, with coal-fired electric generation facilities and vehicles accounting for the bulk of sulfur and nitrogen emissions. When nitrogen is deposited in excess of forest nutrient needs, some nitrate will leave the soil and take with it essential nutrients, which impoverishes the soil resource. When nutrients are leached from soils, growth of vegetation can be reduced. Sulfur deposition can cause the same effects on soils when

the capacity to absorb sulfur is exceeded. Sulfur and nitrogen compounds in the soil also cause acidification of high elevation streams, thereby endangering the habitat of native brook trout and other aquatic species. Recent and projected trends in air pollutants show sulfur compound emissions decreasing over the life of the Plan, whereas nitrogen compound emissions are projected to remain relatively flat.

Ozone pollution is negatively affecting the health of sensitive forest tree species, black cherry, for example. Ozone is formed through chemical reactions in the atmosphere between nitrogen oxide (from vehicles and coal-fired power generation) and volatile organic compounds (from industrial and natural sources) in the presence of sunlight. Ozone levels are highest during the summer. Recent studies suggest that competitiveness between tree species is changing over time due to elevated ozone levels. Tree species that are not sensitive to ozone will out compete more sensitive species over time. Significant reductions in ozone pollution over the life of the Plan are not anticipated, because nitrogen oxide emissions are not expected to decrease significantly.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 39** Develop an understanding of the extent and severity of effects of nonnative invasive species.

**OBJECTIVE 39.1** Develop species-to-site relationships for nonnative invasive species to predict their probable locations within five years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 40** Through appropriate management, reduce populations of native and non-native pest species or vulnerability to them.

**OBJECTIVE 40.1** Maintain forest-stocking levels at no more than 'fully stocked' for the species, age, and site quality with priority for treatment given to those vegetation communities at highest risk of insect or disease attack.

- Reduce stem density on an annual average of 3,500 acres of overstocked loblolly pine stands less than 30 years old on the Oconee during the first 10 years of Plan implementation.
- Reduce stem density on an annual average of 1,500 acres of overstocked loblolly pine stands on the Chattahoochee during the first 10 years of Plan implementation.
- Reduce stem density on an annual average of 1,500 acres of overstocked shortleaf pine stands on the Chattahoochee during the first 10 years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 40.2** Annually assess populations and trends of southern pine beetle.

**OBJECTIVE 40.3** Annually implement appropriate actions of the gypsy moth "Slow the Spread" (STS) strategy.

**OBJECTIVE 40.4** Within five years of Plan implementation, for forest pests with dynamic hazard rating systems available, and for which use data is currently available, dynamically rate all National Forest stands for existing and future hazard level.

FOREST  
HEALTH

**OBJECTIVE 40.5** For forest pests with hazard rating systems currently available but which use data not currently available, collect such data and rate all National Forest stands for hazard level within ten years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 40.6** For forest pests with hazard rating systems currently available, reduce hazard rating to moderate hazard levels or below and maintain for each pest within ten years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 41** Enhance forest health conditions in forest stands that are: (1) substantially damaged by fire, wind throw, or other catastrophes; or (2) in imminent danger from insect or disease attack.

**GOAL 42** Contribute to the development of hazard rating systems for forest pests lacking such a system.

**GOAL 43** Cooperate in the development and testing of biological control organisms.

**STANDARDS**

**FW-151** Comply with the direction contained in the current version of the Regional Forester's invasive species list.

**FW-152** Except as required to maintain RCW habitat, do not reforest High littleleaf hazard soils with shortleaf or loblolly pine, and do not reforest Moderate littleleaf hazard soils with shortleaf pine.

**FW-153** During project level inventories, document the presence of species listed on the Regional Forester's Invasive Species List.

**FW-154** Identify and give priority for restoration to stands affected by oak decline.



## SPECIAL AREAS AND RARE COMMUNITIES

### BACKGROUND

Numerous concerns have been expressed about managing rare communities, such as those identified in the Southern Appalachian Assessment. The assessment states that conservation of 31 rare terrestrial communities is a key to conserving rare plant and animal species. Eighty-four percent of federally-listed terrestrial threatened and endangered species in the Southern Appalachians are associated with rare communities and streamside habitats, which occur on less than 1 percent of the area. Similar groupings of listed aquatic and semi-aquatic species can be identified, although typing and inventory of rare aquatic communities has not been completed. Special Areas can be designated for special or unique aesthetic, archaeological, biologic, geologic, historic, paleontologic, scientific resource values; or areas can be designated that provide unique and exceptional recreation experiences. Ecological communities such as caves, coves, rock outcrops, balds, and wetlands have been identified as possible "special areas." Concerns have been raised that some of these special areas are not adequately protected from activities in the surrounding areas, indicating the possible need for larger areas to be protected.

**Table 2- 6. Rare Communities Identified for the Chattahoochee-Oconee NF**

Wetland Communities	Forest Communities
Appalachian Highlands Bogs, Fens, Seeps, and Ponds	Table Mountain Pine Forest And Woodland
Appalachian Highlands Riverine Vegetation	Basic Mesic Forest
Cliffs and Rock Outcrops	Other Rare Communities
Talus Slopes	Glades, Barrens, and Associated Woodlands
Forested Boulderfields	Balds
Cliffs and Bluffs	Canebrakes
Rock Outcrops	Caves and Mines
Rocky Summits	

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 44** Identify and delineate any rare communities found on Forest lands, and then incorporate them into management prescriptions 4.D or 9.F.

**OBJECTIVE 44.1** Within ten years of Plan implementation develop and validate a predictive model for potential locations of rare communities.

**GOAL 45** Identify and conserve the unique features of special physical resources (such as geologic and paleontological areas).

SPECIAL AREAS  
AND RARE  
COMMUNITIES**STANDARDS**

- FW-155** Rare communities as described in this plan are managed under the Rare Community Management Prescription (9.F) wherever they occur.
- FW-156** Project areas are surveyed for rare communities prior to implementing projects that have potential to adversely affect them. A database of rare community locations and conditions across the forest is maintained, and is referred to during project planning.
- FW-157** The conservation of the rare communities identified in this Forest plan takes precedence over achieving old growth management direction.
- FW-158** Do not make specific locations of rare communities readily available to the general public.

## WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

### BACKGROUND

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (*Public Law 90-542: 16 USC 1271-1287, October 2, 1968*) and its amendments provide for the protection of selected rivers and their immediate environments. To be considered for designation, rivers must possess one or more outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values. Designation preserves rivers in free-flowing condition, protects water quality and protects their immediate environments for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Recommended rivers are added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System through Federal legislation, after a study of the river's eligibility and suitability for designation. The Forest Service is required to consider and evaluate rivers on lands they manage for potential designation while preparing their broader land and resource management plans under Section 5(d)(1) of the Act. Eligible streams are selected for their outstandingly remarkable values and classified into Wild, Scenic, or Recreational segments based on guidance in the Act. Streams found to be eligible are then analyzed against suitability criteria and a determination is made whether or not to recommend a river for designation.

In this plan, designated Wild and Scenic Rivers are managed under management prescription group 2.A. Recommended streams are managed under MRx 2.B until designated. Streams not recommended for Congressional designation will be managed in the 4.H. management prescription.

On May 10, 1974, the Chattooga River was designated as one of the original streams in the Wild and Scenic River System (WSR). It is the premier whitewater stream of the eastern United States, and at present, is the only WSR stream on the Chattahoochee-Oconee NF. Its 57 designated miles begin in North Carolina and become the state boundary between South Carolina (Sumter NF) and Georgia (Chattahoochee-Oconee NF). The Sumter National Forest has the lead for administrative duties on the Chattooga.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 46** Preserve the outstandingly remarkable values (as defined by the Wild and Scenic River Act) of streams designated, recommended, or eligible for the National Wild and Scenic River system for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**NOTE:** Specific direction for designated and recommended Wild and Scenic Rivers is found in Chapter 3 , MRx 2.A and 2.B.

## ACCESS/ROAD MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

System roads are the primary means of national forest access, however, they are also a source of many concerns. These concerns predominantly center on the negative environmental effects of roads including noise, erosion and subsequent sedimentation, transport of invasive species, poaching, and the reduction of non-motorized recreational opportunities available on National Forest. However, driving for pleasure is the major recreational use of National Forest. The presence of roads and their condition also relates to the social justice aspect of reasonable access to public lands by those with physical challenges. Road management to maintain existing levels, or to upgrade as needed based on use, is typically a challenge due to annual funding levels.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 47** Provide a transportation system that supplies the public, the Forest Service, and other authorized users with safe, environmentally sustainable, equitable, financially sound, and operationally effective access to roaded portions of the National Forest.

**GOAL 48** Roads do not adversely affect soil and water resources.

**OBJECTIVE 48.1** Complete condition surveys for those specified road segments that are within Forest Service jurisdiction and that are also within the riparian corridor. Prioritize those that are adversely affecting soil and water resources, and correct those situations in the following order of priority:

1. the approximately 20 miles in watersheds where federally-listed aquatic species occur on or within one stream mile of the lowest watershed occurrence of National Forest ownership within three years of Plan implementation.
2. the approximately 10 miles in watersheds where federally-listed aquatic species occur within five stream miles of the lowest watershed occurrence of National Forest ownership within five years of Plan implementation.
3. the approximately 123 remaining miles within ten years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 48.2** Periodically maintain roads under Forest Service jurisdiction to maintenance level standards per the schedule below:

- 100 percent of maintenance level 5 roads annually
- 50 percent of maintenance levels 3 and 4 roads annually
- 25 percent of maintenance levels 1 and 2 roads annually

**GOAL 49** Close and restore unneeded roads and motorized trails.

**OBJECTIVE 49.1** Over the first 15 years of Plan implementation close at least 50 percent of open roads and/or motorized vehicle trails unneeded for public access or to accomplish long-term forest management objectives.

**GOAL 50** Resolve the jurisdiction of roads claimed by state or local government and not needed by the Forest Service, which are causing adverse environmental effects or are in conflict with management direction, and correct the problem.

## STANDARDS

**FW-159** Use road closure or decommissioning projects as opportunities to enhance other resources; for example, wildlife, recreation, or fisheries.

**FW-160** During active projects, all roads, ditches, and other improvements in the project area are kept free of logs, slash, and debris. Any road, ditch, or other improvement damaged by operations is promptly repaired.

**FW-161** During construction of roads that cross a stream with aquatic T&E species within five stream miles downstream, each segment within 100 feet perpendicular to the stream on either side of a stream crossing will be constructed and stabilized prior to starting another segment.

**FW-162** To minimize the length of streamside disturbance, ensure that road approach sections are aligned with the stream channel at or as near right angles as possible. Locate riparian corridor crossings to minimize the amount of fill material needed and minimize channel impacts.

**FW-163** If culverts are removed, stream banks and channels must be restored to a natural size and shape. All disturbed soil must be stabilized. Stable stream crossings with a history of no adverse impacts will not be replaced unnecessarily.

**FW-164** Hydrologists, fishery biologists, or soil scientists will be consulted prior to replacing culverts or improved fords; for example, concrete slabs, in order to address fish passage concerns and proper culvert sizing.

**FW-165** All new major stream crossings for system roads will be constructed so that they do not adversely impact the passage of aquatic organisms, or significantly alter the natural flow regime. Exceptions may be allowed to prevent the upstream migration of undesired species.

RED-COCKADED  
WOODPECKER

## RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER

### BACKGROUND

On January 27, 2003, the USDI Fish & Wildlife Service approved the second revision of the Recovery Plan for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. This second revision incorporated the 1995 Forest Service Region 8 *Red-cockaded Woodpecker Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Record of Decision (ROD)* that previously provided management direction to National Forests in the Southern Region. The management direction in the Revised Recovery Plan represents the latest research and information regarding red-cockaded woodpecker population and habitat management. It provides guidance to all federal agencies and private landowners with red-cockaded woodpecker on their lands. The Oconee National Forest is identified as a secondary core population, meaning that it can hold 250 breeding pairs at the time of and following de-listing. This Forest Plan adopts and reproduces the appropriate text of the January 27, 2003 recovery plan direction. The intent is to maximize red-cockaded woodpecker opportunities within existing conditions and Forest Plan land allocation decisions.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 51** Contribute to the conservation and recovery of the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) until species viability is assured throughout its range and it is no longer listed as an endangered species under the endangered species act.

### STANDARDS

**FW-166** In the event of a substantive (required action) difference between this Plan and/or its amendments and the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service January 2003 RCW Recovery Plan and/or its amendments, the recovery plan takes precedence.

**NOTE:** See Management Prescriptions 8.D and 8.D.1 in Chapter 3 for specific goals, objectives, and standards relating to the red-cockaded woodpecker.

## MINERALS

### BACKGROUND

Congress has passed various laws providing for the exploration and development of mineral resources on National Forest System lands. Federal mineral resources are divided into three categories: (1) locatable minerals, (2) leasable minerals, and (3) salable (common variety) minerals. Locatable mineral exploration and development is authorized by the 1872 Mining Law that applies to Public Domain status lands. This Forest has no Public Domain status lands, which means that the locatable mineral program does not apply. However, locatable minerals (e.g., gold silver lead, iron, copper, etc.) become leasable on acquired status lands. All the Federal lands in the state of Georgia have been acquired; that is, obtained from private sector ownership. Leasable minerals are managed in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM is the federal agency that issues all mineral leases. Leasable minerals include the "locatable" minerals that occur on acquired status lands - the energy minerals (e.g., coal, oil, gas geothermal, oil shale) and phosphate, sodium and potassium. Salable minerals (e.g., sand, gravel, clay, stone, and rip-rap) are managed solely by the Forest Service on National Forest System lands.

Currently there are no active minerals leases on the Forest. The Forest issues about 50 permits annually for common variety mineral materials, such as gravel or fieldstone.

In the last five years, through legal procedures, the Forest obtained the surface mineral rights to approximately 130,000 acres located in 16 counties in Georgia through the Georgia Dormant Minerals Act. This Act allows the mineral rights to be obtained when the estate is split when the land is acquired and the owner of the minerals has not paid taxes nor worked the minerals in the previous seven years. The Federal government presently owns the rights to all minerals on about 98 percent of the Forest acreage. Mineral rights on the remaining 2 percent of the Forest acreage are privately owned (either reserved or outstanding minerals rights), and the owner has paid taxes on the mineral rights in the previous seven years. Outstanding mineral rights are property rights that were established and separated from the surface estate prior to the government's acquisition of the estate. Reserved mineral rights are established when the Federal government purchases only the surface estate and the mineral estate remains with the seller. The Forest Service, as surface owner, cannot exclude entry by the mineral estate owner, either permanently or for an unreasonable amount of time. The mineral estate owner has the right to make such use of the surface as is reasonably necessary.

Since the 1830s, gold prospecting and mining has been part of the North Georgia experience. Today it is limited in scope to recreational status. This is true on the Chattahoochee NF where commercial mining activities occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 52** Meet demands for energy and non-energy minerals consistent with Forest Plan management prescriptions, multiple-use objectives, and in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

**GOAL 53** Acquire mineral rights that were reserved, but for which there has been no minerals activity; that is, the right has not been used.

## **STANDARDS**

**FW-167** Using a metal detector without ground disturbance to locate minerals is generally allowed unless a more stringent standard applies at the specific location. See related standards in the Recreation section.

**FW-168** Collection of small amounts of surface mineral materials, such as in rockhounding, is allowed on the Forest, unless or until unacceptable resource damage occurs and provided that specimens are for personal non-commercial uses, neither hand nor power digging tools are used, collection does not conflict with existing mineral rights, and collection is not constrained by a more stringent standard at the specific location.

**FW-169** Recreational gold panning is allowed on the Forest, provided that neither hand nor power digging tools are used; collection does not conflict with existing mineral rights; and collection is not prohibited elsewhere in the Plan.

**FW-170** The right of development of private mineral rights will be recognized and allowed, subject to the terms of the deed of separation, appropriate state and federal laws, and Forest management direction.

**FW-171** Lands staff will complete necessary environmental analyses in order to provide the BLM with a consent decision on mineral prospecting permit applications within 90 days and mineral lease applications within 180 days.

**FW-172** For all BLM issued permits and leases, the mining and reclamation plan agreed to between the Forest and the miner will consider opportunities to enhance the desired future condition of the particular management area prescription.

**FW-173** Common variety surface mineral materials authorizations will continue to be issued on a fee basis where appropriate on the Forest.



## SPECIAL USES

### BACKGROUND

Special uses serve a public need and benefit by providing for use and occupancy of National Forest land. The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to permit special uses on National Forest System lands by various Acts.

There are numerous and varied special uses on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. Some of these are communication sites, military uses, private water uses, private driveways, and utilities (water systems, power lines and gas pipelines). Some rights-of-way provide ingress and egress to private inholdings accessed only by crossing National Forest System land. As a designated urban national forest, the number and kinds of special use requests may be expected to increase in the future. Some of these may also be expected to be controversial.

Various types of recreation special uses are located on the Forest. Examples are: outfitter/guides, boat docks, target ranges, recreation residences and a shuttle service to Brasstown Bald.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 54** All designated and other utility corridors and designated communication sites will minimize environmental, social and visual impacts and ensure benefit to the public.

**OBJECTIVE 54.1** Process energy-related leases, licenses and permits within 90 days of the date the applicable decision document is approved.

**GOAL 55** Manage special uses consistent with protection of natural resource values, public health and safety, and cost effectiveness.

**OBJECTIVE 55.1** Process each special use application through initial screening within 30 working days.

**OBJECTIVE 55.2** Maintain current data on each special use in the Special Use Data System (SUDS) database or equivalent as of the end of each fiscal year.

**OBJECTIVE 55.3** Maintain current annual or periodic inspections on each special use permit.

**OBJECTIVE 55.4** Offset costs of environmental analysis for non-categorical exclusion special use projects by collecting funds from the proponent.

**GOAL 56** Minimize the National Forest land area affected by special use permits and their conflicts with other National Forest values.

SPECIAL  
USES**STANDARDS**

- FW-174** Special use proposals or applications will be screened to ensure that the proposed use is: (a) consistent with applicable laws, regulation, orders, and policies, (b) consistent with this Forest Plan, including any amendments, (c) in the public interest, and (d) consistent with other Forest direction.
- FW-175** When a special use proposal meets screening criteria the application will be accepted.
- FW-176** Before approving a special use permit, ensure that the applicant has given adequate consideration to reasonable alternative locations on private land.
- FW-177** When a special use application is accepted, NEPA requirements will be met and a decision document will be completed and signed by the Forest Supervisor or other appropriate Deciding Official.
- FW-178** The forest will maintain a list of special forest products for which collection permits can be issued. Except for scientific purposes, permits will be issued only for those items on the list. Individual collection permits may include further restrictions on the permit holder. Individual management prescriptions may prohibit collections.
- FW-179** New communication tower installation and ridge-top recreational developments are designed to mitigate collision impacts to migratory birds through coordination of project planning and implementation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- FW-180** New communications equipment will be co-located on existing towers or other structures where possible. Height of new towers shall not exceed 200 feet above ground level.
- FW-181** In order to reduce the need for additional commitment of lands for communications facilities, new communications equipment will be located on existing sites whenever that will serve the need or the area intended. When new communication sites are proposed and recommended for approval by the Forest Supervisor, the site will be identified and designated through the communication site plan process and in accordance with land management planning policy, environmental analysis policy and special use policy direction.
- FW-182** Communications towers no longer in use, or determined to be obsolete, will be removed.
- FW-183** Co-locate new special uses requiring linear rights of way within existing corridors, such as utility and transportation corridors, when the purpose and need can be met. When this is not possible, widen existing corridors rather than create new within applicable restraints.
- FW-184** The Forest will not issue any additional special use permits for individual water systems, and will phase out existing systems per established Forest water policy.
- FW-185** Prior to re-authorizing existing individual well/spring permits, determine the in-stream flow or lake level needs sufficient to protect stream processes,

aquatic and riparian habitats and communities, and recreation and aesthetic values.

SPECIAL  
USES

**FW-186** Prior to authorizing new or re-authorizing existing diversions of water from streams or lakes, determine the in-stream flow or lake level needs sufficient to protect stream processes, aquatic and riparian habitats and communities, and recreation and aesthetic values.

**NOTE:** Refer to standards on metal detecting in the Recreation and Heritage Resources sections of this chapter.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

Fire Management involves both fire suppression and proactively using fire to achieve set goals. In comments received from the public during the Plan scoping phase, fire was not identified as a major issue. Since planning began, however, research has been more active, and a greater understanding of fire both as a threat and as a tool has been achieved. The "Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy" (2001) gives clear priority to the protection of health and safety of both the general public and firefighters. This prioritization offers guidance in establishing programs and projects involving the private sector of landowners and developers.

Fire effectively and efficiently reduces the level of hazardous fuels thus reducing risks and costs. Natural ignition of fire (i.e. by lightning strike) is not uncommon and is a valuable ecosystem dynamic within the planning area. Research results are varied, but historic human fire use is being increasingly seen as a crucial influence on our present forests. Fire was used historically to modify vegetation, and its use continued long enough to have an effect on species composition and arrangement. Conversely, vigorous fire suppression efforts beginning about 1920 have greatly affected the present forest. On the Chattahoochee-Oconee, the woody understory is typically dominated by shade tolerant and fire intolerant species.

Ecosystems differ in their ability to support fire. Plant species also vary in their response to fire, with some species benefiting and others not. Frequency and intensity – the fire regime - varies by ecosystem. Fire Condition Classes are used to characterize both general wildland fire risk and ecosystem condition. There are three fire condition classes:

- Condition Class 1 is characterized by: (a) fire regimes within or near an historical range, (b) low risk of losing key ecosystem components, (c) departure from historical frequencies by no more than one return interval, and (d) intact and functioning vegetation attributes (species composition and structure) within an historical range.
- Condition Class 2 is characterized by: (a) fire regimes moderately altered from their historical range, (b) moderate risk of losing key ecosystem components, (c) departure (either increased or decreased) from historical frequencies by more than one return interval, and (d) moderate alteration from the historical range of vegetation attributes.
- Condition Class 3 is characterized by: (a) fire regimes significantly altered from their historical range, (b) high risk of losing key ecosystem components, (c) departure from historical frequencies by multiple return intervals, and (d) significant alteration from the historical range of vegetation attributes.

Fire management will continue to develop during the life of this Plan at national, regional, and local levels. Fire as an ecosystem management tool will become more important.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 57** Keep firefighter and public safety the highest priority in all fire management operations.

**GOAL 58** Reduce the risks and consequences of wildfire through fuel treatments that restore and maintain conditions of fire regime Condition Class 1 to the extent practicable.

**OBJECTIVE 58.1** Reduce extreme fire behavior characteristics and spotting distances by treating fuels to create a defensible space within designated wild land urban interface (WUI) zones.

**OBJECTIVE 58.2** Locate and designate zones specific to wildland urban interface (WUI) fire management issues to allow for prioritization of projects and funding based on protection needs and potential.

**OBJECTIVE 58.3** Prescribe burn a three-year rolling annual average of 30,000 acres each year on the Chattahoochee and Oconee combined to meet plan goals and objectives.

**OBJECTIVE 58.4** Develop a Fire Use Program and a Forest Fire Management Action Plan using applicable national standards within five years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 59** Support local efforts to create solutions to hazardous fuel conditions, including development of tools or markets traditionally not cost effective.

**GOAL 60** Determine values at risk and conduct fire management operations to minimize damage to resources.

**GOAL 61** Expand the role of fire to recover and sustain short interval fire-adapted ecosystems through the use of both prescribed and managed ignition fires, including allowing lightning-caused fire to function, as much as possible, as a natural process; especially in Wilderness or other custodial management areas.

**OBJECTIVE 61.1** Refine the critical values of the Keetch-Byram Drought Code (Cumulative Severity Index) for all major vegetation-soil-landform types on which prescribed fires are conducted and re-issue as an updated Forest supplement to the manual system within five years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 62** Participate in research and cooperative opportunities to increase the understanding of prescribed burning and smoke management constraints.

**GOAL 63** Manage fire in wilderness to benefit the wilderness resource and in accordance with the approved Wilderness Management Plans.

**GOAL 64** Implement the goals of the Federal Clean Air Act ( See also Air Quality Management.)

FIRE  
MANAGEMENT

**OBJECTIVE 64.1** Emissions from prescribed fire will not disproportionately hinder State progress towards attaining air quality standards or visibility goals.

**STANDARDS**

- FW-187** Obtain approval from the Forest Supervisor for the limited use of mechanized equipment in management prescription areas where its use is normally prohibited.
- FW-188** For herbaceous community maintenance, prescribed fire is not used more frequently than every three years, except when needed for habitat to support species viability or to control encroachment by woody species.
- FW-189** Do not construct plowed firelines within savannahs, except when needed to protect facilities or threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species.
- FW-190** When prescribed burning other adjacent vegetation types using a combination of constructed fire control line and natural barriers, exclude areas of mesic deciduous forests lacking a significant oak component unless to do so would result in: (a) failure to meet other prescribed fire objectives, or (b) more than a 30-percent increase in plowed or bladed fireline construction per burn unit.
- FW-191** When necessary to include basic mesic and mesic deciduous forests within burning blocks as part of burning other adjacent vegetation types, only low intensity fires are allowed, except when prescribed burns are designed to encourage oak regeneration in mesic oak forests.
- FW-192** When prescribed burning other adjacent vegetation types using a combination of constructed fireline and natural barriers, exclude areas of basic mesic forests from prescribed burning blocks, where this can be accomplished without resulting in more than a 50 percent increase in plowed or bladed fireline construction.
- FW-193** Areas are not prescribed burned for at least 30 days after herbicide treatment.
- FW-194** In all fire operations, emphasize the use of naturally occurring barriers to fire spread to the maximum extent compatible with other goals, objectives, and standards; particularly riparian area standards.
- FW-195** Locate and construct firelines to minimize mineral soil exposure in both suppression and prescribed fire operations consistent with fire danger, values at risk, operational efficiency, and applicable objectives. Compliance may include adjustments to fireline location even when the readjustment may impose into an area prescribed for less fire use.
- FW-196** Firelines which expose mineral soil are not located in riparian corridors along lakes, perennial or intermittent springs and streams, wetlands, or water-source seeps, unless tying into them as natural barriers to fire spread at designated points with minimal soil disturbance. (*See riparian standards for distances.*)

- FW-197** Rehabilitation of wildfire control lines will be included as an objective of fire operational plans, will occur promptly after the burn, and will meet all other applicable standards of this Plan.
- FW-198** Locate wildfire control lines to avoid impacts on known Heritage resources or T&E or sensitive species habitat, unless impacts to these areas are necessary for human safety. Document rationale for line location if these areas are impacted for safety reasons.
- FW-199** Protect snags and cavity trees in prescribed fire operations where prescribed fire planning has identified a need for this mitigation.
- FW-200** Forest Fire Management Plans will be updated annually.
- FW-201** Prescribed fires in the riparian corridor will maintain high- and intermediate-canopy stream shade, except as needed to create or maintain canebrake communities. (See *Riparian standards for distances*.)
- FW-202** Prescribed burning, other than slash burns, will be designed to retain litter and/or duff material on at least 85 percent of the project area, excluding firelines. Areas within which the post-burn survey identifies more than 15 percent exposed soils will be evaluated for re-vegetation to mitigate erosion effects.
- FW-203** Slash burns are planned and conducted so that they do not consume all litter and duff and alter structure and color of mineral soil on more than 20 percent of the area. Steps taken to control soil heating may include use of backing fires on steep slopes, scattering slash piles, and burning heavy fuel pockets separately.
- FW-204** In prescribed burning planning, use soils inventory data to identify severely eroded soils, locate any area with an average litter-duff depth of less than one-half inch within them and mitigate fire effects to maintain the litter and duff on these areas.
- FW-205** To prevent erosion, water diversions will be installed on prescribed fire control lines during their construction. Refer to Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry handbook for standards on spacing and construction.
- FW-206** All prescribed burning projects will be conducted with full adherence to Forest Service internal guidance for air quality and the pollution control methodologies prescribed by air quality regulatory agencies.
- FW-207** For prescribed burning projects planned within areas having a non-attainment or maintenance status regarding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); the Forest Service will demonstrate in advance that it can complete those projects in conformity with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) provisions established to return the area to NAAQS attainment.

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS, INTERPRETATIVE SERVICES, AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Increasing public understanding of underlying issues is crucial to successful public policy, and environmental education is an investment to prevent costly environmental disasters and to promote sustainable use of natural resources. The guiding principle is that Conservation Education and Interpretation will be integrated as a component in all program areas around the theme of sustainability - specifically, sustaining forest health, biological diversity, ecological processes, recreation and cultural values. The primary audiences will be community leaders including teachers, multi-cultural youth in urban and rural areas and the visiting public. Outreach to urban populations is particularly applicable to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest as a designated Urban Forest. Critical success factors have been identified to measure the degree of progress toward goals and to ensure accountability.

Conservation Education and Environmental Education are terms that are often used interchangeably. Collectively, they are directed at creating awareness and understanding about environmental issues that lead to responsible individual and group actions. Conservation education is based on a recognition that the use and management of natural resources is necessary to support human needs but this must be done in a way and amount that sustains the ecosystems. Environmental education focuses on conservation of natural resources, providing facts about specific environmental issues or problems. Whichever term is used, delivery should use interpretive techniques and tools that capture interest and focus on the processes that enhance critical thinking, problem solving, and effective decision making skills.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL 65** Contribute to public knowledge and understanding of land stewardship issues, strategies, and activities; especially biological conservation.

**OBJECTIVE 65.1** Initiate and facilitate the cooperation of local resources in developing and implementing education relating to use and/or prevention of fire.

**OBJECTIVE 65.2** Communicate what it takes to sustain healthy soil, water, air, and forest ecosystems.

**OBJECTIVE 65.3** Work with under-served urban and rural publics, especially outside the proclamation boundary, to introduce nature and inform about National Forest programs and services.

**GOAL 66** Increase urban and rural public awareness, knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and involvement (participation) in Forest Service resource management activities and challenges.

**OBJECTIVE 66.1** Integrate a conservation education and interpretation component into key forest projects with a high potential for public education, as appropriate.



**GOAL 67** Be a respected, credible voice and opinion leader in natural resources issues and adaptive natural resource management strategies and tactics applicable to the national forest.

**OBJECTIVE 67.1** Build and maintain working relationships with other Federal and State agencies with a conservation mission, public and private schools and universities, non-profit organizations and professional resource management and educational associations.

**GOAL 68** Manage the conservation education and interpretive services programs to be cost-sensitive and avoid duplication with other providers whether in public or private sector.

**GOAL 69** Use web technology effectively.

**OBJECTIVE 69.1** Maintain a current master copy of the Plan with appendices and maps on the worldwide web.

## ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

The guiding management philosophy of the Forest Service is ecosystem management. It is a logical extension of the multiple use philosophy, but further refines it in several key ways. Ecosystem management focuses on the conditions we want as outcomes; that is, desired future conditions, rather than the activities and methods to achieve them. Healthy ecosystems are the overarching and unchanging desire, while tools and techniques may change over time.

Ecosystem management builds upon the multiple use philosophy in several key ways, among them:

- less attention to jurisdictional boundaries,
- more attention to ecological units,
- more attention to ecological dynamics,
- more attention to partnership with nature rather than mastery of it,
- considerations at several scales both above and below the scale of actions being taken,
- an acceptance that we can't know all the answers, but neither can we wait for them,
- more attention on how we leave the land rather than what we take from it,
- an acceptance that dividing humans from the ecology is infeasible, unnecessary, and self-defeating.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 70** Effectively and efficiently adapt management, based on sound science, to changing resource conditions, economic conditions, public objectives, and new law or policy.

**OBJECTIVE 70.1** Compile and analyze historic data on stand-replacing ecological dynamics within 10 years of Plan implementation.

**GOAL 71** Provide leadership and participation in collaborative natural resource management with other conservation agencies.

**GOAL 72** Cooperate and coordinate in data collection and analysis efforts with, adjacent National Forests, the USFWS, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and other public or private entities such that data can be shared for larger scale assessments of habitats and populations across jurisdictional boundaries.

**OBJECTIVE 72.1** Annually coordinate inventories, planning and management with adjacent Ranger Districts/Forests where overlap occurs.

**GOAL 73** Conduct monitoring and evaluation, assessments, project mapping, secondary base map updates, GIS, and other data collection/entry of all resource areas within the context of the Forest Service ecological classification system (ECS).

**GOAL 74** Develop and maintain a thorough understanding of local factors affecting the ecology as a primary basis for resource management decisions.

**OBJECTIVE 74.1** Complete the final first draft of terrestrial ecological classification system unit delineations, mapping, and descriptions within six years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 74.2** Complete a first approximation of aquatic ecological classification system unit delineations, mapping, and descriptions within ten years of Plan implementation.

## STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

The Forest Service is organized into three branches: the National Forest System, Research, and State and Private Forestry (S&PF). The S&PF team for Region 8 is headquartered in the Atlanta regional office. Its mission is the delivery of a variety of programs designed to promote and support resource management and conservation in rural and urban areas. Its method is to work cooperatively with a wide variety of partners.

The State and Private Forestry branch has four units: Cooperative Forestry, Fire and Aviation, Forest Health Protection, and State and Private Planning and Budget.

- Cooperative Forestry (CF) works in partnership with State Foresters and other key partners to connect Federal and State resources with more than 5 million private forest landowners and 7,000 rural and urban communities in the South. There are five major areas of work: Economic Action Program (EAP), Rural Forestry Assistance (RFA), Forest Legacy Program (FLP), Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF), and Natural Resources Conservation Education (NRCE). Each of these work areas has major programs. Each work area focuses on specific landowners, communities, or other clients.
- The Fire and Aviation (FA) unit works to:
  - advance technologies in emergency operations management, particularly fire suppression;
  - maintain and improve the extremely efficient mobilization and tracking systems in place; and
  - support Federal, State, and International fire partners.

The unit is responsible for the Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC), one of eleven centers of the national incident management system developed to coordinate and provide support in emergency situations. SACC, serves as the geographic focal point for interagency emergency response for the thirteen southern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and supports a total of 348 units. The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest hosts the Georgia Interagency Coordination Center that supports mobilization from any unit within Georgia.

- The Forest Health Protection (FHP) unit provides technical forest health assistance to the managers of forested lands in all ownerships throughout the Southern Region. (See the Forest Health topic.)
- The State and Private Planning and Budget (SPPB) unit works with partners in planning regional cooperative forestry programs and budgeting for them.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 75** Cooperate with other landowners in joint, mutually advantageous conservation efforts. Where possible, work with private landowners and conservation groups on lands adjacent to, or in proximity to, Forest Service ownership for the purposes of conservation efforts such as land acquisition, reintroduction of T&E species, restoration of plant and animal habitat, and demonstration of practices to better manage or enhance the resources.

**OBJECTIVE 75.1** Proactively inform the public of programs and grant funds available for private sector participation in project development and implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 75.2** Cooperatively assist and inform adjacent landowners of forestry management issues, especially forest health concerns.

**GOAL 76** Encourage maintenance of forest as a land use on private lands within and surrounding national forests.

## HERITAGE RESOURCES

### BACKGROUND

Heritage resources is a broad term that refers to areas containing objects, buildings, structures, landscape alteration, and other remnants of past human behavior that provide clues to how humans used and adapted to the environment over time. The Heritage Resource Program provides a critical role in preserving our nation's history by protecting significant heritage resources, sharing their values with the public, and contributing relevant information and perspectives to natural resource management.

The Heritage Resource Program represents heritage resource values in forestwide management planning, while providing a systematic program of resource inventory, evaluation, and preservation aimed at the identification, enhancement and protection of significant heritage resources.

Additional management direction for heritage resources can be found in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (36 CFR 800); Archaeological Resource Protection Act (36 CFR 296); the Programmatic Agreement between the USDA Forest Service, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council; the Memorandum of Understanding between the USDA Forest Service and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (36 CFR 79); U.S. Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation; National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60); the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); Executive Orders 11593 and 13007; the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1979 as amended; Forest Service Manual 2360; and the cultural overview for the Forests, *"Past, Present and Future: Cultural Heritage Management on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, Georgia"* (Wynn, Bruce, et al. 1994).

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 77** Significant heritage resource values are identified, enhanced, interpreted, and protected through a systematic program of heritage resource inventory, evaluation, and preservation along with coordination with the public, scientific community, ethnic groups, and interested federally-recognized tribal governments such that heritage resource management concerns are integrated into all plans and projects.

**OBJECTIVE 77.1** Opportunities are provided for the public to observe or to participate in all phases of Forest Service heritage management.

- Provide one Passport in Time project, or similar opportunity for public participation, each year.

**OBJECTIVE 77.2** Partnerships are developed with external organizations, groups, tribes, and individuals to encourage public service through heritage resource projects.

**OBJECTIVE 77.3** Reduce the existing backlog of heritage sites needing formal evaluation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, so that the overall number decreases each year.

**OBJECTIVE 77.4** Cooperate with adjacent Forests, primary partners, and scientific communities in developing a framework for streamlined heritage site evaluations within eight years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 77.5** Refine and field-validate the GIS-based predictive model of heritage site occurrence probability and recreation impact risk within eight years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 77.6** Provide protection for all significant heritage sites that preserves the integrity of scientific data they contain, for the benefit of the public, tribal, and scientific communities. Cooperate with primary partners and scientific communities in preservation and interpretation of certain heritage resources to the public.

**OBJECTIVE 77.7** Develop and maintain an accurate, secure geo-spatial electronic database with site and survey data within eight years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 77.8** Develop a preservation and maintenance plan for historic administrative and recreational facilities within the 15-year period of the Plan.

## STANDARDS

- FW-208** Manage heritage resources in accordance with applicable federal laws, regulations, policy, agreements, and in the public interest. Emphasize the protection of significant heritage properties, completion of the forestwide inventory, and assessment of the significance of inventoried properties. Identify opportunities for appropriate use and interpretation of heritage properties.
- FW-209** Tier all coordination and management relating to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800) to the Southern Regional Programmatic Agreement (PA) and MOU or other agreements between the Forest, and the primary partners: Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) and interested federally-recognized tribes. All provisions of the PA between the Southern Region of the Forest Service and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, SHPOs, THPOs and interested federally-recognized tribes of the Southern Region are incorporated by reference. The Forest Heritage Program serves as the Forest/SHPO/THPO/tribal point of contact.
- FW-210** Use the Chattahoochee-Oconee predictive model to stratify survey intensity.
- FW-211** Consult with Heritage specialists in the planning stages of projects involving ground disturbance, diminished jurisdiction, or increased public use of, or access to, an area.
- FW-212** Responsible official will halt any project during ground disturbance activities if known or newly discovered heritage resources are encountered, regardless of whether the area has been previously disturbed, until the significance of the site has been determined by Forest heritage staff through coordination with consulting parties.

HERITAGE  
RESOURCES

- FW-213** Ensure that Section 106 compliance clauses are inserted in all ground disturbing contracts and sales documents, and that clauses are discussed in pre-work conferences.
- FW-214** Pursuant to 36 *CFR* 196.18, site locations are exempt from provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Do not disclose site locations in documents available to the public, including heritage GIS data, unless agreed to by all parties, including Native American tribes as appropriate.
- FW-215** Heritage specialists will mark on the ground, properties designated through consultation as “protected.” Protected properties will include buffers determined on a case-by-case basis considering landform, vegetative cover, and access. In no case will protective buffers be less than 15 meters (50 feet) beyond known site limits. Stipulate protective measures in project plans for internal coordination.
- FW-216** Use the Passport In Time or equivalent program to build co-operative and collaborative relationships with members of the public and organizations interested in archaeology and history.
- FW-217** A special use permit is required for using a metal detector to locate archaeological or historical remains, but will be granted only for scientific research.



## RANGE (OCONEE ONLY)

### BACKGROUND

Domestic animal grazing has been a historic use, not only on the Oconee National Forest, but on many national forests throughout the south and the western United States. This program is offered to local farmers whose pastures require rotation (rest from grazing) to allow winter grasses or other forage to grow or to make improvements to those pastures. The Oconee National Forest has 1,120 acres identified as permanent grazing allotments managed under Allotment Management Plans. These lands are maintained as permanent grass openings. A special use permit is issued for temporary grazing of cattle or horses.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GOAL 78** Apply ecosystem management techniques when maintaining existing range allotments. Emphasize conversion of these areas to native warm-season grasses and control of noxious weeds; that is, nonnative invasives.
- GOAL 79** Phase out individual range allotments when there is no immediate demand for a particular allotment.

### STANDARDS

- FW-218** Trampling by livestock may not expose mineral soil or displace soil on more than 10 percent of the area on any given allotment.
- FW-219** Where livestock can reach a stream, their access will be controlled to maintain the integrity of stream channels and banks. Reauthorizing grazing in riparian corridors within these existing allotments may occur if continued grazing would be compatible with riparian management desired conditions and objectives.
- FW-220** Where grazing is currently under a permit, control and mitigate to restore, enhance, or maintain the integrity of ephemeral streams. New grazing permits will be designed to minimize negative impacts to ephemeral zones to the maximum extent practicable. Livestock will be excluded from ephemeral zones whenever these zones cannot be maintained or restored without such exclusion.
- FW-221** Where livestock entry points, crossings, and watering points are permitted (i.e., authorized under special-use permit) and have been designated, they will be armored to maintain stream bank stability. They will also be located, sized and maintained to minimize the impact to riparian vegetation and function.
- FW-222** Feeding troughs, watering troughs, and salt and mineral blocks are not allowed inside the riparian corridor unless the entire pasture is within the riparian corridor, in which case they will be located as far away from streams as possible. Watering troughs will be appropriately located to protect the streams.

RANGE  
(OCONEE  
ONLY)

**FW-223** Feeding troughs, watering troughs, and salt and mineral blocks are not allowed inside the ephemeral stream zone.

**FW-224** On the Oconee, when managing for range forage species, wildlife and livestock use should not exceed 50 percent of current annual growth of key grass species, 20 percent of total annual production of key forb species, and 20 percent of current annual growth of key shrub species.

**NOTE:** Refer also to direction in Chapter 3, MRx 11, Riparian Corridors.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### BACKGROUND

Infrastructure is the term for all human-constructed facilities and features. Technically roads are included in infrastructure, but they are addressed as a separate topic in this Plan. Infrastructure is critical to the delivery of National Forest goods and services. Many of the facilities are cultural resources in their own right, and date to the CCC days or even earlier.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 80** Maintain structures in a safe, serviceable, and attractive condition suitable for the intended use.

**OBJECTIVE 80.1** Periodically inspect all National Forest improvements, including buildings, dams, boat ramps, viewing platforms, wetland boardwalks, etc.

### STANDARDS

**FW-225** Proposed or new facilities must be developed in accordance with Executive Orders 11988 (for 100-year floodplains). Alternative locations must be considered for all new facilities. Where none exist, potential impacts must be minimized or mitigated to moderate the severity of those impacts.

**FW-226** Use materials, design, and finishes that are compatible with the scenic integrity objective.

## LANDS

## LANDS

### BACKGROUND

The lands program area includes: (1) acquisition, exchange, and transfer of National Forest land; (2) acquiring, granting, and exchanging rights-of-way; (3) locating and maintaining property boundary lines; (4) resolving land claims and encroachments; (5) determining the suitability of available lands for satisfying the National Forest mission, as well as following the Land Ownership Adjustment Plan; and (6) maintaining lands records, including the status of minerals reservations. These activities are the foundation of providing a national forest available to all.

Almost all of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest was, and still is, acquired under the Weeks Law of 1911 or related acts rather than from the public domain as forests in the West were. Many of the tracts acquired were small and intermingled with private ownership. Because of the resulting fragmentation of ownership between the Forest Service and private citizens, activities such as location and maintenance of landlines, administration of rights-of-way, and resolution of boundary encroachments and claims are much more frequent, difficult and expensive. Consolidation of land ownership improves management in several ways:

- facilitates property line maintenance,
- reduces encroachments and claims,
- decreases need for rights-of-way,
- reduces number of special use applications and administration of permits,
- protects properties in Wilderness, Wild and Scenic River corridors, scenic areas, riparian ecosystems, special floral or faunal communities, habitat for PETS, etc.

During the period 1993 through 2003, approximately 1,000 net acres were added to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests as a result of land exchanges, purchases, donations, and asset forfeiture.

As a designated Urban Forest, the lands program of the Chattahoochee-Oconee is important and dynamic. Several metropolitan areas are near the Forests. Land values and population continue to rise. Many people like the amenities of living adjacent to national forest and preferentially locate there. And many of them are unaware of Forest Service management requirements. Conflicts occur between adjacent landowners and visitors. It is becoming more difficult to obtain easements to access National Forest, regardless of the purpose. Special use applications for communications, utilities, and access are numerous. This situation is expected to continue into the future.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 81** Maintain a proactive program of land acquisition through exchanges and purchases. Land will be acquired primarily to meet resource management needs while following the Land Ownership Adjustment Plan with an overall goal of consolidation.

**OBJECTIVE 81.1** The ownership status of National Forest lands will be maintained annually in the GIS database.

**OBJECTIVE 81.2** Forest Plan land allocation status will be maintained annually in the GIS database in conjunction with the ownership status.

**OBJECTIVE 81.3** Obtain 50 percent of available in-holdings on the Forest within 15 years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 81.4** Acquire all known needed rights-of-way within 15 years of Plan implementation.

**OBJECTIVE 81.5** Acquire additional lands along rivers to facilitate nature-based recreational uses, as well as to provide habitat for aquatic biota with an emphasis for aquatic T&E species or for the reintroduction of native species.

**GOAL 82** Divest those properties through land exchange that are isolated, impacted by urban influence, and generally not conducive to National Forest management and therefore more suitable in private ownership.

**GOAL 83** Inadvertent trespass onto National Forest does not occur.

**OBJECTIVE 83.1** Property lines will be surveyed and marked to Forest Service standard and maintained on a 10-year rotation.

**GOAL 84** Resolve all known title claims and encroachments affecting National Forest System lands.

**OBJECTIVE 84.1** Title claims and encroachments affecting National Forest System lands are to be documented, prioritized for resolution each fiscal year, and resolved within the constraints of the applicable authority.

**GOAL 85** Acquire or exchange accesses with other agencies, counties, and private interests to ensure management objectives are met for all ownerships.

**GOAL 86** Identify opportunities to work with other agencies and organizations to participate in mitigation banking activities.

## STANDARDS

**FW-227** The following priorities will be considered for lands acquisitions and retention of existing National Forest System lands :

- Lands needed for the protection of Federally-listed endangered or threatened wildlife, fish or plant species and their habitat
- Environmentally sensitive lands such as rare communities, wetlands, and existing old growth
- Lands needed for protection of significant historical or cultural resources
- Lands within, or adjacent to, Congressionally-designated wilderness, proposed wilderness study areas, national recreation areas, wild and scenic river corridors, and scenic areas
- Lands needed for protection of viewsheds from the Appalachian Trail
- Lands needed to protect riparian ecosystems and associated coldwater fisheries
- Lands that increase access for recreational opportunities, both developed and dispersed, and protect aesthetic scenery values

## LANDS

- Lands needed for administrative sites (for example, research natural areas or botanical areas)
- Lands permitting consolidation for more efficient management
- Lands with high productive potential.

**FW-228** Land conveyances will be guided by the following criteria:

- Lands inside or adjacent to communities or intensively developed private land and more valuable for non-National Forest System purposes
- Tracts that will serve a greater public need in state, county, city, or other Federal agency ownership
- Inaccessible parcels isolated from other National Forest System lands
- Parcels having boundaries or portions of boundaries with inefficient configurations (projecting necks or long, narrow strips of land, portions of land lots, etc.) and that support more logical and efficient management in private ownership.

**FW-229** Management of newly acquired lands

On newly acquired lands:

1. Promptly mitigate existing adverse environmental impacts using activities that do not require a plan amendment or allocation.

2. To determine whether a Plan allocation decision is needed, consider the following questions:

- a) Are acquired lands within a single management prescription?
- b) Considering all potential prescriptions, would management within the current prescription avoid disqualifying the tract, in context with surrounding NF lands, from allocation to any other management prescription? (For example, we might acquire 200 acres that creates a block of Forest Service ownership that meets the size requirement and could now qualify for Roadless status. The prescription of the surrounding area may permit construction of a new road under certain conditions, but if we did that, we would preclude roadless status for the entire block.)
- c) Would the addition of the acquired tract to that management prescription best meet identified priority land acquisition purposes?

If the answer to all three is 'yes,' a plan allocation decision is not required. Document the consideration of each of these questions, and manage with the prescription within which the newly acquired land occurs.

If the answer to (a), (b), or (c) is 'no,' conduct an environmental analysis and prepare the appropriate decision documentation/Plan amendment for that decision. In the meantime, manage the newly acquired land according to the proposed new allocation.

## AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

The Clean Air Act (CAA) is a major part of the regulatory framework that drives Forest Service participation in air quality management within or outside the Forest. The CAA created National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which established regulatory minimums for air quality, and it created a program for prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) of air quality in areas where good air quality (not falling below the NAAQS minimums) still existed. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) lead these programs, roles have been identified for industry, commerce, land managers, other levels of government and the public. The GA EPD is responsible for administering the state implementation plan (SIP). One objective of the SIP is to regulate atmospheric emissions from many industrial, commercial, land use and other activities.

Areas known (or assumed) to be attaining NAAQS are allocated to one of three PSD “classes.” These classes identify the level of effort that must be expended to maintain good air quality where it already exists. Class I areas (certain wilderness areas and national parks designated by Congress) can receive only small amounts of additional pollution. Class II areas can receive moderate increments of additional air pollution, as long as neither a NAAQS violation nor a significant deterioration of resources is anticipated. Except for the 156 Congressionally-designated Class I areas, all of the United States is designated as Class II (meaning NAAQS are attained). The Cohutta Wilderness area is currently the only area on the Chattahoochee-Oconee classified as Air Quality Class I. The remainder of the Forest is in attainment and designated Class II

Forest Service participation will focus on controlling air pollution impacts on resources throughout the National Forests and on regulation of pollutants that may be generated by land management activities. While the Forest Service cannot unilaterally guarantee the quality of air (generally, or at a specific point) within an airshed, it does ensure that its management activities will be conducted with full adherence to pollution control methodologies and technologies prescribed by air quality regulatory agencies.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 87** Implement the goals of the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) along with the goals of other federal legislation aimed at protection and management of the National Forests. The CAA has goals for protection and improvement of: air quality throughout the National Forest (plus surrounding lands) and, the air quality related values (AQRVs) established for the Cohutta Wilderness (a Class I area). ( See also Fire Management.)

**OBJECTIVE 87.1** Review applications to State air regulatory agencies for major new emissions within 100 kilometers (62 miles) of the Cohutta Wilderness to see if there may be significant impacts on its air quality related values (AQRVs).

**OBJECTIVE 87.2** Work with state air regulatory agencies and regional planning organizations to reduce visibility impairment at the Cohutta Wilderness Class I area.

**OBJECTIVE 87.3** Participate in the SIP implementation process by annually reviewing the status of counties near the Forest, including

neighboring states, regarding their attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Where a non-attainment area is formally recognized by GA EPD, participate in SIP modification to bring the area back into attainment status.

## STANDARDS

- FW-230** All activities will meet the requirements of applicable regulations established in pursuit of state or federal air quality goals. While the Forest Service cannot unilaterally guarantee the quality of air (generally, or at a specific point) within an airshed, it does ensure that its management activities will be conducted with full adherence to pollution control methodologies and technologies prescribed by air quality regulatory agencies.
- FW-231** In leases and other agreements that permit other parties to use Forest land or resources, the Forest Service will require the permittee to meet the requirements of all applicable regulations established in pursuit of state or federal air quality goals.
- FW-232** The Forest Service will assess relevant aspects of air quality within the Forest, either through its own efforts, in cooperation with other agencies, or by review of the results of other agency monitoring in/near the Forest.