

APPENDIX C

INVENTORIED ROADLESS EVALUATIONS

This appendix contains evaluations on the Chattahoochee National Forest's 23 roadless areas. The inventoried roadless areas total approximately 65,000 acres (Table C- 1). These are the areas under study that could be recommended to Congress for study and possible designation as wilderness, allocated for remote backcountry experiences that retain roadless characteristics, or allocated for needed wildlife habitat and forest ecosystem restorations that retain roadless characteristics.

Table C- 1. Inventoried Roadless Acres

Inventoried Roadless Area	Acres
Ben Gap	1,294
Big Mountain	2,923
Boggs Creek	2,075
Cedar Mountain	1,140
Duck Branch	190
Lance Creek	9,064
Ellicott Rock Addition	704
Foster Branch	165
Helton Creek	2,451
Indian Grave Gap	1,024
Joe Gap	5,383
Kelly Ridge	8,396
Ken Mountain	527
Miller Creek	714
Patterson Gap	1,209
Pink Knob	12,174
Rocky Mountain	4,306
Sarah's Creek	6,922
Shoal Branch	412
Tate Branch	1,085
Tripp Branch	638
Turner Creek	1,515
Wilson Cove	563
TOTAL	64,874

Figure C - 1 Cohutta RD Roadless Areas

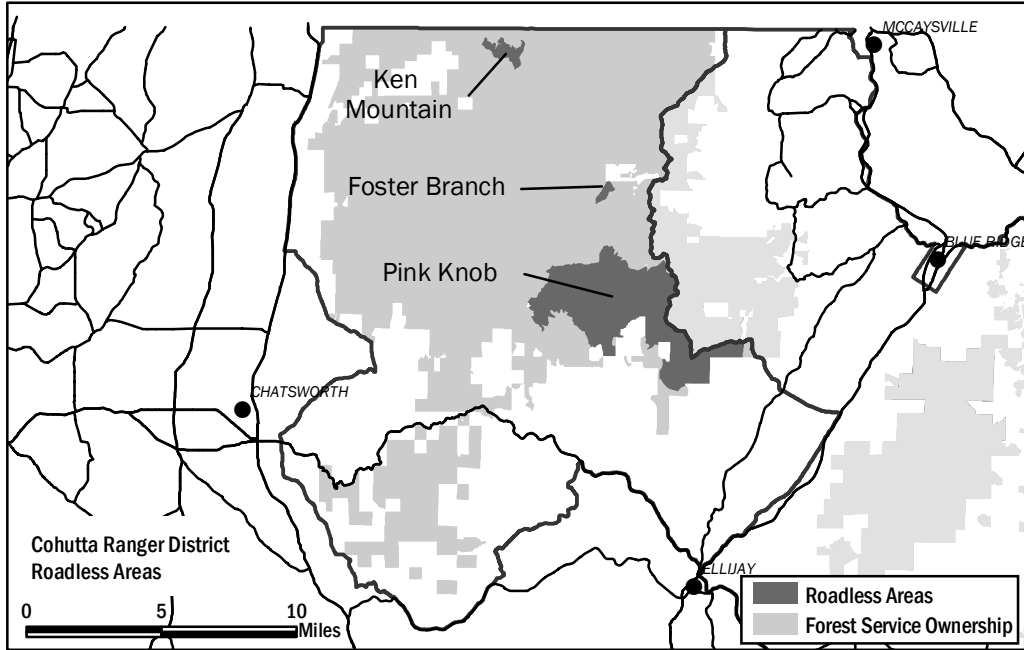
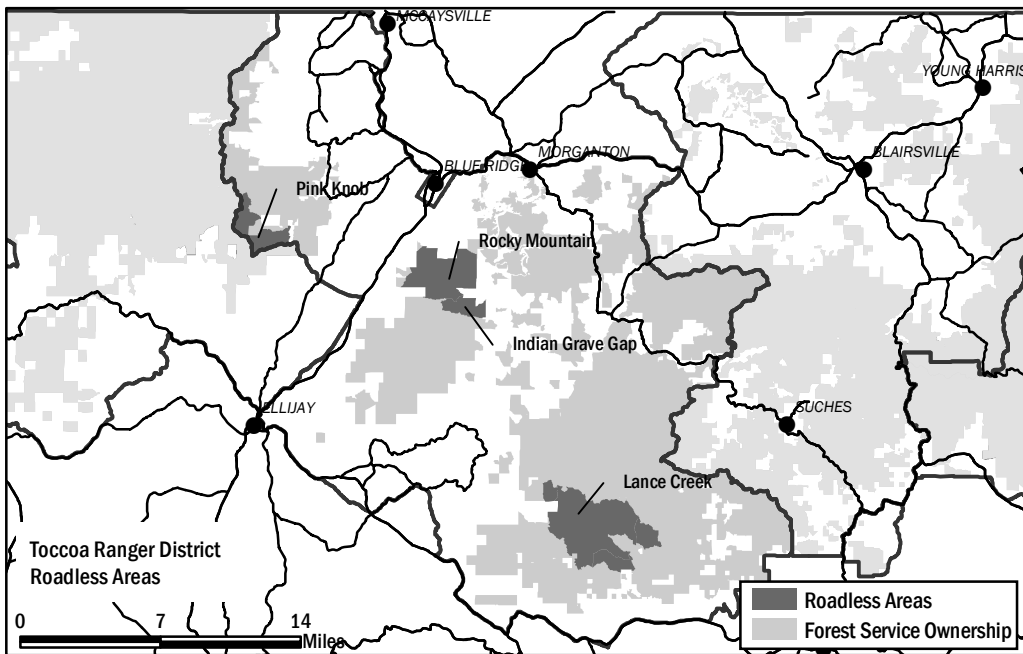


Figure C - 2. Toccoa RD Roadless Areas



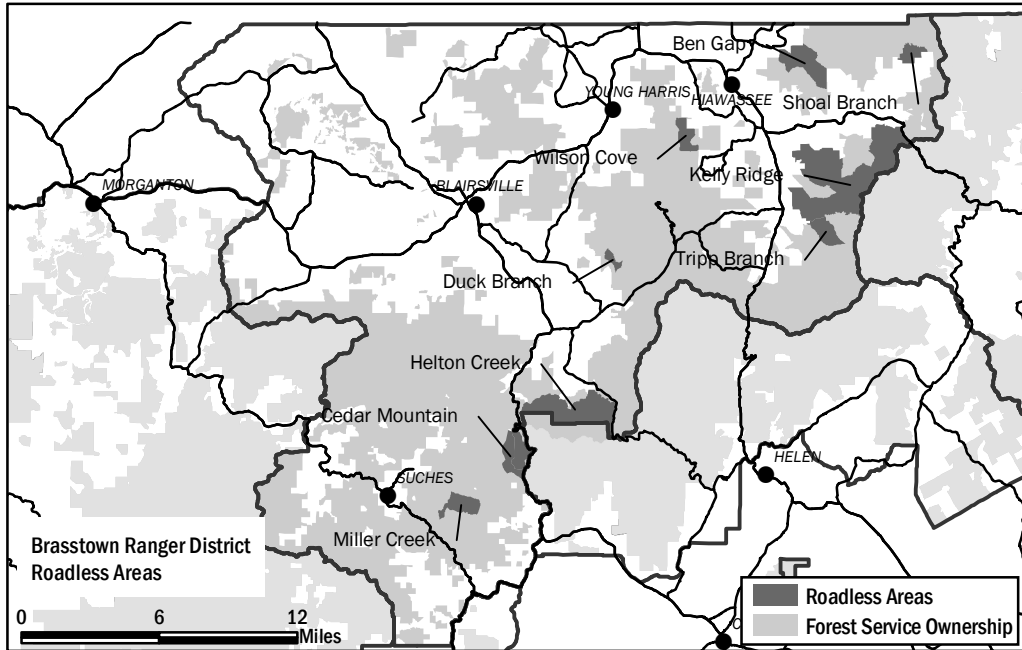


Figure C - 3. Brasstown RD Roadless Areas

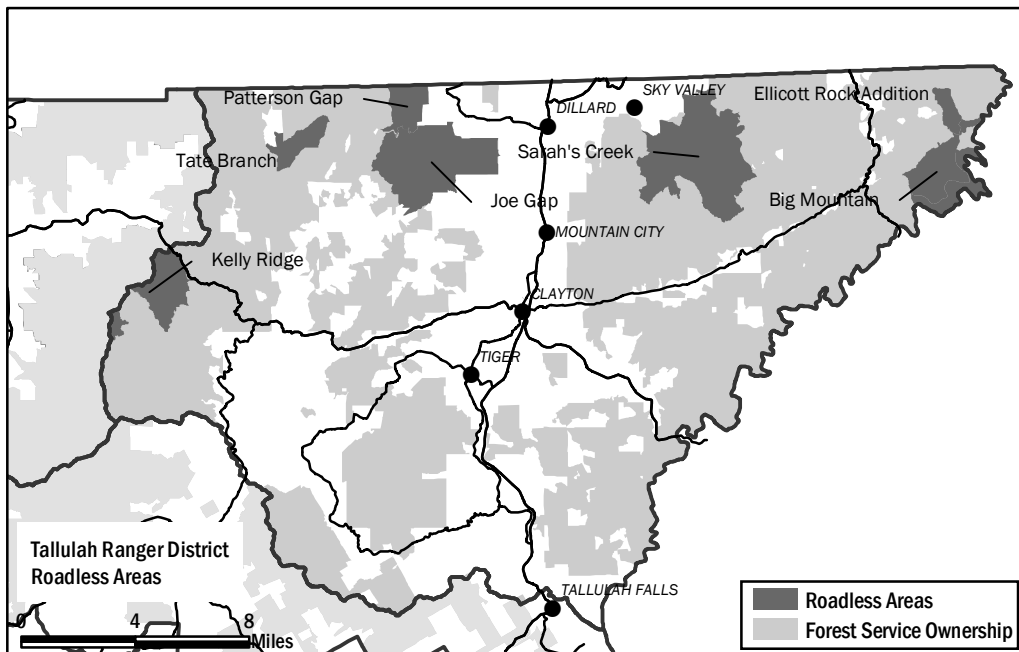
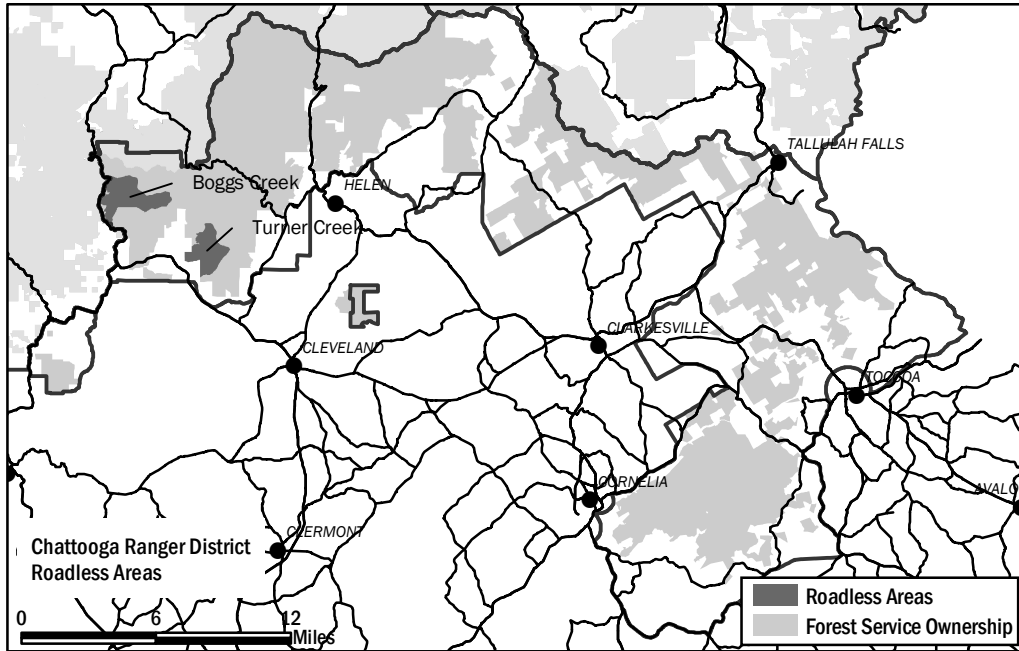


Figure C - 4. Tallulah RD Roadless Areas

Figure C - 5. Chattooga RD Roadless Areas



The roadless areas included in the inventory meet the criteria as potential wilderness as set forth in chapter 2 of FSH 1019.12. The evaluation reports the wilderness potential in three categories:

- **Capability** - the qualities that make a roadless area suitable or not suitable for wilderness
- **Availability** - the non-wilderness resources and demands of the area
- **Need** - the amount of wilderness already in the area and region. Existing Congressionally-designated wildernesses in the area/region amount to 485,484 acres within Georgia on all federally-controlled lands (117,378 acres on Chattahoochee NF only); 66,349 acres (all Cherokee NF) within Tennessee; 111,342 acres (28,900-Pisgah; 37,945-Nantahala NF's) within North Carolina; 60,681 acres (2,859 Sumter NF) in South Carolina; and 41,367 acres (7,245 Talladega NF) within Alabama.

Regionally, existing wilderness areas contain some unique geological, ecological, or scenic sites, overall the wildernesses are representative of the Appalachian hardwood forests; hardwood swamps; and tidal basins. Locally, the need for more designated wilderness is questionable on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest when the inventoried roadless areas represent the same Blue Ridge characteristics but in another location. A breakdown of acres by existing wilderness on the Chattahoochee National Forest follows.

Table C- 2. Existing Chattahoochee NF Wildeness Acres

Designated Wilderness Areas	Acres
Big Frog	83
Cohutta	35,233
Ellicott Rock	2,073
Southern Nantahala	12,949
Raven Cliffs	9,113
Brasstown	12,949
Tray Mountain	10,414
Rich Mountain	10,343
Blood Mountain	7,800
Mark Trail	<u>16,880</u>
Total	117,387

Source: Lands Staff records, Forest Supervisor's Office, 2003

All of the Forest's inventoried roadless areas lie within landform Province (M221) Central Appalachian Broadleaf Forest–Coniferous Forest–Meadow. This landform is represented by the existing wildernesses in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Based on the Bailey-Kuchler classification system of forest types, all 23 roadless areas are classed as Appalachian Oak Forest within the Eastern Deciduous Forest Province. This ecosystem is also represented by the existing wildernesses within the Chattahoochee National Forest. (Refer to Chapter 3 of the EIS for a complete description of the Forest's Ecological Units.)

Table C- 3. Ecological Subsections by Forest Type

Acres by Forest Type for Ecological Subsections Containing Roadless Areas		
Forest Type*	Subsection	
	Southern Blue Ridge Mountains	Metasedimentary Mountains
0	1,452	326
3	60,210	9,475
4	1,358	206
5	76	186
8	1,114	398
9	6,341	623
10	12,427	3,227
12	10,971	1,245
13	82	132
15	6,702	0
16	7,091	4,691
20	305	0
31	3,135	2,453
32	23,130	5,472
33	8,895	14,888
38	11,297	0
39	235	0
41	13,181	5,727
42	17,153	5,026
44	2,014	1,291
45	16,016	7,915
46	701	131
47	5,800	1,469
48	3,126	254
50	6,605	6,595
51	326	0
52	12,399	2,932
53	191,516	29,908
54	848	820
55	55	0
56	66,914	20,592
58	56	58
59	6,884	186
60	12,823	855
71	17	0
72	0	60
73	52	0

Source: GIS stands data layer, 2003

*Forest Type codes from: Compartment Prescription Field Book,
USDA Forest Service, Southern Region.

Table C- 4. Acres by Geology Type and Ecological Subsection (includes non-FS land)

Geology Type	Subsection	
	Southern Blue Ridge Mountains	Metasedimentary Mountains
Aluminous Schist	55341	111
Amphibolite	974	3250
Amphibolite/Ultramafic	11743	0
Amphibolitic Schist/Amphibolite-Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	355	0
Athens Shale	0	74
Biotite Gneiss	299980	3356
Biotite Gneiss/Feldspathic Biotite Gneiss	0	788
Biotitic Gneiss/Mica Schist/Amphibolite	1390	0
Chota Formation	0	1263
Conasauga Group	0	934
Conglomerate	0	2746
Cross-Biotite Schist	23081	9287
Garnet Mica Schist	23888	0
Granitic Gneiss Undifferentiated	26351	0
Graphitic Phyllite	4004	8366
Hornblende Gneiss/Amphibolite	10418	0
Knox Group Undifferentiated	0	261
Marble	168	0
Metagraywacke Undifferentiated	0	1939
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	142092	0
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist-Quartzite/Amphibolite	27014	121275
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist/Calc-Silicate Gneiss	0	13282
Mica Schist	4823	38919
Mica Schist/Gneiss	284635	19304
Phyllite and Quartzite	0	7802
Quartzite	41159	0
Quartzite/Metagraywacke	0	7284
Quartzite/Mica Schist	9797	0
Sillimanite Schist	98	0
Slate/Quartzite/Conglomerate	0	83210
Ultramafic Rocks Undifferentiated	4012	1731
Undifferentiated Peltic Rocks	470	0
Water	13609	4

Source: Georgia GIS Clearinghouse geology data and Forest GIS ecological unit data layer, 2003

Table C- 5. Geology by Inventoried Roadless Area

Geology	Roadless Area	Acres
Biotite Gneiss	Ben Gap	1294
Aluminous Schist	Big Mountain	387
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	Big Mountain	1400
Aluminous Schist	Big Mountain	96
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	Big Mountain	927
Biotite Gneiss	Boggs Creek	2074
Biotite Gneiss	Cedar Mountain	561
Biotite Gneiss	Cedar Mountain	579
Garnet Mica Schist	Duck Branch	189
Mica Schist/Gneiss	Lance Creek	8918
Quartzite	Lance Creek	145
Aluminous Schist	Ellicott Rock Addition	145
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	Ellicott Rock Addition	417
Aluminous Schist	Ellicott Rock Addition	63
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	Ellicott Rock Addition	79
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist- Quartzite/Amphibolite	Foster Branch	165
Biotite Gneiss	Helton Creek	2451
Cross-Biotite Schist	Indian Grave Gap	1024
Biotite Gneiss	Joe Gap	1452
Granitic Gneiss Undifferentiated	Joe Gap	378
Hornblende Gneiss/Amphibolite	Joe Gap	791
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	Joe Gap	2034
Quartzite/Mica Schist	Joe Gap	603
Ultramafic Rocks Undifferentiated	Joe Gap	125
Biotite Gneiss	Kelly Ridge	8394
Quartzite/Mica Schist	Kelly Ridge	2
Conglomerate	Ken Mountain	239
Phyllite and Quartzite	Ken Mountain	243
Slate/Quartzite/Conglomerate	Ken Mountain	45
Biotite Gneiss	Miller Creek	714
Biotite Gneiss	Patterson Gap	39
Quartzite/Mica Schist	Patterson Gap	1170
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist- Quartzite/Amphibolite	Pink Knob	11339
Slate/Quartzite/Conglomerate	Pink Knob	835
Cross-Biotite Schist	Rocky Mountain	1282
Mica Schist/Gneiss	Rocky Mountain	3022
Quartzite	Rocky Mountain	1
Aluminous Schist	Sarah's Creek	260
Metagraywacke/Mica Schist	Sarah's Creek	6662
Biotite Gneiss	Shoal Branch	412
Biotite Gneiss	Tate Branch	1085
Biotite Gneiss	Tripp Branch	638
Biotite Gneiss	Turner Creek	1515
Amphibolite/Ultramafic	Wilson Cove	68
Garnet Mica Schist	Wilson Cove	495

Source: Georgia GIS Clearinghouse geology data, Forest GIS ecological unit data layer, and Forest inventoried roadless data layer, 2003

Biological reasons were used for analysis of wilderness study areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest, too. Analysis indicated that the Chattahoochee National Forest accounts for approximately 95% of lands in Georgia over 3000 feet in elevation based on current Digital Elevation Models (DEM's). Analysis of current vegetation cover on the Chattahoochee National Forest indicates that there are 109,819 acres of habitats above 3000 feet in elevation. This acreage represents 12 percent of total acres on the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Table C- 6. Acres Over 3000 Feet in Elevation Within Chattahoochee Designated Wilderness Areas .

Wilderness Area	Acres
Blood Mountain	3,466
Brasstown	6,903
Cohutta	7,711
Ellicott	416
Mark Trail	6,922
Raven Cliffs	3,699
Rich Mountain	4,161
Southern Nantahala	8,985
Tray Mountain	5,666
TOTAL	47,930

Source: GIS Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and Wilderness data layer, 2003.

Less than 5 percent of the high elevation acres are in the 0-10 age class (early-successional). Because high-elevation, early-successional habitats may be critical for the viability of those species associated with those habitats the forest needed flexibility to be able to create, maintain and enhance those habitats. Wilderness and wilderness study areas do not allow that flexibility. (An Age Class Structure table is found in each Roadless write-up.)

Table C- 7. Acres Over 3000 Feet In Elevation Within Chattahoochee Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Roadless Area	Acres
Ben Gap	547
Boggs Creek	189
Cedar Mountain	320
Lance Creek	1,518
Ellicott Rock Addition	46
Helton Creek	267
Joe Gap	2,331
Kelly Ridge	3,672
Patterson Gap	783
Pink Knob	3,045
Rocky Mountain	284
Sarah's Creek	4,170
Shoal Branch	3
Tate Branch	420
Tripp Branch	141
Turner Creek	53
Wilson Cove	109
TOTAL	17,897

Source: GIS Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and inventoried roadless data layer, 2003.

Table C- 8. Total Acres over 3,000 feet within Wilderness or Roadless Areas

Wilderness and Roadless	65,827
Total Chattahoochee NF Acres over 3,000 feet	109,819
Total CNF Acres Over 3,000 feet not in Wilderness or Roadless Areas	43,992

Source: GIS Digital Elevation Model (DEM) Wilderness data layer and inventoried roadless data layer, 2003.

Early-successional habitats in the Southern Blue Ridge provide important, and in some cases, essential foraging and nesting habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species. They become particularly important in late summer and early fall when the plants produce abundant supplies of “energy rich” soft mast food resources.

The early-succession, shrub-scrub, balds category contains a wide variety of habitat types that occur throughout the Southern Blue Ridge at all elevations and topographic positions. It includes early stages of forest regeneration, old and abandoned fields, high-elevation grass and heath balds, mountain wetlands, and agricultural cropland and pastures. Early-successional herbaceous and shrub habitats are defined by the Southern Appalachian Assessment as “non-cultivated areas with predominant vegetative cover of herbaceous plants and shrubs covering at least 25 percent of the area” and includes high-elevation balds, abandoned agricultural fields and areas of early forest regeneration. (SAMAB 1996).

Table C- 9. Presence of Threatened and Endangered Species in Roadless Areas

Roadless Area	T & E
Ben Gap	no
Big Mountain	yes
Boggs Creek	no
Cedar Mountain	no
Duck Branch	no
Lance Creek	no
Ellicott Rock Addition	no
Foster Branch	no
Helton Creek	no
Indian Grave Gap	no
Joe Gap	yes
Kelly Ridge	no
Ken Mountain	no
Miller Creek	no
Patterson Gap	no
Pink Knob	no
Rocky Mountain	yes
Sarah's Creek	yes
Shoal Branch	no
Tate Branch	no
Tripp Branch	no
Turner Creek	no
Wilson Cove	no

Source: Forest T & E occurrence records, 2003

Table C- 10. Rare Communities

Roadless Area	No. of Rare Communities	Type of Rare Community
Ben Gap	1	Heath bald
Big Mountain	1	Spray Cliff
Joe Gap	1	Bog
Pink Knob	1	Rock Outcrop
Sarah's Creek	3	Spray Cliff, Heath Bald, Table Mountain pine

Source: Forest occurrence records, 2003

Other qualities in common to the 23 roadless areas include: no airstrips or helispots; no electronic sites; and no utility, highway or railroad right of way's. Additionally, no more than 20 percent of any area has been harvested within the past 10 years. No area contains more than one-half mile of roads for each 1,000 acres of land involved. All roads in the areas are under Forest Service jurisdiction. The map below shows the general location of the inventoried roadless areas.

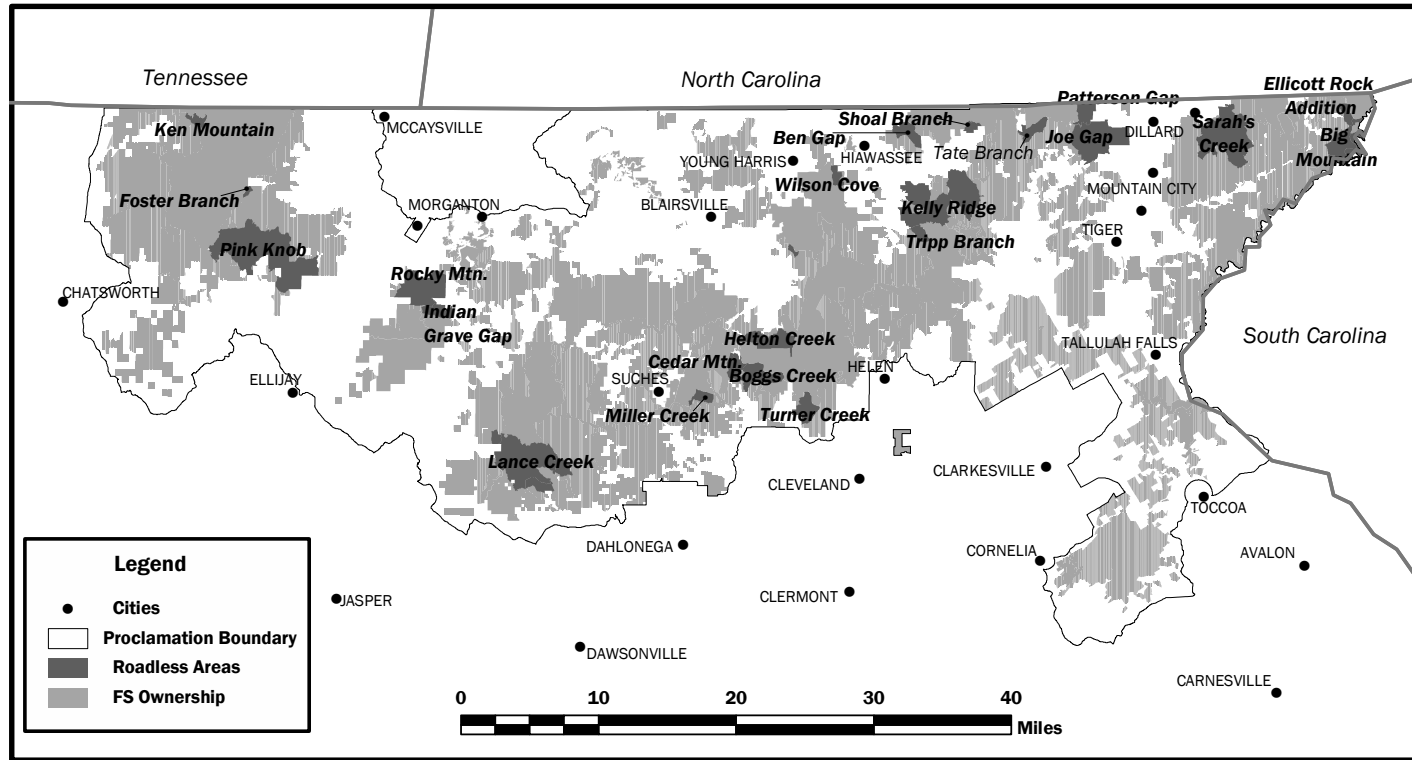


Figure C - 6. Vicinity Map – Inventoried Roadless Areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest

BIG MOUNTAIN

Reference # 03001

Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

5,256 Acres

Georgia = 2,923 Acres

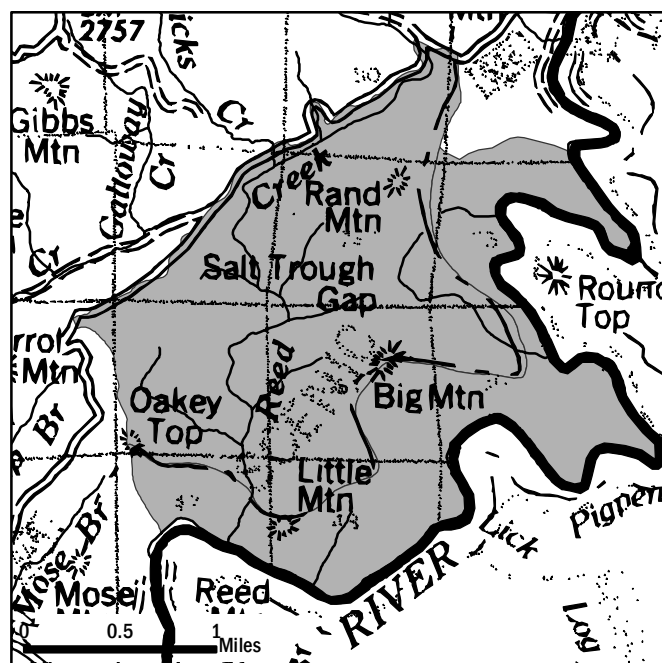
South Carolina = 2,333 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

The area is located in northeast Georgia on the Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF, Rabun County, Georgia, and in northwest South Carolina on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District, Sumter NF, Oconee County, South Carolina. It is centrally located between Clayton, GA, Highlands, NC, and Wahalla, SC. The Chattooga Wild and Scenic River (CWSR) splits the Georgia and South Carolina portions of this roadless area. Access to the area is gained via State Highway 28 and Forest Development Road (FDR) 646, Burrells Ford Road, in Georgia and State Highway 107 and FDR's 708, 709, and 713 in South Carolina. There are two roads shown as accessing this area, in Georgia FDR 646 and County Road 999 for a total of 1.51 miles. FDR 646 is the western and north boundaries of this proposed area. There is a 0.9 mile trail situated through the southwest and west section of the area that is an unofficial trail used by hikers, equestrian riders, and anglers.

Figure C - 7. Big Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This roadless area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Chattooga River Gorge Land-type Association, R8#-M221Dc340. The landform is rugged mountains with the highest point at approximately 2,890 feet on Rand Mountain. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms. Rand Mountain and Big Mountain are the two most notable peaks, with the CWSR and Reed Creek making up the two major water sources for the area. The Rock Gorge and Big Bend Falls are two of the other notable topographic features existing in the area.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping of soils is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common forest types are White Oak, Red Oak, Hickory (60%), White Pine/Hemlock (11%), Upland Hardwood/White Pine (8%), and Pitch Pine (6%), 10 other forest types are identified within this area. Productivity for this area ranges from a high of 800+ board feet per acre per year, to a low of 100 bdft/acre/year. Sixty-five percent of the acreage (1908 acres) is producing in the 150 to 299 bdft/acre/year rate and 15.3 percent (444 acres) is in the 800+ bdft/acre/year rate. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is used primarily for dispersed recreational activities. Hunting, camping, fishing, and backpacking all take place in or around the area. The major recreational impacts on this area come from fishing, dispersed camping, and hiking.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is primarily mature hardwood and hardwood pine forest types. Only 148 acres of the land in this area has had management activities in the last 40 years that may still be evident. The overstory is primarily mature pole timber and sawtimber. There are approximately 8 acres of old growth forest.

This area contains one old house site. The area was logged in the early 1900s and there is evidence of old logging operations throughout the area. Old roads and skid trails are still visually evident in the area.

The area has a semi-natural to natural appearance and is bordered on the west and north by Burrells Ford Road (FDR 646). Across the road to the north is the proposed Ellicott Rock addition. Burrells Ford Road (FDR 646) separates the two proposed roadless areas. The trail in the southwest section of the area receives intermittent use from hikers, equestrian users, and anglers.

Table C- 11 Age Class Structure – Big Mountain Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres	
	Big Mountain	Big Mountain - Chattooga WSR
0 - 10	0	0
11 - 20	0.8	0
21 - 30	126.4	0
31 - 40	20.7	0
41 - 50	0	0
51 - 60	0	0
61 - 70	0.1	0
71 - 80	474.6	0
81 - 90	312.1	3.7
91 - 100	712.1	1093
101 - 110	139.8	0
111 - 120	0	0
121 - 130	1	0
131 - 140	0	0
141 - 150	0	0
151 - 160	0	0
161 - 170	0	0
No Data	0	21

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

The area is adjacent to and crosses the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River corridor into the Sumter National Forest. It lies just south of the Ellicott Rock wilderness and the proposed Ellicott Rock addition that is separated by the FDR 646 road from Big Mountain. Hiking to Ellicott Rock wilderness to view the corner of the three states is very popular. Fishing, hunting, hiking, and camping are also very popular in the area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The area reflects the management of the last half-century. The exclusion of fire in many of the stands that make up this area has allowed an overabundance of undergrowth to develop. Tree species in the timber stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management. Elevations range from 1700 ft to 2850 ft. There is a contiguous forest canopy to the river.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The Big Mountain roadless area is 5,256 acres in size (2,923 ac in Georgia; 2,333 ac in South Carolina). It is large enough to be a stand alone designated wilderness area. It is located entirely on National Forest. A portion of the roadless area is within the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Corridor. A solitude core area refers to the semi-primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) setting identified within the roadless inventory. A solitude core area of approximately 1687 acres has been identified.

The segment of the Chattooga WSR in which the area lies is at present closed to rafting or boating. This is a very dangerous white water segment that is not very accessible other than by the river. Hiking on unmaintained trails and dispersed camping is available and occurs throughout the year. Recreational visitation numbers are low for the interior of the area. Hunting season in the fall sees the highest influx of individuals to the interior of the area and then it is very few people.

The highest concentration of visitors occurs along Reed Creek and the Chattooga River for fishing. Reed Creek, which cuts through this area, is outstanding trout water, as well as, the section of the Chattooga River that runs through the proposed wilderness.

Special Features

Proximity to the Chattooga River, trout streams, and the Ellicott Rock wilderness help make this an interesting area. The area is rugged, on the northern end is Rand Mountain at 2880 ft., on the east side is Rock Gorge on the Chattooga River, on the southeast side is Big Mountain above the Chattooga River at 2820 ft., on the southern end is Little Mountain at 2030 ft., on the southwest side is Oakey Top at 2628 ft., the west side is comprised of Reed Creek or small tributaries with Persimmon Gap a feature at 2000 ft., the north end is anchored by Rand Mountain at 2880 ft., and in the center is Salt Trough Gap where a number of ridgelines come together at 2380 ft.

Elevations are typical for the southern Blue Ridge Mountains. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest lie in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The Big Mountain roadless area is elliptical in shape with several fingers extending out from the core area. A smaller area was removed from the proposal due to the proximity of trailhead parking, a campground, and bridge at Burrell's Ford. This removed area is located at the northern end of the proposed wilderness area. Management of the area could be possible with proper signing and patrolling by wilderness rangers. Conflicts will occur with the continued use of the road, bridge,

trails, river, and campground. One heavily used dispersed campsite could be a continual problem in restricting vehicle use and access.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Roads, trails, and the Chattooga River border most of the area. The southern and northern boundaries would have to be established on the ground since these follow ridgelines. Some of the boundary could be incorporated into the WSR boundary that is established. An offset from the existing FDR 646 would be needed.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

No proposed recreational sites or designated trails exist in this area. Many of the dispersed sites contain fire rings and lantern posts. Burrell's Ford Campground and bridge are frequently used drop-off points for hiking into the Ellicott Rock wilderness, and fishing is frequent in this section of the Chattooga River. In good weather, it is not unusual to see 30-40 cars parked in this area. Hunting is popular. The unofficial Burrell's Ford Trail traverses the west side of the area. If the area is designated as wilderness, most of the amenities and site work to reduce and rehabilitate soil problems completed at the dispersed campsites would need to be removed.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Trout stocking takes place on a very frequent schedule in Reed Creek. There are no maintained wildlife openings in this area. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of balance between the early age class habitats and the late habitats available for wildlife within the area.

There are between 50 and 100 stream structures on creeks within the boundaries of this proposed area. The Rabun County Chapter of Trout Unlimited has worked to improve the trout fisheries in the area. Wilderness designation will hamper the maintenance of the existing structures and stocking of trout in any streams within the wilderness boundary.

Water Availability and Use

Chattooga River, Reed Creek, and various un-named streams flow through this proposed roadless area. There are no special use water wells or spring boxes. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

There has not been livestock grazing in this area for over 75 years.

There are 1,889 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The area is primarily mature hardwood and hardwood pine forest types. Sixty percent of the area is made up of White Oak, Red Oak, and Hickory forest types.

White Pine/Hemlock stands are the next largest component of this area and comprise only 11 percent of the forest types. Only two age groups are evident in this proposed roadless area. There are 148 acres in the 10-40 year age groups with most of this in the 21-30 year range. The remainder stretches from 61 to 130 with 25% of the acreage in the 91-100 year age class. Loss of the suitable acreage in this area will require a reduction in planned silvicultural activities for the district and forest. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from that category.

Gold mining occurred in the late 1800s. There is no current mining activity occurring in the area. The federal government owns the mineral rights within this area. Some rock hounding activities occur in the area with little to no damage occurring.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Surveys have been done in the area; more sites are to be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No authorized uses exist for this area. The tract is completely surrounded by federal land, so no future authorized land based uses will occur. There is some question as to the use of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River that travels through this proposed roadless area, future special use authorization of river activities may occur.

Management Considerations for fire, forest health, recreation

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks will occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of stems of all trees increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered by designation as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

ELLICOTT ROCK ADDITION

Reference # 03005

704 Acres

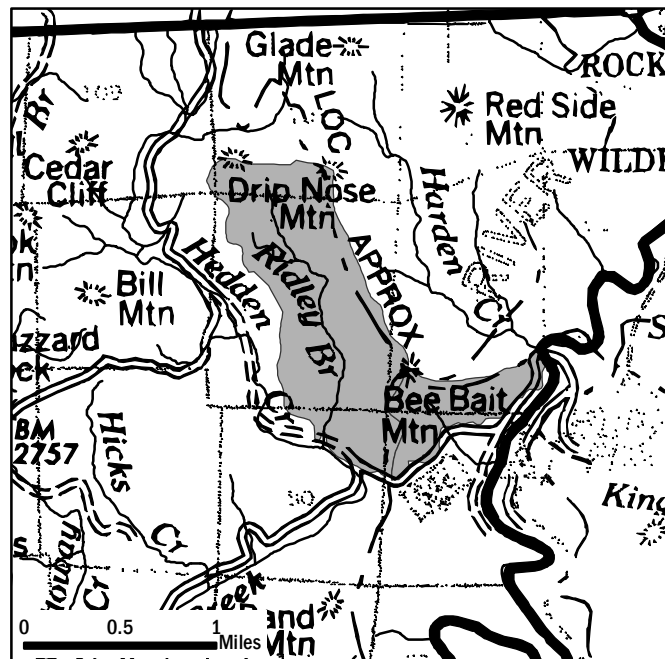
Tallulah Ranger District

OVERVIEW

Location and Vicinity

The area is located in northeast Georgia on the Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF, Rabun County, Georgia. It is centrally located between Clayton, GA, Highlands, NC, and Walhalla, SC. Access to the area is gained from Forest Development Road (FDR) 646 on the south side and County Road 121 on the west. Both of these roads are accessed via State Highway 28. There are three roads shown as accessing this area in Georgia, FDR 646, 646A and County Road 122 for a total of 1.19 miles. FDR 646 and County Road 122 make up the southern boundary of this proposed area. There are 0.4 mile of trail situated through the southern end of the area that is an unofficial trail used by hikers and anglers.

Figure C - 8. Ellicott Rock Addition Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This roadless area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Chattooga River Gorge Land-type Association, R8#-M221Dc340. The landform is rugged mountains with the highest point at approximately 3,133 feet on Drip Nose Mountain. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms. This area primarily is made up of the Ridley Branch drainage. Drip Nose Mountain and Bee Bait Mountain are the only notable topographic features existing in the area.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping of soils is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common forest types are White Oak, Red Oak, Hickory (62%), Upland Hardwood/White Pine (17%), White Pine/Cove Hardwoods (9%), and White Pine/Upland Hardwoods (6%), five other forest types are identified within this area. Productivity for this area ranges from a high of 800+ board feet per acre per year, to a low of 100 bdft/acre/year. Eighty-two percent of the acreage (574 acres) is producing in the 150 to 299 bdft/acre/year rate and 18 percent (126 acres) is in the 800+ bdft/acre/year rate. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is used primarily for dispersed recreation activities. Hunting, camping, fishing, and backpacking all take place in or around the area. The major recreational impacts in this area come from fishing use on Reed Creek and Ridley Branch. Trout fishing is a very popular activity in the area. A series of dispersed campsites are located on Ridley Branch. These sites were improved as part of a soil and water project in the early 1990s. Use in this area is medium to high. The area is also popular with off-road/4-wheel-drive vehicle users. Numerous violation notices for illegal off-road operation have been issued. Hunting use is relatively light.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is primarily mature hardwood and hardwood pine forest types. Only 91 acres of the land in this area has had management activities in the last 40 years that are still evident. The area was logged in the early 1900s and there is evidence of old logging operations throughout the area. Old roads and skid trails are still visually evident in the area. The overstory is primarily mature pole timber and sawtimber.

Table C- 12. Age Class Structure – Ellicott Rock Addition Roadless Area

	Roadless Area Acres
Age Class 2000 Base Year	
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	91
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	0
71 - 80	135
81 - 90	178
91 - 100	297
101 - 110	2
111 - 120	0
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

The area has a semi-natural to natural appearance and is bordered on the east by the Ellicott Rock wilderness, on the south by FDR 646 and CR 122, on the west by a north-south ridge off of Drip Nose Mountain, and on the north by Drip Nose Mountain. Across the road to the south is the Big Mountain roadless area. Burrells Ford Road (FDR 646) separates the two proposed areas. The trail in this area follows along Ridley Branch.

Key Attractions

The area is adjacent to the Ellicott Rock wilderness, the Big Mountain roadless area, and is close to the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River. Fishing, hunting, hiking, and camping are very popular in the area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity of the Area

The area is comprised mainly of hardwood forest types. The area reflects the management of the last half-century. Tree species are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management. Elevations range from 2290 ft to 3310 ft. Three stands have been regenerated in the last 20 years: 47 acres to pine and 50 acres to a hardwood/pine forest type. There is a non-system

road that follows the drain in the middle of the proposed area. This road was put into place to access the stands harvested. The under story is dense patches of mountain laurel and rhododendron, which have become established due to the exclusion of fire in the area.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The Ellicott Rock addition area is 703 acres in size and could not be a stand alone designated wilderness. It is located entirely on National Forest. The area is proposed as an addition to the Ellicott Rock wilderness. A portion of the roadless area is within the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Corridor. A solitude core area refers to the semi-primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) setting identified within the roadless inventory. A solitude core area has not been identified.

The segment of the Chattooga WSR in which the area lies is at present closed to rafting or boating. This is a very dangerous white water segment that is not very accessible other than by the river. Hiking on unmaintained trails and dispersed camping is available and occurs throughout the year. Recreational visitation numbers are low for the interior of the area. Trout fishing in Ridley Branch is the highest impact recreational activity occurring with the peak season in the spring and summer

Special Features

Proximity to the Chattooga River, trout streams, and the Ellicott Rock wilderness are the special features of this area. The area is rugged, on the northern end is Drip Nose Mountain at an elevation of 3133 feet and on the east side is Bee Bait Mountain at an elevation of 3045 feet. Elevations are typical for the southern Blue Ridge Mountains. There are no known threatened and endangered species in the area. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The size of the area is 703 acres, which would not be a significant increase in acreage for the Ellicott Rock wilderness. The area is 'L' or boot-shaped along the southwest and southern sides of the Ellicott Rock wilderness with Ridley Branch extending up the center of the area. This area is noted for illegal ATV activities with several citations being issued over the last few years. With the amount of camping and fishing that occur in the area there will be continued problems managing this area as wilderness.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

West and north boundary will require on-the-ground location and marking that is primarily located on a wide ridge top. The south boundary coincides with FDR 646 and CR 122 roads and the Ellicott Rock wilderness boundary.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Dispersed camping occurs along the drain in the middle of the area. It is a destination area for those wishing to use dispersed camping sites and hike or fish in the surrounding areas. Many of the dispersed sites contain fire rings and lantern posts. If the area is designated as wilderness, most of the amenities and site work to reduce and rehabilitate soil problems completed at the dispersed campsites would need to be removed. No proposed recreational sites or official trails exist in this area.

Wildlife

The northern side is over 3000 ft in elevation and special management considerations for a diversity of wildlife habitats, including early-successional habitats should be made available for management opportunities. Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class).

There are several stream structures in Ridley Branch that will be lost through lack of maintenance. The Rabun County Chapter of Trout Unlimited has worked to improve the fishery habitat in the area. Stocking of the streams within the area will be hampered if the area becomes a part of the wilderness system. (For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Ridley Branch is the primary water source in this area. There are no special use water wells or spring boxes. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, timber, and minerals

There has not been livestock grazing in the area for over 75 years.

The area is primarily mature hardwood and hardwood pine forest types. Sixty percent of the area is made up of White Oak, Red Oak, and Hickory forest types. Upland Hardwood/White Pine stands are the next largest component of this area and comprise only 17% of the forest types. Only two age groups are evident in this proposed roadless area. There are 91 acres in the 11-20 year age group and the remainder stretches from 71 to 100 with distribution almost equal between each of the 10 year age classes represented. Loss of the suitable acreage in this area will require a reduction in planned silvicultural activities for the district and forest. Based on the previous Forest and Land Management Plan, there are 564 acres that is suitable for timber production. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from that category.

Gold mining occurred in the late 1800's. There is no current mining activity occurring in the area. The federal government owns the mineral rights within this area. Some rock hounding activities occur in the area with little to no damage occurring.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

No surveys have been done in the area; sites could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No authorized uses exist for this area. The tract is completely surrounded by federal land, so no future authorized land based uses will occur. There is some question as to the use of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River that travels adjacent to a portion of this area, future special use authorization of river activities may occur.

Management Considerations for fire, forest health, recreation

The area would be an addition to Ellicott Rock wilderness and would add some solitude to that area.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

PATTERSON GAP

Reference # 03013

Tallulah Ranger District Chattahoochee NF

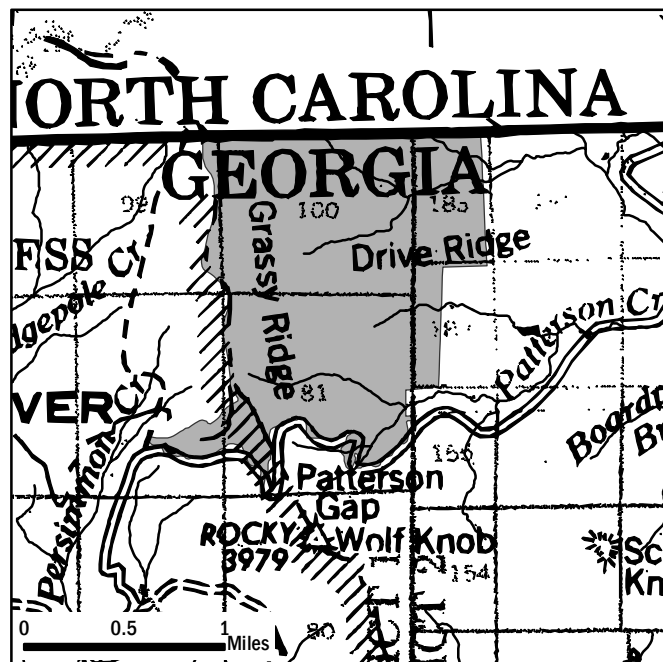
1,209 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in northeast Georgia on the Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF, Rabun County, Georgia. It is due west of Dillard, Georgia approximately five miles. It adjoins the eastern boundary of the Southern Nantahala Wilderness and lies between it, private property on the east, and FDR 32 (Patterson Gap Road) on the south. It lies on the east slope of the Tennessee Valley divide. The area can be reached via Patterson Gap Road off of Betty's Creek Road out of Dillard, GA. There is 0.3 miles of trail located in this area that is used by hikers to access the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina.

Figure C - 9. Patterson Gap Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Southern Nantahala Land-type Association, R8#-M221Dc1125. The landform is rugged mountains with the highest point at approximately 4,400 feet on Grassy Ridge to a low of 2,430 feet on Messer Creek. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping of soils is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well-drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common forest types are Yellow Poplar/White Oak/Red Oak (42%), White Oak/Red Oak/Hickory (36%), Chestnut Oak (14%), and Scarlet Oak (8%). This area has potential for sugar maple restoration. Productivity for this area ranges from a high of 599 board feet per acre per year, to a low of 100 bdf/acre/year. Fifty-eight percent of the acreage (703 acres) is producing in the 150 to 299 bdf/acre/year range, and 19 percent (228 acres) is in the 500-599 bdf/acre/year range. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The unofficial Grassy Mountain Trail leaves from Patterson Gap and connects to the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina, bisecting this area. Violations of ORV use have been investigated in the Asa Falls area. Hunting is very popular in this area. Light amounts of camping occur throughout the area. The Till Rich Cove is known for its botanical diversity and attracts some visitors. The area is currently managed as MA 4 in the *Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests*. MA 4 is classified as rugged, high-elevation lands unsuitable for timber production. There is 0.02 miles of roads within the area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is mature hardwood forest types. Only 91 acres of the land in this area has had management activities in the last 50 years that may still be evident. The area was logged in the early 1900s and there is evidence of old logging operations throughout the area. Potential old growth of various forest types has been identified on 168 acres.

Table C- 13. Age Class Structure – Patterson Gap Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	91
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	110
71 - 80	267
81 - 90	186
91 - 100	0
101 - 110	44
111 - 120	475
121 - 130	35
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Old roads and skid trails are still visually evident. The overstory is primarily mature pole timber and sawtimber. The area has a natural appearance and is bordered on the west by the Southern Nantahala Wilderness Area and on the east by private land. Across the road to the south is the Joe Gap proposed roadless area. Patterson Gap road, FDR 32 separates the two proposed roadless areas. The trail on the western edge of the area receives intermittent use from hikers.

Key Attractions

The Southern Nantahala Wilderness and the alternative access hiking trail to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail are the main attractions in this area. Additional attractions include several waterfalls, unique vegetative communities, and the Joe Gap proposed roadless area to the south.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The natural ecosystem within the area has developed and been maintained during the last century. Management activities in the area have been minor during the last 50 years. The exclusion of fire in many of the stands that make up this area has allowed an overabundance of undergrowth to develop. Tree species in the forest stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The Patterson Gap area is 1209 acres in size. This area is not large enough to be considered for a stand alone designated wilderness. It is located entirely on National Forest. The area is proposed as an addition to the Southern Nantahala Wilderness. A solitude core area refers to the semi-primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) setting identified within the roadless inventory. A solitude core area has not been identified.

Special Features

The only special features associated with this area are the ruggedness of the terrain and the unique characteristic of being entirely composed of hardwood timber stands. The Tennessee Valley Divide (Grassy Ridge 4000+ elev) is the western boundary with the Southern Nantahala wilderness. Nichols Gap is 4169 feet and Patterson Gap on the southwest corner of the area on the divide is 3100 feet in elevation. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The size of this area would not be a significant increase in acreage for the Southern Nantahala Wilderness. The area is relatively square with access available from Patterson Gap Road to the south and private land from the east. The ease of access from these two sides will make it hard to manage use and illegal ATV activities. Only minor ATV activity has occurred in the past, but it is expected to increase with the Forest's current ATV restrictions.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Boundaries are identifiable, but would require wilderness area signing to take place.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Limited increased recreational opportunities will be provided with this addition to the wilderness system. Hunting and camping pressure in the area should see no change.

Wildlife

This is one of the last 'gaps' of public land that are not congressionally designated wilderness along the Georgia-North Carolina border. Management flexibility must remain for all wildlife management in this area, especially to those species with populations in the North Carolina Mountains. This is a critical link for the viability of those species that depend upon high elevation early-successional habitats.

The northern side is over 4000 feet in elevation and special management considerations for a diversity of wildlife habitats, including early-successional

habitats should be made available for management opportunities.

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is not a balance between early-successional habitats and late successional habitats (age class). It is skewed to the late age classes. For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.

Water Availability and Use

There are four named drainages within this area that flow into Betty's Creek. There is one known private water system that originates within this area, with the potential for several more. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, timber and minerals

No livestock grazing has occurred here in the last 75 years.

There are 1136 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from the suitable category. The area is primarily mature hardwood forest types. Forty-two percent of the area is made up of Yellow Poplar, White Oak, and Red Oak. The White Oak, Red Oak, and Hickory forest type makes up 36 percent of the forest type acreage. Chestnut Oak and Scarlet Oak make up the only two other forest types represented in this area. There are three age groups represented in the area; 91 acres in the 41-50 year range, 563 acres in the 61-90 year range, and 554 in the 101-130 age range. Loss of the suitable acreage in this area will require a reduction in planned silvicultural activities for the district and forest.

The combination of elevation and geology give this area a moderate to high potential for sugar maple community restoration, a very limited possibility in Georgia.

Gold mining occurred in the late 1800s. There is no current mining activity occurring in the area. There are 164 acres of outstanding mineral rights existing for this area. The federal government owns the mineral rights to the remaining acreage. Some rock hounding activities occur in the area with little to no damage occurring.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Five cultural resource sites are located in this area. Additional sites could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

There is one special use permit for access to private land. No additional authorized special uses occur.

Management Considerations for fire, forest health, recreation

The ease of access from two sides will make it hard to manage use and illegal ATV activities. Only minor ATV activity has occurred in the past, but it is expected to increase with the Forest's current ATV restrictions.

Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. A Gypsy Moth outbreak was located just a few miles away from here and could easily show up in this location. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

It is important to coordinate high-elevation, early-successional management direction within this area (the Joe Gap inventoried roadless area, the Southern Nantahala wilderness area, and the Nantahala National Forest). Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area.

Wilderness designation would preclude restoration of sugar maple except through long term forest succession.

A long private/forest boundary could increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. A management buffer could be put in place to aid fire management/equipment use. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Grassy Ridge Trail (unofficial) could become a designated trail to access the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Private property line encroachments will require increased monitoring.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

KELLY RIDGE

Reference # 03014

8,396 Acres

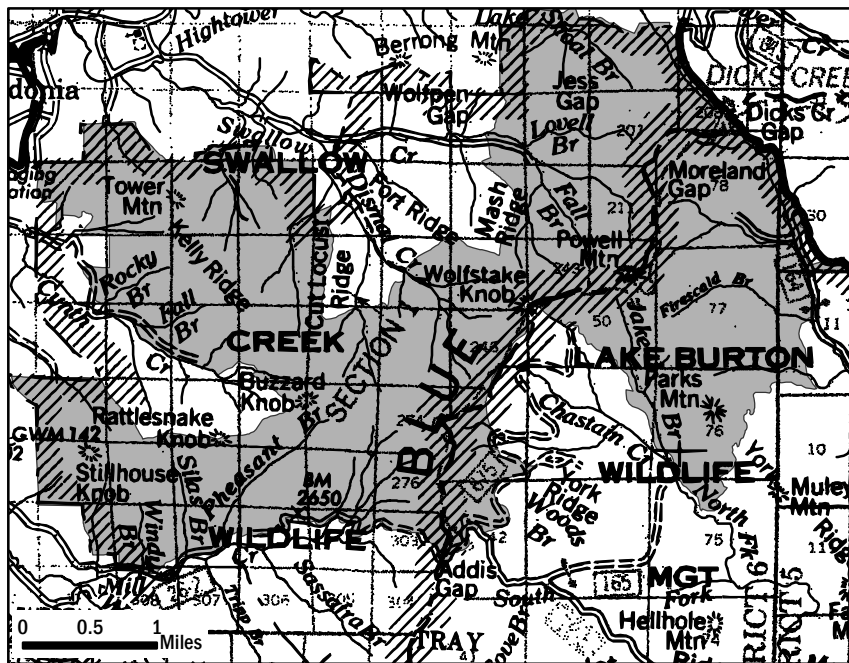
Brasstown and Tallulah Ranger Districts, Chattahoochee National Forest

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Towns and Rabun Counties, Georgia, on the Brasstown and Tallulah Ranger Districts. It is situated south of U.S. Highway 76 and FDR 164, east of State Route 75, west of State Route 197, and north of FDR 26-1 (Wildcat Road) and FDR 26-2 (Mill Creek Road). Access is via all-weather FDRs 26, 99, 164, 300, and 675; county roads 90 and 99; U.S. Highway 76, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT). The area can be found on the USGS Macedonia and Hightower Bald GA-NC quads, and on USGS Tray Mtn. and Lake Burton GA quads. The town of Hiawassee is northwest of the area.

Figure C - 10. Kelly Ridge Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Hiawassee River Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc23, and the South Slope Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc24. The landform is characterized by rugged mountain crests, including a portion of the Blue Ridge, with the highest point at approximately 4,276 feet on Double Spring Knob. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

Soils east of the Blue Ridge divide are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes. Soils west of the Blue Ridge divide are in the Evard-Saluda-Tusquitee soils group. This grouping is characterized as deep or shallow, steep or very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in material weathered from granite, gneiss and schist or in loamy sediment; on ridgetops and sides of mountains with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, red, chestnut, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch pine on dryer and disturbed sites and northern red oak at moderate elevations.

The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

This area contains the AT and a spur trail to a vista on Parks Mountain. The amount of hiking and backcountry camping is high. Dispersed camping in the Dicks Creek drainage is also very popular. Hunting pressure in this part of the Lake Burton WMA is high.

The AT corridor receives heavy day and overnight use. This area is within the Swallow Creek WMA and is used for hunting and some fishing. On the Tallulah Ranger District side the area is 1-2 miles west above Lake Burton, Wildcat Campground, Moccasin Creek State Park, and Lake Burton Wildlife Management Area. Evidence of old roads exists in the area.

On the Brasstown Ranger District side the eastern and southern portions of the area are contiguous to the Lake Burton WMA and Tray Mountain Wilderness, which are similar in character as the Kelly Ridge area.

This area is under multiple-use management, and some timber harvesting has occurred, with the most recent sale being completed in 1995.

The area is primarily mature hardwood. Damaged, dead, and downed trees are heavily scattered throughout the area. This damage was primarily caused by high winds. The area is heavily wooded and several cove hardwood ecosystems with scattered pockets of old growth (436 acres) are found there. There are 29 maintained wildlife openings in the area. Within the entire proposed Kelly Ridge area, there are 11 miles of open roads of all classifications.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is close to Lake Burton, Wildcat Campground, Moccasin Creek State Park, and Lake Burton Wildlife Management Area. Evidence of old roads exists in the area. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Deep Gap Trail Shelter are located on the eastern side of the proposed area.

Table C- 14. Age Class Structure – Kelly Ridge Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	51
11 - 20	53
21 - 30	248
31 - 40	237
41 - 50	23
51 - 60	169
61 - 70	708
71 - 80	989
81 - 90	2860
91 - 100	920
101 - 110	1294
111 - 120	454
121 - 130	36
131 - 140	63
141 - 150	270
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

At this time there are 51 acres in the 0-10 year age class, 53 acres in the 11-20 year age class, 248 acres in the 21-30 year age class, and 237 in the 31-40 year age class. This is a total of 7 percent of the area that has readily apparent management activities that have occurred in the last 40 years.

The eastern and southern portions of the area are contiguous to the Lake Burton WMA and Tray Mountain Wilderness, which are similar in character to the Kelly Ridge area. The northern and western portions of the area interface with a mixture of general forest and extensive private lands, and development is more apparent.

Key Attractions

The Appalachian Trail, scenic overlooks from the trail, and the Hemlock Falls are key attractions. The AT follows the Tennessee Valley Divide. Double Springs Knob is along the trail and is approximately 4200 feet in elevation. The area's namesake ridgeline, Kelly Ridge, is over 3000 feet, as is most of the entire area. Lake Burton and Moccasin Creek State Park are two nearby destinations off two miles to the east.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

On the Tallulah Ranger District side, the area reflects the management of the last half century. There is one planted stand of pine timber in the area. The remaining acreage that has been harvested in the past was regenerated from seed and/or sprouts from the harvested timber. This is primarily a climax forest type where no major disturbance has taken place since the late 1800s and early 1900s.

On the Brasstown Ranger District side, the area is generally natural in appearance with wildlife openings and past timber harvesting areas being the main contrasting features. Natural processes appear to be operating freely on the steeper slopes and ridgelines. Recreational impacts along the Appalachian Trail are noticeable as well.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

This area can provide for primitive recreation and some solitude. The area is large enough to be a stand alone designated wilderness. Heavy use occurs along the AT corridor year-round. Hunting occurs during the appropriate seasons. There are opportunities for challenges away from the AT corridor in the steeper slopes and ridgelines.

Special Features

Rugged terrain in some locations is the special feature. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. Within the Chattahoochee National Forest there are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The shape of the area is irregular with significant indentations of the boundary over a number of mountain ridges and watersheds.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

On the Tallulah Ranger District the boundary follows roads, ridges, and drains. Marking and line location would require extensive work to establish on the ground.

On the Brasstown Ranger District the boundary follows a road on the south; exterior boundary lines, roads, and ridgelines in the west; and exterior boundary lines and ridgelines in the north. The boundary should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns including encroachment and vehicular access.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

The area contains a section of the Appalachian Trail and Deep Gap Trail Shelter. There are numerous dispersed sites with some of these containing metal fire rings and lantern posts. Hunting and some fishing are the primary recreational activities in the area, with some dispersed camping. Lake Burton and Moccasin Creek State Park are two nearby destinations.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a pretty good balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class). It also is evidence that active forest/wildlife management takes place within the area.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000-4000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats should be made available for management opportunities. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, which includes old balds, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. Wildlife management will also be affected by the loss of maintained openings. Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the Lake Burton Wildlife Management Area and the Swallows Creek Wildlife Management Area and its associated 29 wildlife openings, and managed hunts. Designation will restrict management of these areas and limit what DNR can do to provide for wildlife and fisheries. Dicks Creek and Mill Creek are stocked trout streams. (For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Numerous creeks are located throughout the area. The Cynth and Swallow Creek drainages on the Brasstown District feed into the Hiawassee River outside the area.

The Dick's Creek drainage, Moccasin Creek drainage, and Wildcat Creek drainage feed into Lake Burton to the east. Water quality from this area is good and no changes are expected if the area is designated.

Livestock, timber and minerals

No livestock has been grazed here for over 75 years.

There are 4,941 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The area is primarily mature hardwood forest types. Sixty-three percent of the area is made up of the White Oak, Red Oak, Hickory forest type. The Yellow Poplar, White Oak, Red Oak forest type makes up 19 percent of the forest type acreage. The remaining 18 percent is made up of 15 other forest types. All ten year age classes are represented from the 0-10 age class to 141-150 age class. The largest two age classes are the 81-90 (2,860 acres) and the 101-110 (1,294 acres), which combined makes up 50 percent of the total area. Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area.

This area has several locations that were mined for gold in the late 1800s. No mineral activity, other than rock hounding, is occurring at this time. Most of the acreage on the Brasstown Ranger District portion of this area has outstanding mineral rights.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Many known sites exist in this area. If future surveys are conducted, more sites are expected to be discovered.

Land Uses

No special use permits exist within this area. No future permits are expected to be needed.

Management Considerations for fire, forest health, recreation

Loss of the suitable acreage in this area will require a reduction in potential silvicultural activities for restoration of Forest type or species restorations that are identified within the area. (See EIS chapter 3 for effects discussion.)

Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. A Gypsy Moth outbreak was located just a few miles away from here and could easily show up in this location. More frequent insect outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age.

A long private/forest boundary may increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. Management buffer could be put in place to aid fire management/equipment use situations. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Private encroachment will require increased monitoring.

The Deep Gap Shelter has a potential to be incompatible with wilderness designation when maintenance is due or required.

Boundaries should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

SARAH'S CREEK

Reference # 03016

Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest

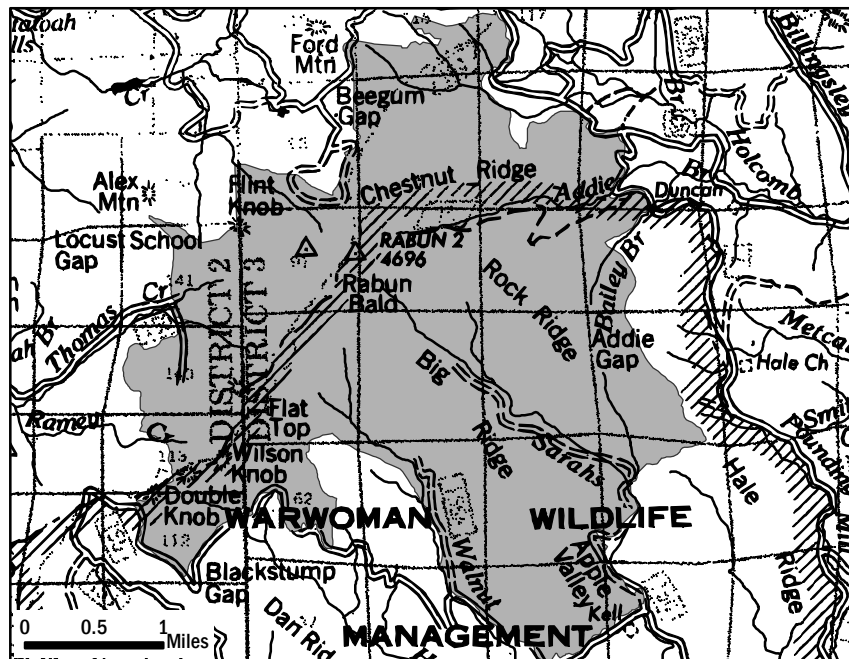
6,922 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Rabun County, Georgia, on the Tallulah Ranger District. It surrounds Rabun Bald and is bounded on the north by private property. FDR 7 (Hale Ridge Road) and FDR 156 generally define the eastern boundary. FDR 155 generally defines the southern boundary. The western boundary follows topography and FDR 150 in a northerly direction from Double Knob on the Tennessee Valley Divide to Alex Mountain. Access is via FDR 7, 150, 155, 155A, 156, and the Bartram National Recreation Trail and the Three Forks Trail. There are seven miles of trail and approximately 11 miles of open roads of all classifications within this area.

Figure C - 11. Sarah's Creek Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Rabun Bald Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc27. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest elevations over 4,400 feet (Rabun Bald is in this area). There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

Soils of this roadless area occur in three different groupings. Soils north of Rabun Bald on the higher ridge areas are classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping of soils is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes. The long, high ridges such as Big Ridge extending south from Rabun Bald have soils classified in the Saluda-Ashe soils group characterized as shallow or moderately deep, steep or very steep, well drained or somewhat excessively drained loamy soils that formed in material weathered predominantly from granite, gneiss and schist; mainly on the sides of mountains with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes. The lower elevation slopes joining Sarah's Creek and Walnut Creek have soils in the Hayesville-Bradson-Tusquitee group. These soils are described as deep, moderately steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in material weathered from granite, gneiss and schist, or in loamy or clayey sediment, on intermountain plateaus with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common forest types are White Oak/Red Oak/Hickory (46%), Yellow Poplar/White Oak/Red Oak (9%), and White Pine (7%). The remaining 38% is composed of 19 different forest types each covering less than 6 percent of the acreage. Most of the Table Mountain pine occurring on the Chattahoochee is within this area. Productivity for this area ranges from a high of 800+ board feet per acre per year, to a low of 100 bdft/acre/year. Sixty-five percent of the acreage (4,510 acres) is producing in the 150 to 299 bdft/acre/year rate and 12 percent (799 acres) is in the 800+ bdft/acre/year rate. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is used primarily for dispersed recreation activities. Hunting, camping, fishing, and backpacking all take place in or around the area. The major recreational impacts in this area come from fishing use. Trout fishing is a popular activity in the area. Hiking is popular along the Bartram Trail and the Three Forks Trail. Sightseeing at the overlook at Rabun Bald is also very popular. Use in this area is medium to high. The area is a popular hunting and associated camping area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Overall the area is natural appearing. The area is primarily mature hardwood and hardwood pine forest stands. About a fifth of the area is made up of pine stands.

Past treatments are evident throughout the area.

The Sky Valley resort community is located on adjacent private land to the northwest. It is characterized by a very high road and structure density. It is also the only ski area in Georgia.

Table C- 15. Age Class Structure – Sarah’s Creek Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	33
11 - 20	197
21 - 30	297
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	117
51 - 60	115
61 - 70	1043
71 - 80	1110
81 - 90	989
91 - 100	806
101 - 110	455
111 - 120	1276
121 - 130	343
131 - 140	133
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	1

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

The area contains 12 openings maintained for wildlife and is part of the Warwoman Wildlife Management Area.

There is evidence of old logging and mining operations throughout the area. The overstory is primarily mature pole and sawtimber hardwoods and hardwood-pine (14-16 inch size class).The area has a semi-natural appearance. The area was extensively logged in the early 1900s, and there still exists evidence of this. Old roads and skid trails are still evident in the area. There is approximately 640 acres of old growth forest within the area.

Key Attractions

The main key attraction of this area is the Rabun Bald observation deck.This is Georgia’s second highest peak at 4696 feet. Other attractions include the Bartram Trail, the Three Forks Trail, and Sarah’s Creek Campground.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The area reflects the management of the last half-century. The exclusion of fire in many of the stands that make up this area has allowed an over-abundance of undergrowth to develop. Tree species in the timber stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management. Elevations range from 1,800 ft to 4,696 ft. Approximately 50 percent of the area is 3,000 feet or higher in elevation.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

This area is large enough to be considered for a stand alone wilderness area. Visitation to this area is quite high. Fishing in the streams occurs throughout the fishing season (end of March – end of October), and hiking on the trails is year round. Hunting season sees a high influx of visitors on both sides of the divide. The Darnell Creek rifle range is within a half mile of the western boundary, and noise from this site can be heard from most locations west of the Bartram Trail.

Cross country travel provides plenty of opportunities for challenges and primitive recreational experiences. Areas to experience solitude are very limited.

Special Features

Rabun Bald and its associated observation deck at 4696 feet along the Tennessee Valley Divide, and the Pitch Pine regeneration areas on top of several of the main ridges northwest of Walnut Fork are special features. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The area has two axis. The northwest-southeast axis is the longer one of the two and follows Big Ridge from Ducks Nest Gap to Rabun Bald. The other axis follows the Bartram Trail from Hale Ridge Road to Blackstump Gap. The area has numerous vehicular access points that will be hard to control. Several dispersed campsites exist within the area.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

A third of the boundary is co-located with roads. The remainder follows ridge lines, streams, and side hills. All boundaries will need to be signed. Several roads will need to be closed and some wildlife openings abandoned.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Recreation is already high to moderate within and throughout the area. Tourism should not be affected if left as is or becomes wilderness. Rabun Bald, second

highest mountain in Georgia at 4696 feet, has an observation deck and receives many visitors. There is about 7 miles of designated hiking trails throughout the area.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations that include migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Trout stocking takes place on a very frequent schedule in Sarah's Creek and Holcomb Creek. Wildlife management is common with 12 managed openings. As the age class structure table shows, there is a pretty good balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class). It also is evidence that active forest/wildlife management takes place within the area.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, which includes old balds, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. Wildlife management will be affected by the loss of 12 maintained openings. Georgia Department of Natural Resources manages the Warwoman Wildlife Management Area and the designation will restrict their management of this area by limiting what could be done to provide for wildlife and fisheries. (For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Sarah's Creek, Walnut Fork, Holcomb Creek, Thomas Creek, and various un-named streams flow through this proposed roadless area. There are no special use water wells or spring boxes. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock has not been grazed within the area for over 75 years.

Ongoing research in this area has resulted in two different forest types having prescribed burns completed since the spring of 2000. These burns were an attempt to reduce the White Pine encroachment in certain areas and to establish Table Mountain Pine regeneration along the ridge tops. Results indicated that these were successful on both counts and now there are two age stands on Big Ridge and the unnamed ridge to the west of Big Ridge. In addition, another 506 acres have been regenerated in the last 30 years. Numerous old roads are located throughout the area and provide good access to many of the stands. Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area.

No mineral activities are occurring in the area and none are known to have occurred in the past. There are outstanding mineral rights existing on part of this area.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

There are several known sites located in the area. If future surveys are conducted, more sites are expected to be located.

Land Uses

There are no special use permits for this area.

Management Considerations for fire and forest health

Loss of the suitable acreage in this area will require a reduction in planned forest and habitat restoration activities. Based on the previous Forest and Land Management Plan, there are 4,185 acres that are suitable for timber production. The wilderness designation will remove this area from that category.

Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. A Gypsy Moth outbreak was located just a few miles from here and could easily show up in this location. There have been a number of Southern Pine Beetle spots within and adjacent to this area, and current outbreaks of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has extended to just a mile from the eastern edge of this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age.

The private/forest boundary could increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. A management buffer could be put in place to aid with fire management/equipment use situations. Present fire control techniques will be altered if this area were managed as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

The ability to maintain existing Table Mountain pine will be greatly constrained by wilderness designation. Efforts to keep it would be limited to management-ignited prescribed fire. The opportunity to restore Table Mountain pine onto comparable sites would be foregone.

The boundary should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

JOE GAP

Reference # 03018

Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

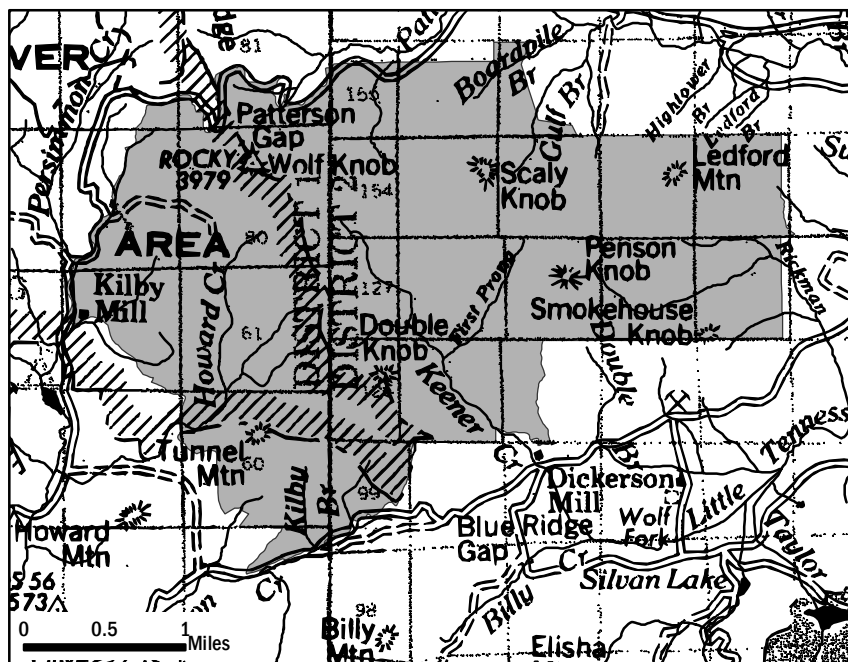
5,383 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Rabun County, Georgia, on the Tallulah Ranger District. It lies south and east of FDR 32 (Patterson Gap Road, an all-weather road) and is generally surrounded by private property on the northeast, east, and south. Access from the south is via the paved country road #S879 and FDR 437 (Howard Branch Road, all-weather dirt and gravel road). Patterson Gap Road (FDR 32), provides access from the north and west. Dillard and Mountain City, Georgia are about two miles to the east of this area. It lies on both sides of the Tennessee Valley Divide with about half of its acreage over 3000 feet in elevation. The area has about 6.29 miles of road within and adjacent to its boundary.

Figure C - 12. Joe Gap Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It occurs in the Lake Burton Land-type Association, R8#-M221Dc25, and the South Slope Land-type Association, R8#-M221Dc24. Geology is diverse due to the Lake Burton Fault zone. The landform is rugged mountains with the highest point at approximately 4,000 feet on Wolf Knob to a low of 2,040 at Persimmon Creek on the southwest corner. There are both steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms; and wide flat ridges and some wider flat creek bottoms. There are several notable topographic features, depending on where you are viewing the area. Wolf Knob and Queens Mine Knob are in the northeast section; Ledford Mountain and Smokehouse Knob are on the far eastern end of the area, and Double Knob in the southwest section of the area. In addition to the mountain tops, the Keener Bog is located within the area. This is a flat upper side slope area of considerable botanical potential for Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping of soils is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common forest types are White Oak, Red Oak, Hickory (35%), Yellow Poplar, White Oak, Red Oak (21%), Cove Hardwood, White Pine, Hemlock (7%), with 15 other forest types identified within the area. This area has some of the highest potential on the forest for the restoration of sugar maple communities. Productivity for this area ranges from a high of 800+ board feet per acre per year, to less than 100 bdft/acre/year. Sixty-two percent of the acreage (3346 acres) is producing in the 150 to 299 bdft/acre/year rate with 18 percent (978 acres) producing less than that and 19 % producing more than that. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

This area receives extensive hunting for all game species during their respective hunting seasons. Some fishing occurs within the streams. Hiking and rock hounding also occur to a lesser extent. General forest and wildlife management occurs.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is primarily mature hardwood forest types. Only 261 acres of the land in this area has had management activities in the last 40 years that may still be evident. The area was logged in the early 1900s and there is evidence of old logging operations and some mining operations throughout the area. There is approximately 450 acres of old growth forest scattered within the area.

Table C- 16. Age Class Structure – Joe Gap Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	99
31 - 40	162
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	1
61 - 70	1274
71 - 80	1513
81 - 90	813
91 - 100	469
101 - 110	306
111 - 120	293
121 - 130	261
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	180
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Old roads and skid trails are still visually evident in the area. The overstory is primarily mature pole timber and sawtimber. The area has a semi-natural to natural appearance. It is bordered on the north, east, south, and southwest by private land. Most of this private land has homes located on it and where practical has been cleared for pasturage or grazing. Across the road to the north is the proposed Patterson Gap roadless area and the Southern Nantahala wilderness area. Patterson Gap Road (FDR 32) separates this area from the Wilderness Area and the proposed roadless area.

Key Attractions

Attractions are limited to the terrain. Wolf Knob with its elevation of 3,979 feet and Keener Bog are the two primary key attractions within this area. The Queen Mine area has been proposed for a botanic area in the past. All other peaks are over 3000 feet in elevation. These include Scaly, Double, Person, and Queen Mine Knobs; Joe Gap; Ledford, and Tunnel Mountains. The Tennessee Valley Divide splits the area in roughly in half (eastside – westside).

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The area reflects the management of the last half-century. The exclusion of fire in many of the stands that make up this area has allowed an over-abundance of undergrowth to develop. In most areas there is an over abundance of under story

vegetation under the mature tree canopy. Tree species in the timber stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management. Elevations range from 1700 ft to 4000 ft.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The Joe Gap roadless area is 5,383 acres in size. It is large enough to be a stand alone designated wilderness area. It is located entirely on National Forest. A solitude core area refers to the semi-primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) setting identified within the roadless inventory. A solitude core area of approximately 1700 acres has been identified. There is opportunity to provide solitude within this area, there is plenty of room for dispersed camping, and no designated trails.

Special Features

Keener Bog and the proximity to the Southern Nantahala wilderness are the special features associated with this area. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The east half of the area is rectangular and is surrounded on three sides by private land that is becoming heavily developed with homes. The west half is more circular in shape with private land on the south and southwest sides of it. This proximity to private land with numerous homes built up around the area will make it very difficult to control vehicular access to the area. Numerous roads lead up to the boundary and many of these cannot be blocked adequately. Historic use of the area by ATV will pose another management problem.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Approximately the entire eastern half lies adjacent to private land and is currently marked with boundary line paint. The northern boundary and northwest boundary is adjacent to FDR 32 down to an area referred to as Kilby Mill. The remainder follows ridges and drains and would have to be established on the ground.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

No proposed recreation sites or trails exist in the area. Dispersed camping and hunting are the main activities. With several wildlife openings developed for game management. In addition, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) developed a disabled hunter site on the northwest corner of the area. This area was installed in 1997 and is maintained by both DNR and the Forest Service.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations which include migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, black bear, and occasional grouse inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. There are four existing wildlife openings on the northwest corner of the area that are currently being maintained.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early - successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, which includes old balds, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. It is important to coordinate high-elevation, early-successional management direction within this area; the Patterson Gap inventoried roadless area, the Southern Nantahala wilderness area, and the Nantahala National Forest. As the age class structure table shows, there are no early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. All are skewed towards older successional habitats. (For further discussion regarding high-elevation habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Numerous creeks throughout the area feed into the Little Tennessee River watershed and the Tallulah River watershed. No special use water systems exist and no known un-permitted systems exist. Keener and Howard Creeks are the largest streams within the area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, timber and minerals

There has not been livestock grazing within this area for over 75 years.

There are only 5 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The area is primarily mature hardwood forest types. As stated earlier, there is only 261 acres (5%) that have had management treatments in the last 40 years. The remaining stands have age classes that start at 61 years old and extend out to 150 years of age. Fifty-two percent of the stands are in the 61 to 80 year age groups with the remaining 43 percent slowly decreasing in acreage as the age extends out to 150 years. All but 5 acres are unsuitable for timber production. Designation would not have much effect on planned harvests.

There are 1260 acres of outstanding mineral rights scattered throughout the area. Past evidence of mining activities exist, most notably around Queen Mine Knob and Queen Mine Gap. As with most of northeast Georgia in the gold belt, the area was mined for gold in the late 1800's.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

There are several known sites located in this area. More sites are expected to be located if future surveys are completed.

Land Uses

There are no special-use permits in this area.

Management Considerations for Fire and Forest Health and Recreation

Primitive camping will remain as the main camping/recreational opportunity.

Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area. Prescribed fire has been utilized within this area. Wilderness designation will limit active management for maintenance or restoration of plant species or vegetative communities, including protecting Keener Creek bog from woody encroachment.

Forest health is a consideration, such as outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks will occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of stems of all trees increase.

A long private/Forest boundary will increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. Management buffer could be put in place to help with fire management/equipment use situations. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Private encroachment on the forest boundary will require increased monitoring.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

TATE BRANCH

Reference # 03020

Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

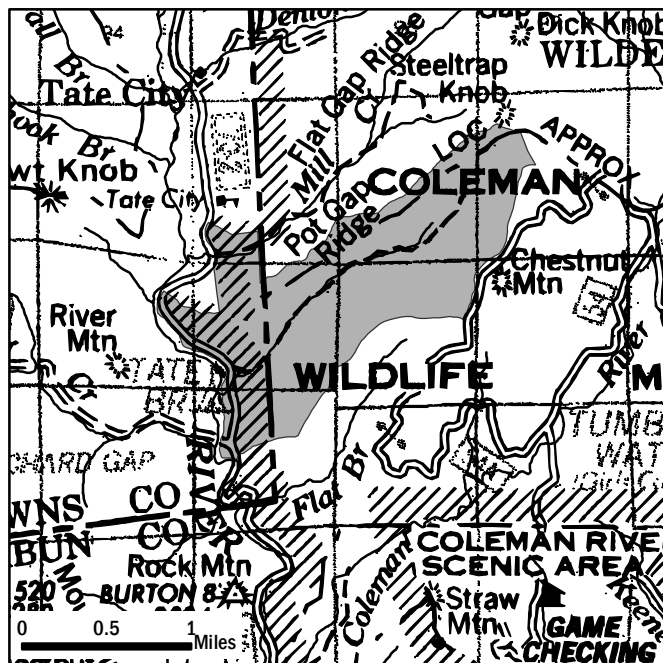
1,085 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

The area is located in Towns and Rabun Counties, Georgia, on the Tallulah Ranger District. It adjoins the Southern Nantahala Wilderness along Pot Gap Ridge, extends east of FDR 70 (Tallulah River Road), and generally encompasses the headwaters of Tate Branch. It also abuts private property at Tate City. Access is via FDR 70, an all-weather dirt and gravel road. No trails are located within this area.

Figure C - 13. Tate Branch Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This roadless area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It occurs in the South Slope Land type Association, R8#-M221Dc24. The landform is rugged mountains with the highest point at approximately 3600 feet near Chestnut Mountain. There are no peaks within the area. Tate Branch is the only stream within this area.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Edneyville-Porters soil group. This grouping of soils is characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well-drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountain slopes with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common forest types are White Oak, Red Oak, Hickory (43%), White Pine (16%), and Yellow Poplar, White Oak, Red Oak (13%). Six other forest types are identified within this area. Productivity for this area ranges from a high of 800+ board feet per acre per year, to a low of 100 bdf/acre/year. Sixty percent of the acreage (647 acres) is producing in the 150 to 299 bdf/acre/year rate and 33 percent (354 acres) is in the 800+ bdf/acre/year rate. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is primarily used for hunting and fishing. Some cross country hiking also occurs in the area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

This is a natural appearing area with a few old roads and skid trails giving any indication of past activities by man. The surrounding areas are similar. The key components are the hardwood overstory on the ridges and upper side slopes and the White Pine and Hemlock along the stream.

Key Attractions

The Tallulah and Coleman Rivers, The Tallulah River campground, Tate Branch campground, and Sandy Bottoms campground are the key attractions to this area. All of these are outside of the western and southern boundary.

Table C- 17. Age Class Structure – Tate Branch Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	94
71 - 80	173
81 - 90	88
91 - 100	267
101 - 110	172
111 - 120	276
121 - 130	11
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

This is a natural appearing area. The exclusion of fire in many of the stands that make up this area has allowed an overabundance of undergrowth to develop. Tree species in the timber stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management. Elevations range from 2200 ft to 3600ft. There is contiguous forest canopy throughout the area.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The area is not large enough to be considered as a stand alone wilderness. As an addition, it would give a buffer to the Southern Nantahala wilderness that would increase the chance for solitude or a more primitive experience.

Special Features

The Tallulah River and Tate Branch drainage are features of the area. This is a very unremarkable area. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

This area is rectangular in appearance and stretches from the northeast to the southwest. Management of the area could be achieved with limited conflicts from

users.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The northwest boundary follows a private property line boundary and the remainder of the north line follows the south boundary of the Southern Nantahala wilderness Area. The remainder of the area follows natural terrain features such as ridges and stream drainages. The boundary should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, developed recreation, and private interface concerns.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Walk in hunting and hiking are the main activities within this area. These activities would still occur. Most camping is outside the area in the three campgrounds along the Tallulah River.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a total lack of early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, which includes old balds, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area.

There are stream structures on Tate Branch, which is a stocked trout stream, within the boundaries of this proposed area. The Rabun County Chapter of Trout Unlimited has managed and maintained the structures for trout fisheries in the area. Wilderness designation could hamper the maintenance of these structures within the wilderness boundary. (For further discussion regarding high-elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Tate Branch is the only water source within this area. Water quality is good and will remain so, if designated.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock has not been grazed in this area for over 75 years.

The area is primarily mature hardwood and hardwood pine forest types. Forty-three percent of the area is made up of White Oak, Red Oak, and Hickory forest types. White Pine stands are the next largest component of this area and comprise only 16% of the forest types. No activity has occurred in this area within the last 60 years.

Age classes range from 61 to 130 years old. The area has approximately 11 acres of old growth scattered within its boundary.

Loss of the suitable acreage in this area is minimal and would not require a reduction in planned silvicultural activities for the district and forest. Based on the previous Forest and Land Management Plan, there are only 280 acres that were suitable for timber production. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from that category.

About half of this area has outstanding mineral rights. No activity has occurred in this area in the past and none is expected in the future.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

The area has a few sites located within it. More sites can be expected based on terrain and history of the area.

Land Uses

There is one authorized right-of-way that crosses a small portion of the extreme western end of the area. This may be handled by an offset of the boundary from the Tallulah River Road.

Management Considerations for fire, forest health, recreation

Gypsy Moth outbreaks and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid outbreaks have potential for occurrence in this area. Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this roadless area was designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

The Sandy Bottoms and Tate Branch Campgrounds are located adjacent to this area. Tate Branch Campground has several campsites located within the proposed boundary and these would have to be removed or the boundary altered to manage for these sites. In addition a non-potable water source for the Tate Branch Camp Host is located in Tate Branch and would have to be removed.

Another consideration is the potable water system for the Tate Branch Campground. This system has been having problems for the last few years and an alternate well site is being investigated across the road, within the roadless boundary. To provide this water source, it will require the boundary to be moved off of the Tallulah River Road.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need – Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

CEDAR MOUNTAIN

Reference # 03002

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

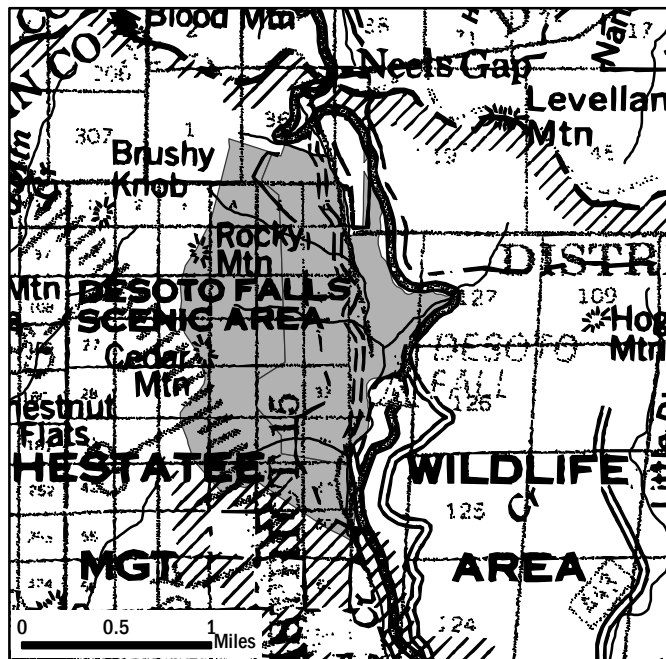
561 acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

This area is located in northeastern Lumpkin County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It is adjacent to the Blood Mountain Wilderness along the eastern boundary of the Wilderness at the Rocky Mountain - Cedar Mountain ridgeline below Neels Gap. The DeSoto Falls trail accesses this area from the DeSoto Falls Scenic Area, which is adjacent to this evaluation. This recreation area is accessed via US 129. The area is found on the USGS Neels Gap GA quad, and is for the most part surrounded by National Forest land. The town of Dahlonega is located about 15 miles southwest of the area.

Figure C - 14. Cedar Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section, and the Suches Landtype Association (M221Dc018). The general aspect is predominately east-facing slopes confined to the Frogtown Creek drainage. Slopes vary from steep to very steep on sideslopes to nearly flat in the floodplains of the large drainages. Streams range from a narrow V-shaped arrangement to wide U-shaped drainages found primarily on the lower reaches of the larger streams. Drainage density is medium throughout the area with perennial streams common and well distributed. The area contains the headwaters of Frogtown Creek that drains the area south to become the Chestatee River. Elevations range from approximately 1,920 feet at Frogtown Creek to 3,560 feet at the crest of Rocky Mountain.

Soils are classified in the Edneyville-Porters-Ashe soil group, characterized by moderately deep, well drained to excessively drained, sloping to steep soils on mountainsides. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species include northern red, white, chestnut, and scarlet oak on dry sites. White pine is more prevalent than yellow pine species. Mesophytic species, such as yellow poplar and Eastern hemlock, are on moist sites. The average annual precipitation is about 70 inches, and the average annual temperature is 60 degrees Fahrenheit

Current Use

This area is primarily used for dispersed recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, and scenery viewing. This area is part of the Chestatee Wildlife Management Area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is heavily wooded with steep slopes and narrow stream drainages with several waterfalls. Rock outcrops are visible on Rocky Mountain. There is old evidence of timber harvesting activities - some old stumps and ill-defined roads. The area is generally natural appearing. The DeSoto Falls Trail and it's attendant bridges and observation decks are the predominant non natural-appearing features of the area.

The area is bounded by the Blood Mountain Wilderness on the west and is similar in character. The DeSoto Falls Scenic Area is adjacent of the area. Across the US 129 corridor to the northeast lies the Raven Cliffs Wilderness This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system.

Key Attractions

The Blood Mountain Wilderness adjoins the area. The area borders the DeSoto Falls Scenic Area and the DeSoto Falls Recreation Area, which has a developed campground, and is the starting point for the DeSoto Falls Trail. Rugged scenery and waterfalls make this an easy stop for vistors by car.

Table C- 18. Age Class Structure – Cedar Mountain Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	555
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	0
71 - 80	0
81 - 90	2
91 - 100	0
101 - 110	3
111 - 120	1
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity, and Appearance

The overall appearance of the area is natural. Natural process, with the exception of the continuing use and maintenance of the DeSoto Falls Trail, appear to be operating freely. As time passes, evidence of past timber management activities have diminished. There are good opportunities for primitive and challenging outdoor recreation activities here due to the terrain and minimal amount of maintained trail mileage. Traffic noise can be heard in many locations away from the streams in the area.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

Cedar Mountain could not be a stand alone wilderness. As an addition to Blood Mountain wilderness, it will afford more opportunity for solitude and primitive camping experiences. Solitude is affected primarily due to heavy traffic along US 129, which is visible from higher elevations in the area.

Special Features

Rocky Mountain has large exposed rock faces which offer vistas. Rocky Mountain is approximately 3560 feet; Cedar Mountain is approximately 3480 feet; and at Gooch Gap the elevation is over 3000 feet. The streams flowing through the area have waterfalls of varying sizes, and form part of the headwaters of the Chestatee River.

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape and Manageability

The area would be an addition to the Blood Mountain Wilderness south of Neels Gap, encompassing primarily east-facing slopes and drainages of a long ridgeline extending from Blood Mountain and lower elevation west-facing slopes. It is somewhat longer north to south versus east to west. It is not large enough to be a stand alone wilderness area.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The boundary is contiguous with Blood Mountain Wilderness on the west. Some private land bounds the northwest line. The northeastern boundary follows streams and straight-line bearings. The southern boundary follows a ridgeline. US129 and the DeSoto Falls Scenic Area generally form the eastern boundaries. There are no legal or illegal roads or trails entering the area.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Hunters in the Chestatee WMA use portions of this area. Scenery in the area is viewed from US 129 and the DeSoto Falls trail. No developed recreation sites are within the area, but the DeSoto Falls Scenic Area is adjacent. Some dispersed camping occurs along the streams and ridgelines.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations that include migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, and bear. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Many acres are over 3000 ft. in elevation (Cedar Mtn., Rocky Mtn.,

Gooch Gap). As the age class structure table shows, there is a total lack of early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. Wildlife management will also be affected by the loss of maintained openings. (for further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix C)

Water Availability and Use

Frogtown Creek is the primary stream in the area, and along with its attendant feeder streams are part of the headwater streams for the Chestatee River. There are no water permits in this area. The DeSoto Falls Recreation Area gets its water from a spring in the area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock has not grazed within the area in over 75 years.

This area is classed as unsuitable for timber production in the present forest plan. Management is to enhance the characteristics of the adjacent DeSoto Falls Scenic Area and wildlife habitats. The area would continue to be in the unsuitable for timber production category. There are 5 acres classified as suitable for timber production within this area.

No mineral activity has taken place.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Surveys have been done in the area; more sites are to be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

There are no special-use permits in this area. The tract is completely surrounded by federal and state land, so no future authorized land based uses will occur.

Management Considerations

As an addition to Blood Mountain wilderness, it will afford more opportunity for solitude and primitive camping experiences.

Forest health is a consideration, such as outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks will occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of stems of all trees increase.

Fire management might be affected due to mechanized equipment restrictions in

wilderness. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

MILLER CREEK

Reference # 03003

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

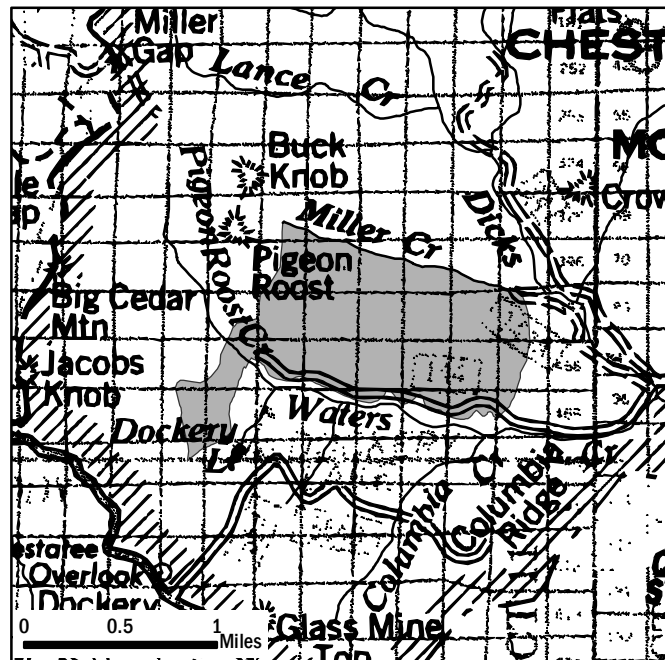
714 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

The area is located in Lumpkin County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It adjoins a portion of the southern boundary of the Blood Mountain Wilderness and lies between Miller Creek and FDR 144 (Waters Creek Road). Access is via this road and a segment of the Dockery Lake Trail. The area is found on the USGS Neels Gap GA quad, and is surrounded by National Forest land. The town of Dahlonega is south of the area.

Figure C - 15. Miller Creek Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section, and the Suches Landtype Association (M221Dc018). The general aspect is predominately south-facing slopes confined to the Miller Creek drainage. Slopes vary from steep to very steep on sideslopes to nearly flat in the floodplains of the large drainages. Streams range from a narrow V-shaped arrangement to wide U-shaped drainages found primarily on the lower reaches of the larger streams. Drainage density is medium throughout the area with perennial streams common and well distributed. Elevations range from 1,800 feet at Miller Creek to 3,200 feet below the crest of Buck Knob.

Soils are classified in the Edneyville-Porters-Ashe soil group, characterized by moderately deep, well drained to excessively drained, sloping to steep soils on mountainsides. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species include northern red, white, chestnut, and scarlet oak on dry sites. White pine is more prevalent than yellow pine species. Mesophytic species, such as yellow poplar and Eastern hemlock, are on moist sites. The average annual precipitation is about 65 inches, and the average annual temperature is 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

This area is used for dispersed recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping. Multiple-use management for timber harvesting occurs in the area, with the most recent harvest being in 1986. The area is contained within the Chestatee Wildlife Management Area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is generally naturally appearing, with the exception of one 1-acre wildlife opening and 0.21 miles of access roads. There are 100 acres of 0-20 year old regeneration harvest scattered within 5 separate forest stands.

The lands to the north and west of the area are in Blood Mountain Wilderness. The lands to the south and east have several wildlife openings. Several streams flow from the generally southeast facing drainages into Waters Creek. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system.

Key Attractions

Blood Mountain Wilderness borders the north and west sides of the area. The Waters Creek trophy trout stream is adjacent to the southern boundary of the area along FDR 144. The Dockery Lake Trail passes through the southwest corner of the area (approx. 0.80 miles). The Dockery Lake Recreation Area is nearby, as is Dick's Creek, a stream corridor along FDR 34 which receives heavy day, dispersed camping, and fishing use.

Table C- 19. Age Class Structure – Miller Creek Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	1
21 - 30	53
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	317
51 - 60	2
61 - 70	0
71 - 80	35
81 - 90	28
91 - 100	79
101 - 110	29
111 - 120	94
121 - 130	78
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

Natural processes are operating freely for the most part. The wildlife opening and access roads, and the portion of the Dockery Lake Trail in the area are the exceptions to the overall natural appearance of the area. Mature oak and hickory (hardwoods) is predominant with some pine. Elevations range from 2000 ft to 2800ft

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The area is not large enough to be considered as a stand alone designated wilderness. There is not an opportunity for solitude in the area, with most use occurring along FDR 144 during managed hunts and trout fishing season, and along the Dockery Lake Trail. It could add solitude or a more primitive experience to the Blood Mountain wilderness.

Special Features

The area itself lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

This area is generally narrowly rectangular in shape, running east to west north of Waters Creek, crossing a ridgeline, and descending to Miller Creek..

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The western and northern boundaries are contiguous with the Blood Mountain Wilderness. The eastern boundary runs drainages and a ridgetop between Miller Creek and FDR 144. No illegal roads or trails enter this area.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS**Recreation, including Tourism**

There are no developed recreation sites within the area. The Dockery Lake Recreation Area is in close proximity to the southwestern corner of the area. The Dockery Lake Trail passes through the southwestern corner of the area. The Waters Creek trophy trout stream attracts large numbers of anglers to the southern boundary along FDR 144. This area is within the Chestatee WMA, and hunters access it along FDR 144.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations that include migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Trout fishing is the predominant activity on Waters and Miller Creeks. Two managed openings occur within the identified area with access roading. Within Chestatee WMA.

As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high-elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Feeder streams in this area drain into Miller and Waters Creek, which form part of the headwaters for the Chestatee River. There are no special water uses in the area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

No livestock has been grazed within the area for the last 75 years.

Multiple-use management for timber harvesting has occurred in the area, with the most recent harvest being in 1986. All acres of Miller Creek are suitable for timber production in the 1985 plan.

Gold mining occurred in the late 1800s.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Surveys have been done in the area; more sites are to be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

There are no special-use permits granted in this area.

Management Considerations for fire, recreation

Fire management will be affected due to mechanized equipment restrictions in wilderness. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Wildlife management will lose the one maintained opening.

The area will be allocated as unsuitable for timber production.

Maintenance of portions of the Dockery Lake Trail will be affected due to the restrictions on mechanized equipment in wilderness.

Area could add solitude to the Blood Mountain wilderness.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks will occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of stems of all trees increase.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

DUCK BRANCH

Reference # 03004

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

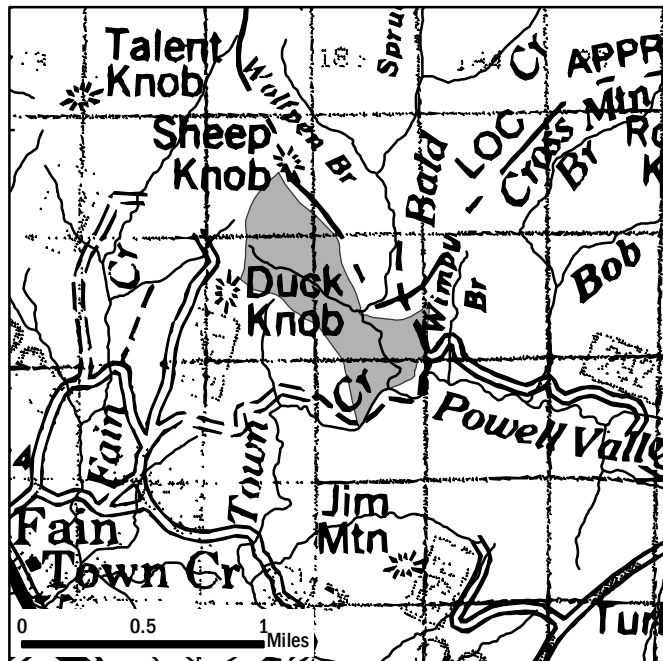
190 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is in Union County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It adjoins a portion of the southwest boundary of the Brasstown Wilderness and encompasses the Duck Branch drainage down to its confluence with Town Creek. Access is via FDR 292. The area is found on the USGS Jacks Gap GA quad, and is entirely surrounded by National Forest land. The town of Blairsville is north of the area.

Figure C- 16. Duck Branch Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section, and the Nottely River Landtype Association (M221Dc019). The general aspect is predominately south- and west-facing slopes confined to the Duck Branch drainage. Slopes vary from steep to very steep on sideslopes to nearly flat in the floodplains of the large drainages. Stream channels are generally narrow V-shaped arrangement. Drainage density is medium throughout the area with intermittent streams common and well distributed. The area contains the headwaters of Duck Branch that drains the area west to Town Creek. Elevations range from 2,200 feet at Duck Branch to near 3,000 feet below the crest of Sheep Knob.

Soils are classified in the Evard-Cowee-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout; on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species include northern red, white, chestnut, and scarlet oak on dry sites. White pine is more prevalent than yellow pine species. Mesophytic species, such as yellow poplar and Eastern hemlock, are on moist sites. The average annual precipitation is about 70 inches, and the average annual temperature is 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is used by hunters. Other recreational uses are limited. The area is presently managed for multiple use. There are no developed recreation sites in the area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is generally natural in appearance. Approximately 16 acres of forest were thinned in 1992. A 1.5-acre wildlife opening is in the area. There is approximately 0.1 mile of FDR 292 in this area.

Contiguous lands are all National Forest and are forested. The Brasstown Wilderness adjoins the northeast to southeast boundary. There are no maintained trails in the area. Several old logging roads and harvest areas are in evidence in the surrounding areas. The area is a red oak, white oak, and hickory hardwood forest type approximately 80-100 years old. Elevations range from 2100 ft to 2800 ft. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system

Table C- 20. Age Class Structure – Duck Branch Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	17
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	72
61 - 70	80
71 - 80	11
81 - 90	0
91 - 100	11
101 - 110	0
111 - 120	0
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

There are no developed recreation sites or trails within this area. The Brasstown Wilderness adjoins the area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity of the Area

The area is comprised mainly of hardwood timber types. The area reflects the management of the last half-century. Tree species in the timber stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management.

Opportunities for Experience Often Unique to Wilderness

By itself, this area cannot offer wilderness experience. Natural processes appear to be operating freely, with the exception of the maintenance of the wildlife opening. There is not an opportunity for solitude in the Duck Branch drainage. Sights and sounds of traffic and other such noises would be minimal. The sides of the drainage are relatively steep and rugged. It would add solitude to the Blood Mountain wilderness.

Special Features

The area is adjacent to the Brasstown wilderness. Some rock outcropping is in evidence. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Description of Size and Shape

The area is small, 190 acres that could be added to the Brasstown Wilderness. The area is somewhat rectangular in nature.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The boundary follows the Brasstown Wilderness northeast to southeast, then follows ridgeline and streams for the remainder. There is some occasional illegal ATV use in the southeast corner near Powell Valley Creek. The area is somewhat rectangular in nature.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS**Recreation, including Tourism**

There are no developed recreation sites or trails in the area. Primary use is dispersed recreation activities such as hunting, along with limited fishing, and camping. It would add a small amount of challenge to Blood Mountain wilderness.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, and black bear inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. There are 1.5 acres in wildlife opening/food plot. As the age class structure table shows, there is a total lack of early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. Wildlife habitat restoration is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area.

Water Availability and Use

Duck Branch and its small feeder streams drain into the Nottley River watershed. There are no water uses in the area.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock has not been grazed within the area for over 75 years.

This area is presently allocated suitable for timber production. No acres in 0-20 year age class from past management activities.

No mineral extraction has taken place or would be expected.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

One site in the area has been surveyed. Other sites could be expected, based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

There are no special-use permits issued in this area.

Management Considerations

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation as additional wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

Wildlife management will be minimally affected due to the loss of the existing food plot.

The area would be allocated unsuitable for timber production.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

HELTON CREEK

Reference # 03009

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

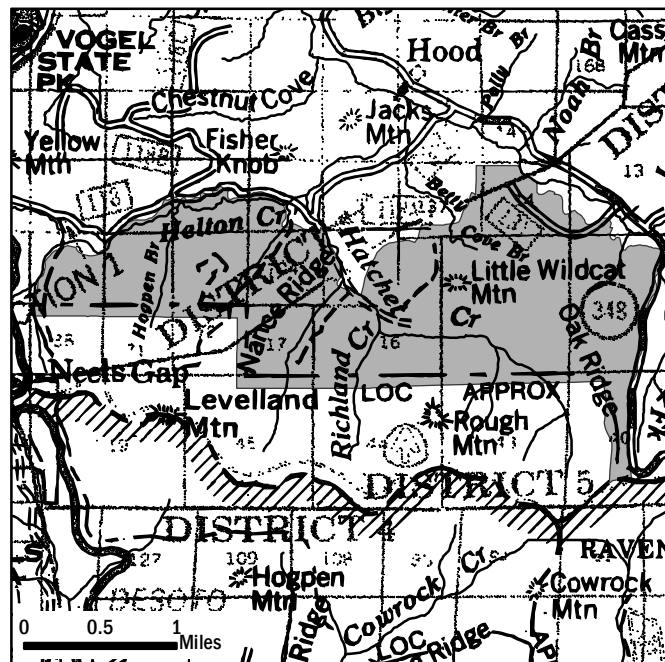
2,451, Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

This area is in Union County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It adjoins the northern boundary of the Raven Cliffs Wilderness between, generally, U.S. Highway 129 and State Highway 348 (Russell Brasstown National Scenic Byway) and Forest Development Road 131. It extends to Helton Creek along the northwest quadrant. The area is found on the USGS Cowrock, Neels Gap, Jacks Gap, and Coosa Bald quads. The town of Blairsville is north of the area. Access is via FDR 118 (Helton Creek Road), 118A, 131, and the Russell Brasstown National Scenic Byway. The FDRs are all-weather gravel roads, while the scenic highway is paved.

Figure C - 17. Helton Creek Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography and Vegetation

This area is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section, and the Toccoa River Landtype Association (M221Dc017). The general aspect is predominately north- and east-facing slopes confined to the Helton Creek drainage. Slopes vary from steep to very steep on sideslopes to nearly flat in the floodplains of the large drainages. Stream channels are generally narrow V-shaped arrangement. Drainage density is medium throughout the area with intermittent streams common and well distributed. The area contains the headwaters of Helton Creek and Hatchet Branch that drains to the east to the Nottely River. Elevations range from 2,200 feet at the floodplain of Helton Creek to 3,458 feet at Double Poplar Top.

Soils are classified in the Evard-Cowee-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout; on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species include northern red, white, chestnut, and scarlet oak on dry sites. White pine is more prevalent than yellow pine species. Mesophytic species, such as yellow poplar and Eastern hemlock, are on moist sites.

The average annual precipitation is about 70 inches, and the average annual temperature is 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Hunting, fishing, dispersed camping are the primary uses of the area. Scenery is viewed from the Russell Brasstown National Scenic Byway, and from a short trail to Helton Creek Falls.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Natural in appearance, some evidence of past timber harvesting activities such as old roads, stumps, etc.

Area is typical of southern Appalachian north-facing drainages, with oak-hickory-maple-yellow poplar hardwood slopes and hemlock stream corridors. There are private inholdings nearby or adjacent to portions of the northwest and north central boundaries of the area, with development evident in these inholdings.

Table C- 21. Age Class Structure – Helton Creek Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	56
11 - 20	109
21 - 30	157
31 - 40	64
41 - 50	18
51 - 60	242
61 - 70	156
71 - 80	146
81 - 90	450
91 - 100	615
101 - 110	89
111 - 120	36
121 - 130	140
131 - 140	111
141 - 150	61
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

It lies just north (0.25 miles) of The Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The Helton Creek Falls and attendant trail gets heavy visitation. The area adjoins the Raven Cliffs Wilderness, is just east (0.25 miles) of the Blood Mountain Wilderness, and just south (3 miles) of Vogel State Park.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

Some evidence of human activity, primarily old roads and timber harvest areas is apparent, but is slowly diminishing. Natural processes appear to be operating freely in much of the area. The area is natural in appearance. There is approximately 260 acres of potential old growth forest in the area.

Opportunities for Experience Often Unique to Wilderness

At just less than 2500 acres, Helton Creek could not be considered to be a stand alone designated wilderness. There is good opportunity for added solitude and primitive recreation to adjacent Raven Cliffs wilderness. Numerous rock outcrops and steep terrain offer challenges to visitors. Traffic sights and sounds are mostly limited to the far eastern and western boundary areas. Visitation is primarily during hunting season, with the areas around the stream of Helton Creek getting year-round use.

Special Features

Rock outcrops and numerous streams with various sized waterfalls are in evidence. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The area is somewhat narrowly rectangular east to west, and lies on the north facing slope.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The southern boundary is contiguous with the Raven Cliffs Wilderness. The northern, eastern, and western boundaries follow streams and roads for the most part. Some private interface is found along the northern boundary. Some old roads would require additional blocking/closing (0.58 miles). There is occasional illegal ATV use along FDR's 118 and 118-A

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS**Recreation, including Tourism**

Hunting and dispersed camping are the principal recreational uses of the area, in addition to scenic viewing from the Russell Brasstown National Scenic Byway. The area is a viewshed for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. There are no developed recreation sites in the area.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a balance age class habitats available for wildlife within the area but management is needed to maintain this balance.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

No maintained wildlife openings are within this area.

Water Availability and Use

Numerous feeder streams in the area drain into Helton and Hatchet Creeks, which are part of the Nottley River watershed. There are no water use permits in the area.

Livestock, Timber and Minerals

Livestock had not been grazed in over 75 years.

As the age class structure table points out, there has been quite a bit of management activity within the area.

There are 1015 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan.

No mining or mineral extraction has occurred here.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Partly surveyed; some known sites; other sites expected.

Land Uses

No authorized uses exist for this area.

Management Considerations

The area would be an addition to Raven Cliffs wilderness and will add some solitude to that area.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation as addition to wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

BEN GAP

Reference # 03011

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

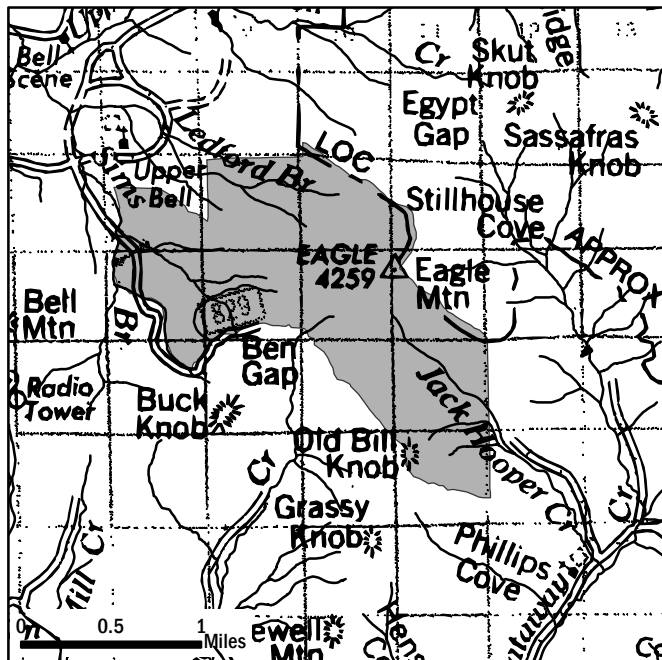
1,294 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Towns County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It adjoins the western boundary of the Southern Nantahala Wilderness along Jump-off Ridge and Eagle Mountain. The area is generally defined by private land along the northwest and southeast quadrants, FDR 829, and Sims Branch. Access is via FDR 829. The area is found on the USGS Macedonia GA-NC quad. The town of Hiawassee is southwest of the area.

Figure C - 18. Ben Gap Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetaion

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the South Slope Landtype Association, M221Dc24. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest point at 4,259 feet on Eagle Mountain, which forms part of Hollifield Ridge. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Porters-Edneyville soils group, characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountains. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, chestnut, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch pine on dryer and disturbed sites and northern red oak at moderate elevations. There is a small heath bald on the crest of Eagle Mountain, partially within the The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

This area is used for dispersed recreation such as hunting, with horseback riding occurring on the system roads. Illegal OHV use also occurs, primarily along and from the private interface. Multiple-use management is practiced, and timber harvesting has occurred on a regular basis in this area. There are 1.47 miles of open roads in the area.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Area is heavily wooded on the steeper and higher slopes. Several timber harvest areas and access roads are evident at lower elevations. One hundred and forty acres are in the 0-20 age class. There are no maintained trails in the area.

The northeast side of this area is bounded by the Southern Nantahala wilderness. The southern side is bounded by national forest and is similar in appearance. The north, northwest, and southeast side adjoin private land which is pastoral in appearance, with structures and fields evident.

Table C- 22. Age Class Structure – Ben Gap Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	30
11 - 20	110
21 - 30	16
31 - 40	14
41 - 50	41
51 - 60	8
61 - 70	25
71 - 80	219
81 - 90	343
91 - 100	186
101 - 110	110
111 - 120	191
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attraction

The area borders the Southern Nantahala wilderness. Eagle Mountain (4,259 ft) is a prominent feature in the area and has a small heath bald, a rare community. There are no developed recreation sites or trails in the area. The area is east and above (one mile) the town of Hiwassee and Chatuge Lake.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity/Natural Appearance

The area is generally naturally appearing, particularly along the steeper slopes and ridgelines where natural processes are operating freely. A 10-year-old, 30-acre regeneration area is evident. Other older harvest activities are returning to a natural appearance. Some old roads and illegal trails show evidence of illegal OHV use. There are approximately seven acres of potential old growth forest.

Opportunities for Experience Often Unique to Wilderness

The area is not large enough to be a stand alone designated wilderness area. Visitor use is primarily from hunters during the appropriate seasons. Traffic noise and visibility are most apparant near the private land interface. The steep rugged terrain and lack of trails offers challenge to visitors, and additional acres to the existing

Southern Nantahala Wilderness. Solitude would not be expected as the area is perched above US Highway 76, GA highway 175 and the town of Hiawassee.

Special Features

Rock outcrops are found on Eagle Mountain and Hollifield Ridge with a small heath bald on Eagle Mountain as well. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The area is somewhat crescent-shaped, with National Forest land bounding the northeast and southwest areas. Significant amounts of private interface will present challenges to wilderness management in those areas. Boundaries should take this into account.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The boundary adjoins the Southern Nantahala Wilderness on the northeast, follows the exterior forest boundary on the east, follows FDR 289 to a point on a tributary of Sims Branch, follows the tributary to the external forest boundary on the northwest, then continues on the external forest boundary back to the Southern Nantahala Wilderness. An offset from both FDR 289 and the exterior forest boundary would allow for greater flexibility in fire management and private interface issues.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

There are no developed recreation sites or trails in this area. Primary recreational use is by hunters and horseback riders. Lake Chatuge is the primary draw for the area.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations which include migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, black bear, and occasional grouse inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a balance of age class habitats available for wildlife within the area and management is needed to maintain the balance. The area shows evidence of forest and wildlife management.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Sims Branch and Ledford Branch to the northwest, Jack Hooper Creek to the southeast and Bearmeat Creek to the southwest, begin in the area. Approximately 1 mile east from Chatuge Lake.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

No livestock grazing has occurred in the last 75 years.

Multiple use management is evident throughout the area. As the age class structure table points out, there has been quite a bit of management activity within the area. There are 1,291 acres in this area that are classed as suitable for timber production.

Mineral extraction has not taken place, and would be not expected.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Some surveys at locations that had potential soil disturbances; some sites known; more expected if surveyed.

Land Uses

There are no special-use permits granted in this area.

Management Considerations

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

Forest health considerations could be a concern in the future, especially for an area that overlooks a popular lake and adjacent town. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid could occur. Designation as an addition to existing wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks will occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of stems of all trees increase.

Wilderness designation would limit the maintenance or restoration of the small existing heath bald, a rare community, to natural ignition fire or management ignited fire.

The area would be an addition to Southern Nantahala wilderness and would add some solitude to that area.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need – Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

SHOAL BRANCH

Reference # 03012

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

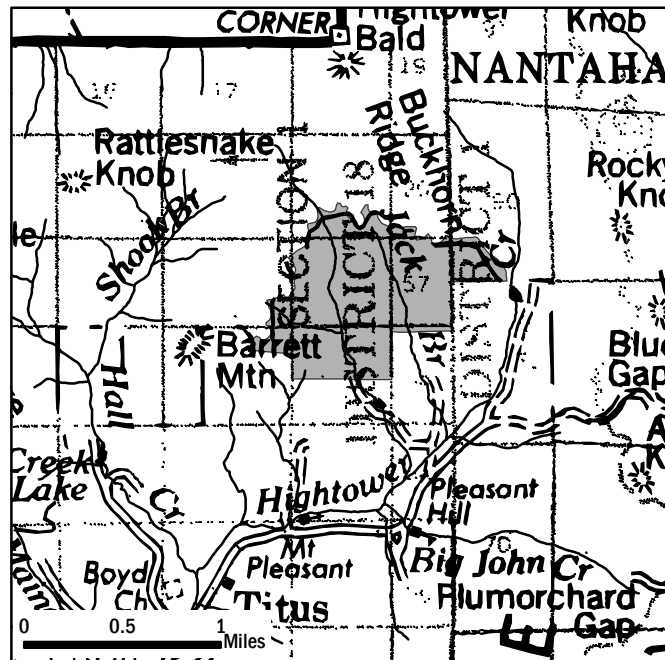
412 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

This area is located in Towns County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It is situated south of Hightower Bald between the existing Southern Nantahala Wilderness and private property. Access is via FDR 311. The area is found on the USGS Macedonia and Hightower Bald GA-NC quads. The town of Hiawassee is southwest of the area.

Figure C - 19. Shoal Branch Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the South Slope Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc24. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest elevation at approximately 3,000 feet. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms. The area forms the upper drainages for Shoal and Jack Branches, draining south into Hightower Creek.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Porters-Edneyville soils group, characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountains. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, chestnut, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch pine on dryer and disturbed sites and northern red oak at moderate elevations. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Hunting and some dispersed camping are the primary uses of this area. Gemstone collectors have dug in a portion of the area, creating a large pit.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Steep wooded slopes descending into typical Appalachian cove and riparian environments. There is evidence of old timber harvest roads. No maintained trails are in the area.

Borders the Southern Nantahala Wilderness in an east to west arc. Contiguous with Forest boundary/private land on southern side. Some private development near this interface.

Table C- 23. Age Class Structure – Shoal Branch Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	23
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	57
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	20
61 - 70	0
71 - 80	0
81 - 90	0
91 - 100	68
101 - 110	71
111 - 120	111
121 - 130	56
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

Southern Nantahala Wilderness. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is east (0.75 miles) of the area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

Area is similar to surrounding forest. Natural processes appear to be operating freely, particularly on the steeper slopes. Timber harvesting activities (23 acres) are still evident from about 15 years ago.

Area is natural in appearance, with some evidence of past management activities such as closed roads and stumps.

Opportunities for Experience Often Unique to Wilderness

The Shoal Branch area could not be a stand alone designated wilderness. Primitive recreation, solitude. Visitor use is primarily during hunting seasons. Sights and sounds of traffic is minimal, but would likely increase as development continues along the private interface. Some solitude and primitive experiences could be added to the Southern Nantahala wilderness.

Special Features

Terrain is the most special feature, overall, rather unremarkable. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape and Manageability

Roughly half oval, rounded across northern arc.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Northern arc contiguous with the Southern Nantahala Wilderness. Entire southern side contiguous with private land boundary. Private interface would require close monitoring and should be taken into consideration.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS**Recreation, including Tourism**

Hunting is the primary recreational use of the area. There are no developed recreational uses in the area. Adjacent to Southern Nantahala wilderness.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations which include migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, black bear, and occasional grouse inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of balance between age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. Management is needed to create and maintain the age class balance. (For further discussion regarding high elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Jack and Shoal Branches and their attendant feeder streams are in the area. There are no water use permits in the area.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock confined to adjacent private land. None on NF the last 75 years.

Not much active forest management has occurred in the past 10 years. There are 80 acres of forest within the area that have been regenerated in the last 40, and 403 acres classified as suitable for timber production.

Some rock hounding activities occur in the area with little to no damage occurring. Gemstones occur in the area based on recreational dig evidence.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Very limited surveys have been done at at potential soil disturbance locations. There are some known sites; other sites expected if surveys were to occur.

Land Uses

No authorized uses exist for this area.

Management Considerations

The area would be an addition to Ellicott Rock wilderness and will add some solitude to that area.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

The long private/forest boundary may increase risk of wildfire (wildland/urban interface), with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. Management buffer could be put in place to help with fire management/equipment use situations. Private encroachment may require increased monitoring for possible encroachments and vehicular trespass use.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

TRIPP BRANCH

Reference # 03015

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

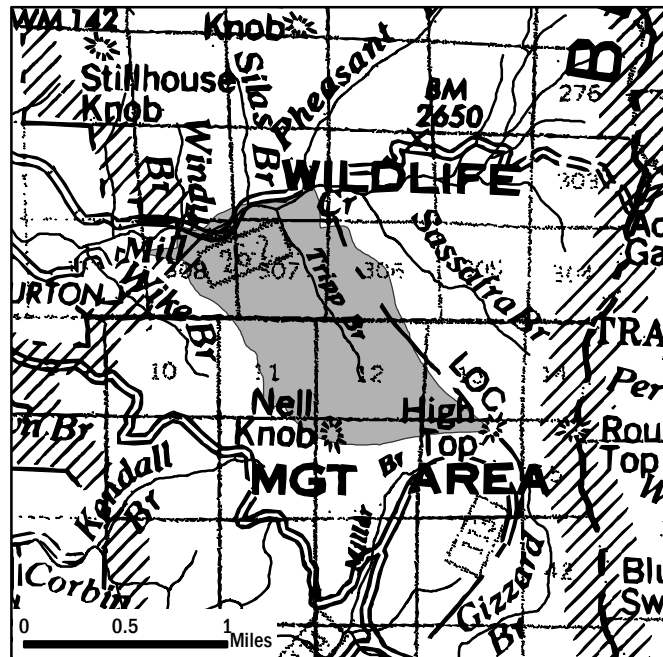
638 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Towns County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It is adjacent to the northwest boundary of Tray Mountain Wilderness. It lies south of FDR 26-2 Mill Creek road and is defined by the Tripp Branch drainage and a small piece of private land on the northwest. Access is via the all-weather Mill Creek road. There is 1.50 mile of road within the area. The area is found on the USGS Tray Mtn. GA quad. The town of Hiawassee is northwest of the area

Figure C - 20. Tripp Branch Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Hiawasse River Landtype Association, M221Dc23. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest elevation at approximately 3,840 feet on High Top. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms. The area primarily encompasses the upper Tripp Branch drainage.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Porters-Edneyville soils group, characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountains. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, chestnut, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch pine on dryer and disturbed sites and northern red oak at moderate elevations. The average annual precipitation is about 70 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Hunting and some dispersed camping. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is about 0.25 miles to the east.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area generally appears natural, with some evidence of past timber harvesting activity such as old roads, stand age differences, and stumps in a small area. Steeply wooded slopes falling into a stream drainage. There are no maintained trails in the area.

Table C- 24. Age Class Structure – Tripp Branch Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	32
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	40
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	29
71 - 80	47
81 - 90	76
91 - 100	161
101 - 110	252
111 - 120	2
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

Contiguous with the Tray Mountain Wilderness. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is about 0.25 miles to the east.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The area has not been significantly altered in contrast to the surrounding lands. Natural processes appear to be operating freely. The area is generally natural in appearance.

Opportunities for Experience Often Unique to Wilderness

Primitive recreation and solitude could be added to Tray Mountain wilderness. Area by itself is not large enough to be considered a stand alone designated wilderness. Sight and sound of vehicles would be limited to the boundary along FDR 26-2 and possibly the private interface.

Special Features

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The area is generally v-shaped, opening southeast to northwest.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The area is bounded by ridgelines and a gravel road, bordering the Tray Mountain Wilderness on the east side, and having a short section contiguous with the Forest boundary on the northwest corner.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS**Recreation, including Tourism**

Hunting and some dispersed camping. No developed recreation sites are in the area.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of balance between age class habitats available for wildlife within the area.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevational habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Trout fishing on Tripp Branch and Mill Creek is popular.

Water Availability and Use

Tripp Branch is the main water source. No water use permits are in the area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

No livestock within this area, only on adjacent private land.

There has been 62 acres of forest regenerated within the 1-40 year age class. There are 224 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan.

No mineral mining has occurred within this area.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Some surveys have been accomplished where soil disturbing activities took place. Some sites were located and more could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No authorized uses exist for this area.

Management Considerations

The area would be an addition to Tray Mountain wilderness and can add some solitude and primitive experiences to that area.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

The boundary should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines, due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

WILSON COVE

Reference # 03022

Brasstown Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

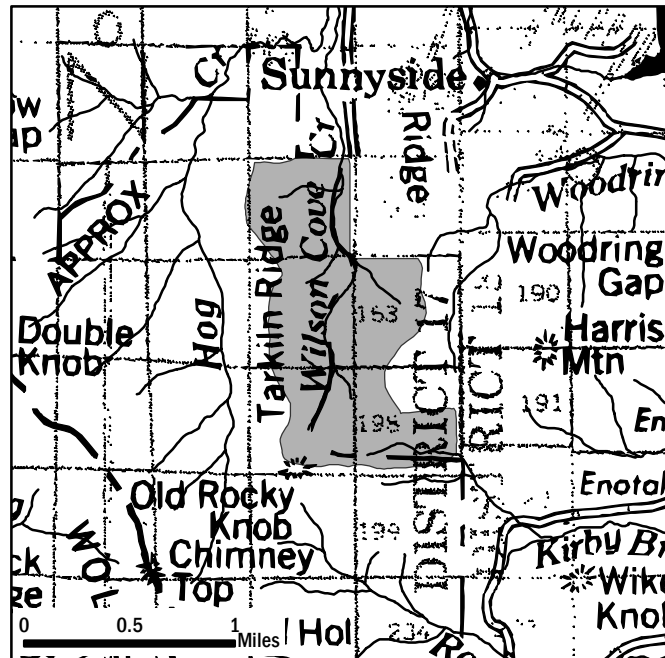
563 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is in Towns County, Georgia, on the Brasstown Ranger District. It adjoins the northeastern quadrant of the existing Brasstown Wilderness along Tarklin Ridge and Old Rocky Knob. Access is via an old road that crosses through private land before entering the National Forest. The area is found on the USGS Hiawassee GA quad. The town of Young Harris is west of the area, and the town of Hiawassee is northeast of the area. There is approximately 0.30 miles of existing open roads of all types within the area.

Figure C - 21. Wilson Cove Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Brasstown Bald Landtype Association, R8#M221Dc22. The landform slopes east and north from Tarklin Ridge, a rugged mountain crest with the highest point at 3,700 feet on Old Rocky Knob.

Soils are generally classified in the Tusquitee-Porters-Edneyville soils group, characterized as deep and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained loamy soils that formed in loamy sediment or in material weathered predominantly from gneiss and schist on mountains. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, chestnut, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch pine on dryer and disturbed sites and northern red oak at moderate elevations. The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Hunting is the primary use during appropriate seasons.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Generally natural in appearance with some evidence of past timber harvesting and OHV use such as roads, stumps, etc.

Table C- 25. Age Class Structure – Wilson Cove Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	15
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	0
71 - 80	124
81 - 90	355
91 - 100	69
101 - 110	0
111 - 120	0
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Steeply wooded on three sides, dropping into a north facing cove. Contiguous with the Brasstown Wilderness on the west and south.

Key Attractions

The area is adjacent to the northeastern side of Brasstown Wilderness. Lake Chatuge and the town of Hiwassee lie approximately 3.5 miles to the northeast. It is a steep area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The area is not significantly different from the adjoining lands.

The area shows evidence of human impact in it's lower elevations.

Steep ridgelines and slopes are natural in appearance and natural processes appear to be operating freely.

Opportunities for Experience Often Unique to Wilderness

Primitive recreation and solitude can be added to adjacent Brasstown wilderness. The area is too small to be considered as a stand alone desinated wilderness.

Special Features

Old Rocky Knob is over 3600 feet. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

Somewhat irregular in shape, longer north to south.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Contiguous with the Brasstown Wilderness on the west and south, following ridgelines on the east, and the Forest boundary on the northeast with a small amount of private land being bordered.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

The primary use of the area is hunting. There are no developed recreation sites in the area. An ATV trail was formerly located in a portion of the area.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, and black bear inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a total lack of early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevation habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

No maintained wildlife openings are in this area.

Water Availability and Use

Feeder streams drain into Wilson Cove Creek. There are no water permits within this area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

There has not been any livestock grazing in this area for over 75 years.

There are 15 acres of forest that has been regenerated in the last 40 years. 554 acres are suitable for timber production in the 1985 forest plan. Some vegetative restorations could occur in the future.

There has not been any mining within this area.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

2 surveys occurred in the past; known sites exist, and others could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No authorized uses exist for this area.

Management Considerations

The area would be an addition to Brasstown wilderness and will add some solitude and primitive experiences to that area.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase.

The boundary should be offset from private interface concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

BOGGS CREEK

Reference # 03007

2,075 Acres

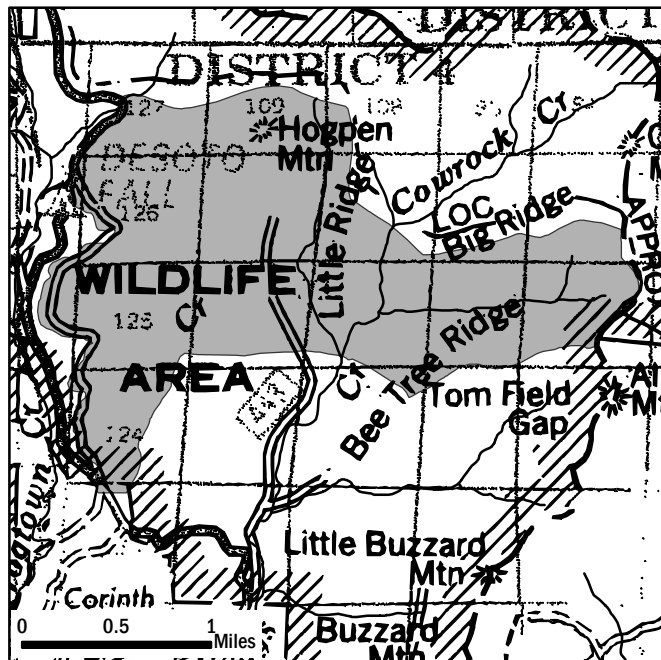
Chattooga Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

The area is located on the Chattooga Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF, Lumpkin County, Georgia. It encompasses 2,071 acres east of State Highway 129 and joins the Raven Cliffs Wilderness to the north and east. The south boundary is Bee Tree Ridge, USGS quads, Neels Gap and Cowrock crossing FDRs 443 and 443D at their intersection, following west to ridge top and south to FDR 639, and following FDR 639 north to State Highway 129. Primary access is by FDRs 443 (south central portion) and 639 (west portion).

Figure C - 22. Boggs Creek Inventoried Roadless Area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the South Slope Landtype Association, M221Dc24. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest elevation at 3,427 feet (Hog Pen Mtn). There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

Soils are classified in the Edneyville-Porters-Ashe soil group, characterized by moderately deep, well drained to excessively drained, sloping to steep soils on mountainsides. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common canopy tree species are mixed upland hardwoods, including pitch and Virginia Pine on disturbed northern red oak and poplar on north aspects. Overall, white pine is just as common as other pines.

Current Use

The area is within the Chestatee Wildlife Management Area that Georgia Department of Natural Resources manages for controlled hunts; trout fishing, and various non-game wildlife species management. Dispersed camping and day use is very popular along Boggs Creek, which has maintained camping sites, restroom facilities and an all weather road just below the proposed boundary.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The Boggs Creek area is 2,075 acres in size and is located entirely on National Forest System land. Landforms consist of mountain ridges separated by a series of small to medium, steep side slope drains. Elevation ranges from 1,800 feet at Boggs Creek to 3,427 feet along Hog Pen Mountain. There are two primitive Forest Service developed roads within the area (FDR 443, 0.80 miles and FDR 443B, 0.50 miles). FDR 639, 2.4 miles, make up primarily the western boundary of the area. The area appears to be natural, but there are signs of disturbance from timber harvesting. Recent timber sales (119 acres), 12 maintained wildlife openings, and 1.3 miles of primitive system roads are within the area.

Vegetation of the area is mature hardwood and pine forest (with the exception of 119 acres in the 0-30-year age class). Landscape is diverse, and the view will be restricted from within the core area due to surrounding ridges.

Table C- 26. Age Class Structure – Boggs Creek Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	119
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	23
71 - 80	333
81 - 90	718
91 - 100	2812
101 - 110	310
111 - 120	766
121 - 130	1718
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

Raven Cliffs Wilderness to the north and east; and the mountain ridges to the north and south, which consist of Hogpen Mountain at 3427 feet, and slightly smaller Cowrock Mountain, Little Ridge, Big Ridge, and Bee Tree Ridge. Other nearby attractions include Vogel State Park, Desoto Falls Scenic Area and the accompanying waterfalls, and Chestatee Wildlife Management Area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The Boggs Creek area encompasses the headwaters of Boggs Creek and offers potential for a wide variety of high-quality primitive recreation activities. The dominance of landform, variety of color and texture in the vegetation patterns, and presence of flowing water give integrity to the natural processes operating within the area. The physical features include scattered, isolated pockets that retain the feeling of having just been discovered. It is possible to find areas that are unique and unlike other places on the forest, but there are also areas (119 acres of timber harvest, 12 maintained wildlife openings, and impacts caused by recreational visitors) that show evidence that others have passed that way.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The size of the Boggs Creek area is such that it cannot be a stand alone designated wilderness area. A solitude core area refers to the semi-primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) setting identified within the roadless inventory. A solitude core area has not been identified.

The highest concentration of visitors occurs along Boggs Creek at points accessible for fishing. The Creek, which cuts through this area, is outstanding trout water.

Special Features

Raven Cliffs Wilderness to the north and east; and the mountain ridges to the north and south, which consist of Hogpen Mountain at 3427 feet, and slightly smaller Cowrock Mountain, Little Ridge, Big Ridge, and Bee Tree Ridge. The area itself lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. Elevations are typical for the southern Blue Ridge Mountains. 82,623 acres of existing wildernesses and 20 inventoried roadless areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest lie in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The rectangular east-west shape conforms to the existing shape of adjoining Ravens Cliff Wilderness Area and lies across the upper Boggs Creek watershed. The interior of the area is remote with steep slopes and high elevation rocky ridges that provide mountainous viewshed as viewed from Highway 129 and FS 443.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Boundary locations avoid conflict with most important existing, or potential, public use that might result in demands to allow nonconforming structures and activities. It is possible to readily and accurately describe, establish, and recognize the boundary on the ground. The boundary, primarily ridge tops and FDR 639, will constitute a barrier to prohibit use to the extent practical. Also, the ridge top boundary will act as a shield to protect the areas environment from the sights and sounds of civilization outside the area. An offset from the boundary road 639 would enhance the area's characteristics by avoiding impacts that are a result of engineering work and wildlife operations. Due to the high volume of visitor use along Boggs Creek Road, it will be difficult to manage the area as an enduring resource and protect its natural character.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

There is very little nonconforming use occurring within the area at present, and what is occurring can be mitigated or terminated. This area has the potential to augment the Boggs Creek recreational area by offering a wide variety of high-quality primitive

and unconfined recreation activities with hunting remaining the primary recreational activity. The Boggs Creek area below the proposed boundary is already heavily used for recreation activities that encompass much of the area above the study boundary. The area's diversity of landscape, ecosystems, and terrain would provide the visitor with opportunities to engage in more than one recreation activity including the possibility of providing outdoor education and scientific study. Scenic features such as dominance of landform, variety of color, vegetation patterns, presence of flowing water, and abundance of varied wildlife enhance the area's recreation opportunities. If the area becomes an addition to the Raven Cliffs wilderness, it would provide easy access (due to existing roads) into the southwestern section of the wilderness and may concentrate tourism into this area.

Wildlife

This area contains wildlife species typical of the Blue Ridge Mountains such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. The area is in the Chestatee Wildlife Management Area and wilderness designation will preclude any habitat restoration or maintenance within the area. There are 12 maintained wildlife openings.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of balance between the early age class habitats and the late habitats available for wildlife within the area.

Trout stocking takes place on a frequent schedule in Boggs Creek.

Water Availability and Use

Boggs Creek is the largest stream within the area. There are no Special Use water permits authorized. Water quality should remain at current levels if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber and Minerals

There has not been livestock grazing in this area for over 75 years.

Common tree species are mixed upland hardwoods, including northern red oak and poplar on north aspects and pitch pine and Virginia Pine on disturbed Overall, white pine is just as common as other pines. Harvesting of forest products will be precluded by wilderness designation. Approximately 1093 acres of the Boggs Creek area is classified as suitable for timber production in the 1985 plan. No timber harvest has occurred within the past 10 years. 119 acres were harvested during the mid-1970s. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from the suitable for timber management category.

All minerals are federally-owned. There are no federal oil or gas or gas leases.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

One-quarter of the Boggs Creek area has been surveyed; no sites known; some sites could be expected.

Land Uses

No special use permit authorizations have been issued for lands in the roadless area.

Management Considerations

Present fire control techniques will be altered by designation as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase. As use increases on both the adjacent US Highway 129 and up Boggs Creek, fire occurrence could increase.

Forest health is a consideration. Outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have occurred in North Georgia over the last five years. Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in the Boggs Creek area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks will occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of stems of all trees increase.

This area has the potential to augment the Boggs Creek recreational area by offering a wide variety of high-quality primitive and unconfined recreation activities with hunting remaining the primary recreational activity.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need – Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

TURNER CREEK

Reference # 03008

Chattooga Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

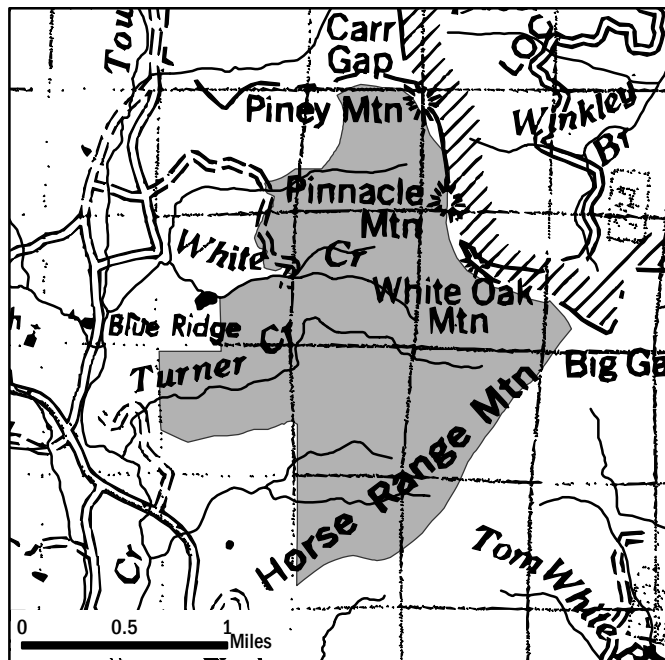
1,515 Acres

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

The area is located on the Chattooga Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF, White County, Georgia. It encompasses 1,515 acres north of State Highway 129 and joins the Raven Cliffs wilderness to the north and northeast. The southeast boundary is Horse Range Mountain, with private land and FDR 57 on the west. Primary access is by FDR 57, an all-weather dirt and gravel road in the northwest portion of the area. A private road under special use permit also provides access to the west-central portion of the area. The entire western boundary is coexistent with private land from White Creek to Horse Range Mountain.

Figure C - 23. Turner Creek Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is the Suches Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc18. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest elevation at 3,162 feet on Horse Range Mountain. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

Soils are classified in the Edneyville-Porters-Ashe soil group, characterized by moderately deep, well drained to excessively drained, sloping to steep soils on mountainsides.

Common species are mixed upland hardwoods, white, scarlet, and chestnut oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch, virginia and white pines on dryer and disturbed sites, and northern red oak at moderate elevations. The average annual precipitation is about 65 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The Turner Creek areas offers a wide variety of quality recreation activities. There are no developed recreation sites in the roadless area. Currently, 168 acres are suitable for timber production out of the 1,515 acres. Within the past 40 years, 99 acres of timber harvest has occurred. There is a private inholding (22 acres) of land within the area, with access by a primitive road along Turner Creek.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

This area is 1,515 acres in size and is located entirely on National Forest System land with the exception of a 22-acre private tract located on Turner Creek. Landform consists of mountain ridges separated by a series of small to medium, steep, side slope drains. Elevation ranges from 1,780 feet at the lower end of Turner Creek to 3,162 feet along Horse Range Mountain. There is one primitive road (0.80 miles) within the area along Turner Creek leading to the private tract of land. The area appears to be natural, but there are signs of recent disturbances from timber harvesting within the area. Vegetation of the area contains all age classes but on appearance resembles mature vegetation.

There are 302 acres of inventoried old growth throughout the area. Vegetation of the area contains all age classes but is lacking disturbance and, therefore, gives the areas an appearance of mature vegetation. The view to the east is restricted by Horse Range, Double Head, White Oak, Pinnacle, and Piney Mountains.

Table C- 27. Age Class Structure – Turner Creek Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	80
21 - 30	19
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	160
71 - 80	231
81 - 90	77
91 - 100	77
101 - 110	173
111 - 120	84
121 - 130	19
131 - 140	467
141 - 150	104
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

Raven Cliffs wilderness to the north and northeast.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

The Turner Creek area encompasses the headwaters of six drainages and offers a wide variety of primitive recreation activities. The dominance of landform, variety of color and texture in vegetation patterns, presence of flowing water contribute to the high scenic quality of the area. The integrity of the landscape is very high because there is no noticeable intrusion to the natural landscape's character except for 99 acres of past harvesting activity. The physical features of the area include scattered, isolated pockets that retain the feeling of having just been discovered.

Special Features

A rather un-remarkable area. Horse Range Mountain is 3162 feet, Pinnacle Mountain to the east is 3135 feet and White Oak Mountain just to the south of Pinnacle is over 3000 feet.

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. All 10 existing

wildernesses and 23 inventoried roadless areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest lie in this subsection.

Size, Shape and Manageability

The size and shape of the Turner Creek area makes its preservation practical but is not large enough to be a stand alone wilderness area. The boundary follows obvious topographic features such as ridges, property boundary, and FDR 57 and can be easily recognized by both the user and the manager. Surrounding lands are publicly owned with Raven Cliffs wilderness to the north and northeast, with the exception of the southwest which borders private land. Some conflicting uses are occurring, the private tract within the area and its access will be a conflict. The adjacent private lands are not managed in a way that is generally compatible with roadless area or wilderness.

The high mountain ridges are most likely to limit the sights, sounds, and access from the north, east, and south. Access to the area would be via FDR 57 and would be of minimal impact. Development of the private land adjoining the area would be feasible. The area lies across the Turner Creek Watershed and to the southwest of boundary of Raven Cliffs.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The entire western boundary is coexistent with private land from White Creek to Horse Range Mountain. Boundary locations avoid conflict with important existing or potential public use outside the boundary that might result in demands to allow nonconforming structures and activities with the exception of the 22-acre tract within the boundary. It is possible to readily and accurately describe, establish, and recognize the boundary on the ground. The boundary (ridge tops, national forest property lines, and FDR 57) will constitute a barrier to prohibit use to the extent practical. It will also act as a shield to protect the area's environment from the sights and sounds of civilization outside the area. FDR 57 will provide adequate opportunity for access and traveler transfer facilities. The area is small in size (1,515 acres) but does join the Raven Cliffs wilderness to the north and northeast, which results in the ability to manage the area as an addition to the existing wilderness.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

There is very little nonconforming use occurring within the area at present, and what is occurring can be mitigated or terminated. The area is capable and offers a wide variety of high-quality primitive and unconfined recreation activities. Scenic features such as dominance of landform, variety of color, vegetation patterns, presence of flowing water, and abundance of varied wildlife enhance the areas recreation opportunities. If the area becomes an addition to Raven Cliffs wilderness, it will

provide needed access to the southern end of Raven Cliffs wilderness and help disperse visitors into the wilderness.

DeSoto Falls Scenic Area is just to the west of the area; the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is on the Mountaintops north of the area; and Vogel State Park is about 10 miles to the north on US Highway 129.

Wildlife

This area contains wildlife species typical of the Blue Ridge Mountains such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, and black bear. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed.

A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high-elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of early age class habitats available for wildlife within the area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevation habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

There are no maintained wildlife openings within the area.

Water Availability and Use

Numerous streams such as Turner Creek, White Creek, and smaller unnamed branches. There are no special water uses in the area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock has not been grazed within the area for over 75 years. Livestock is present on adjacent private land.

Steep side ridges have limited forest management (99 acres have been regenerated the past 40 years). There were 168 acres in this area classified as suitable for timber production in the 1985 plan.

Access is limited and limits vegetative management at present.

U.S.A. owns all mineral rights

Cultural/Heritage Resources

No surveys; sites expected.

Land Uses

Access to the private tract of land (22 acres) within the area is authorized through special use to continue access to the private land.

Management Considerations for fire, recreation

Fire management will be affected due to mechanized equipment restrictions in wilderness. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Wildlife management will be affected due to the loss of the two openings.

A 22-acre private inholding is within the area.

The area will be allocated as unsuitable for timber production.

Area could add solitude to the Raven Cliffs wilderness.

Forest Health is a concern due to lack of active control measures if insect attack occurs such as outbreaks of Southern Pine Beetle, Gypsy Moth, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Designation of roadless and wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

The diversity of the landscapes, ecosystems, and terrain could provide the visitor with opportunities to engage in more than one activity including the possibility of providing outdoor education and scientific study.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

FOSTER BRANCH

Reference # 03019

165 Acres

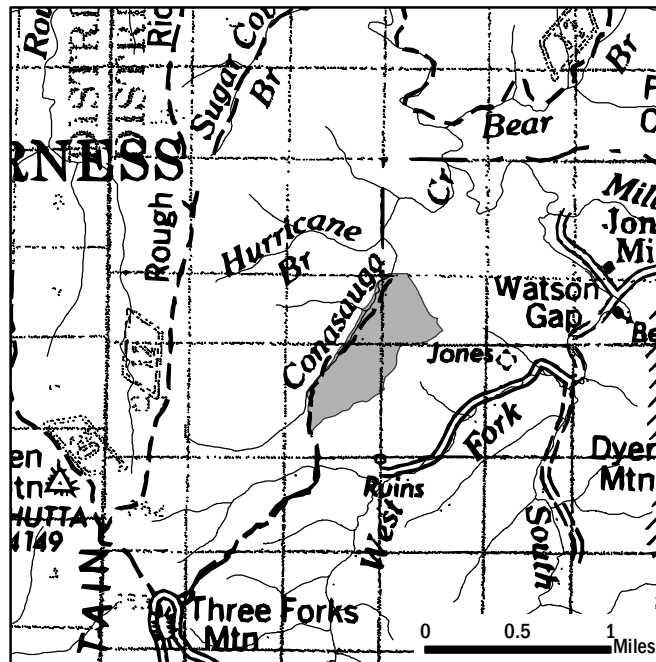
Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Fannin County, Georgia, on the Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District, about 12 air miles west of Blue Ridge, Georgia. The area is 165 acres in size, and averages 0.3 miles in length and one mile in width. It is within the Hemtop U.S.G.S. Georgia Quadrangle. The western boundary of the roadless area adjoins the Cohutta Wilderness separated by Conasauga Creek. It touches private property on the north and follows a ridge on the east and south. There is no developed access.

Figure C - 24. Foster Branch Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Humid Temperate Domain, Hot Continental Division, Central Appalachian Broadleaf-Coniferous Forest-Meadow Province, the Blue Ridge Mountains Section, the Metasedimentary Mountains Subsection, and the Flat Top Mountain Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dd10.. Geologic materials are described as phyllite, conglomerate, and metegraywacke (empire sandstone) in Georgia. The landform consists of moderate elevation mountains with long, descending, narrow (<100 feet wide) ridge crests. Terrain consists of one main northwest-facing ridge with several spur ridges draining into Conasauga Creek. The highest elevation is 3,022 feet. There are no distinctive terrain features, but named topographic features include Wagon Road Ridge and Conasauga Creek.

Soils are generally classified in Cowee-Evard-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout; on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains, and with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are hickory, white oak, chestnut oak, and scarlet oak on dry sites; typical tree species on moist sites are yellow poplar and eastern hemlock.

The average annual precipitation is 61 inches, and the average annual temperature is 58 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is used for dispersed recreation activities such as hiking, hunting, and fishing and for multiple-use management. Use is considered low. There are no developed recreation facilities or developed trails within the area. The roadless area is located within the Cohutta WMA. There are no improved roads in the area. No timber harvest has occurred during the past 10 years.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

The area is natural in appearance. There are no distinctive terrain features. There are some old roads in the area, but they are reverting back to a natural appearance. The forest exhibits a mostly continuous canopy. The roadless area adjoins other National Forest lands on about 90% of its boundary. The block of private land that it borders to the north, historically known as the Jones Settlement, is comprised of fairly large tracts of forestland interspersed with a low density of permanent dwellings and summer cabins. However, development is proceeding within the Jones Settlement.

National forest land adjoins the remainder of the Jones Settlement where, except for the area that borders the Cohutta Wilderness, multiple-use management activities such as road access, wildlife openings, and timber harvest are evident.

Table C- 28. Age Class Structure – Foster Branch Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	0
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	22
71 - 80	104
81 - 90	30
91 - 100	0
101 - 110	0
111 - 120	9
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Key Attractions

Remoteness is a key attraction in this area. The South Fork Trail's (FDT 140) northern terminus is found on FDR 126 located in the vicinity of the Jones Settlement. The area is adjacent to the Cohutta wilderness.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

Natural processes are operating and the area is minimally affected by outside forces. There are no recent signs of human disturbance. Old roads in the area are having their appearance muted by the forces of nature. The small roadless area reflects the look of the Cohutta Wilderness.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The Foster Branch addition area is 165 acres in size and could not be a stand alone designated wilderness. It is located entirely on National Forest. The area is proposed as an addition to the Cohutta wilderness. The amount of visitor use is low and is generally confined to hunting. Due to the remote nature of this area, there is little to no human noise. Terrain is typically steep and rugged. Since this area adjoins the Cohutta Wilderness, it will effectively add more acreage to an existing wilderness thus providing more opportunity for solitude, challenge, and primitive recreation.

Special Features

The Foster Branch area borders the Cohutta Wilderness on its western boundary. There are no known occurrences of rare species in the area. This area lies in the the Metasedimentary Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 35,502 acres of existing wildernesses and 3 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The shape and location of the roadless area makes its preservation as potential wilderness practical. Almost half of the boundary follows either a property line or a marked wilderness boundary. A boundary would need to be established where it joins other National Forest lands, but this boundary follows natural terrain features and can be located on the ground.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The northern and western boundary follows a human-made feature, a property line boundary and a marked wilderness boundary, respectively. The remainder of the area follows natural terrain features such as ridges and stream drainages.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, Including Tourism

There are no developed recreation sites within the area. Hiking, hunting, fishing, and dispersed camping would remain viable under wilderness designation. There is no expected effect on tourism.

Wildlife

Habitat for typical Blue Ridge species such as wild turkey, black bear, white-tailed deer, gray squirrel and various forest interior-dwelling songbird species is present in the area, in the form of mature hardwood stands. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. There is a lack of early-successional forest habitat and open forestland in the area, with the exception of clearings within the Jones Settlement to the north. The roadless area is located within the Cohutta WMA.

As the age class structure table shows, there is a total lack of balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class). It is skewed to the late age classes.

Water Availability and Use

Conasauga Creek, a perennial stream within the Jacks River watershed, drains the roadless area and delineates its western boundary. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not. No water use permits are within this area.

Livestock, Timber and Minerals

There has not been livestock grazing within this area for over 75 years.

There are 165 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. Wilderness designation would remove this acreage from that category.

The area is primarily mixed hardwood forest types.

No mineral extraction has occurred at this area.

Cultural Resources

No surveys; sites could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No special-use permits have been authorized in this area.

Management Considerations (forest health, fire, non-federal lands)

The development of adjacent private landholdings, encroachment, and conflicting use are concerns to management. Private property line encroachments will require increased monitoring.

Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

A private/forest boundary could increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. A management buffer could be put in place to aid fire management/equipment use. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

The use of prescribed fire for wildlife habitat improvement (i.e. dormant season burning to stimulate herbaceous and woody vegetation growth, fruiting, etc) as well as a tool in maintaining the oak component (key wildlife habitat) in the area would be eliminated.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

PINK KNOB (also known as Mountaintown)

Reference # 03006

12,174 Acres

Armuchee-Cohutta and Toccoa Ranger Districts, Chattahoochee National Forest

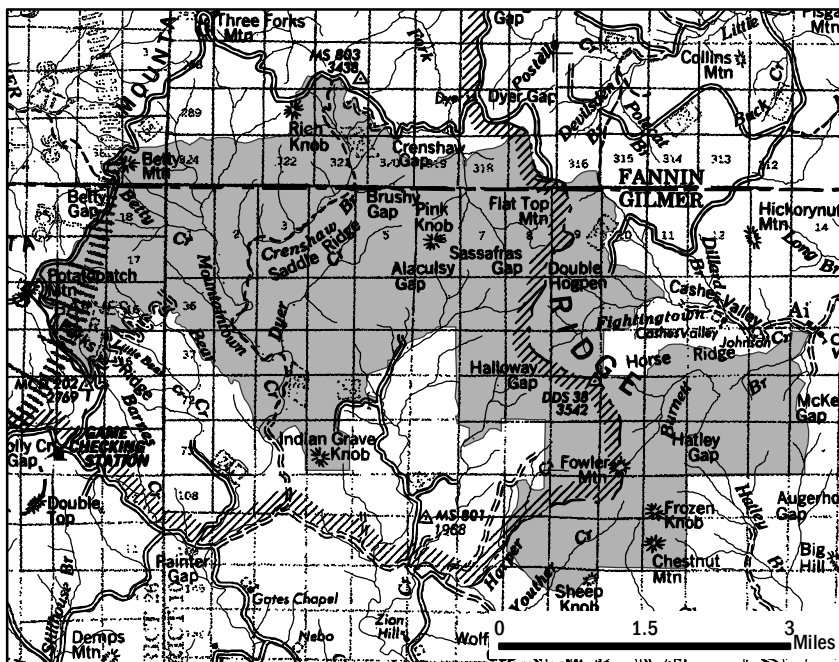
OVERVIEW

Mountaintown area which is part of the larger Pink Knob inventoried roadless area, is not analyzed separately. It is not an inventoried roadless area. Just an area condensed from the larger Pink Knob area.

Location, Vicinity, and Access

This area is located in Fannin and Gilmer Counties, Georgia, on the Armuchee-Cohutta and Toccoa Ranger Districts. It generally encompasses the headwaters of Mountaintown Creek, Fightingtown Creek and the south fork of the Jacks River, about nine air miles north of Ellijay, Georgia and ten air miles west of Blue Ridge, Georgia. The area lies south and east of FDR 64 (Three Forks Road), west of Cashes Valley and McKenny Gap, and generally north of the Bear Creek area and private property in the Hatley Branch, Harper Creek, and East Mountaintown Creek drainages. 12,174 acres in size; it is about 7.7 miles wide and averages three miles in length. It is found within portions of U.S.G.S. Georgia Quadrangles Cashes Valley and Dyer Gap. Access is via FDRs 56, 56A, 64, 64A, 68, 269, 304, 394 and 797.

Figure C - 25. Pink Knob inventoried roadless area.



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area is in the Metasedimentary Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section ecological unit classification. The general aspect is predominately southerly with generally east-facing slopes confined to the Fightingtown Creek drainage. Slopes vary from steep on sideslopes to nearly flat in the large drainages. Streams range from a narrow V-shaped arrangement to wide U-shaped drainages found primarily on the lower reaches of the larger streams. Drainage density is high throughout the area with perennial streams common and well distributed. The area contains the headwaters of three major streams that drain the area: Mountaintown Creek, Fightingtown Creek and the south fork of the Jacks River. Elevations range from 1,670 feet at Mountaintown Creek to 3,730 feet on Flat Top Mountain on the Tennessee Valley Divide.

Major topographic features include Potatopatch Mountain on the western boundary and Flat Top Mountain to the northeast together with the Mountaintown Creek, Heddy Creek and Fightingtown Creek drainages. Soils are generally classified in Cowee-Evard-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout the profile. These soils are on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains, and with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

The portion located in Gilmer County is generally classified in the Ashe-Edneyville-Tusquee soils group. This group is characterized by mainly steep, stony soils that have loamy subsoils occurring on mountain ridgetops, in coves and at the base of slopes. These soils are well drained and have mesic temperatures and udic moisture regimes.

Common tree species include hickory, northern red oak, white oak, chestnut oak, and scarlet oak on dry sites. White pine is more prevalent than yellow pine species. Mesophytic species, such as yellow poplar and eastern hemlock, are on moist sites. The average annual precipitation is about 61 inches, and the average annual temperature is 58 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

The area is used for dispersed recreation activities such as mountain biking, hiking, hunting, fishing and dispersed camping. There are no fully developed recreation facilities within the area. A trailhead facility/hunt camp with an information board and a trash bin exists at the lower end of FDT 135 (Mountain Creek Trail). There are three existing trails that pass through the area, FDT 135, FDT 3 (Pinhoti Trail) and FDT 2 (Benton MacKaye Trail).

The most significant recreation uses are mountain biking and fishing. The Mountaintown Creek Trail (5.6 miles in length) is a heavily used mountain bike trail. The trail has been recognized in national publications, such as *Outside Magazine*, as a premier mountain bike travelway. The trail is maintained with assistance from the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association. Mountaintown Creek has been a very popular trout fishery, which has received extensive fish habitat improvement work. The Forest

Service in partnership with Trout Unlimited has constructed and maintained nearly 100 fish structures in the stream, more than any other stream on the forest. The number of trout fishing anglers has declined in recent years due to access restrictions across private land holdings in the Hills Lake area. The private land owners have erected a gate at the Hills Lake road entrance to block public access to what was once a public use road. While foot access is still supposed to be permitted on this 2-mile road section, there have been altercations between individual land owners and the public. Due to this access issue, the Forest Service has stopped maintaining the trailhead facility on FDT 135 and it has installed a gate at the government property line north of Hills Lake to block motorized access to all but administrative use. Trout Unlimited has approached the Forest Service with a proposal to develop alternative access to lower Mountaintown Creek through the construction of a road, parking area and connector trail originating in the Bear Creek area, but no action has been taken on this proposal thusfar. Until these access issues are resolved, public use of National Forest land in the lower Mountaintown Creek drainage will be limited.

Illegal ATV use is a significant law enforcement problem on the Benton MacKaye Trail. Use arises primarily from the Cashes Valley area. Cross-country illegal ATV traffic is also evident in the Sassafras Gap area coming out of East Mountaintown.

Located within the Cohutta WMA, hunting pressure is considered low primarily due to a lack of motorized access. Other recreation uses include ramp hunting/digging, dispersed camping, and hiking. Ramp hunting is very popular in the Flat Top Mountain area. Dispersed camping use is considered low; hiking is low to moderate on FDT 2, FDT 3 and FDT 135. The Pinhoti Trail, FDT 3, is a newly developed long distance trail completed within this area in 2002. Other sections of this trail outside the roadless area are not yet completed.

There are numerous wildlife food plots and roads managed as linear wildlife openings maintained by the Forest Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources totalling 55 acres.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

With the exception of the recent timber sales, wildlife openings, fish structures, trails, and improved roads, which are visually evident, the majority of the area appears to be natural appearing. Timber harvest had occurred as late as 1992 in the vicinity of Hatley Gap and McKenny Gap. Two 1991 regeneration areas are located in the Heddy Creek drainage. Several other regeneration areas greater than 10 years old are found within the Pink Knob area. There is about 270 acres of potential old growth identified within the area.

There are several old roads in the area, but they are reverting back to a more natural appearance over time. The forest exhibits a mostly continuous canopy. There is a diversity of vegetative species as well as a diversity of age classes.

Table C- 29. Age Class Structure – Pink Knob Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	98
11 - 20	157
21 - 30	447
31 - 40	50
41 - 50	133
51 - 60	823
61 - 70	2002
71 - 80	3734
81 - 90	1946
91 - 100	992
101 - 110	756
111 - 120	773
121 - 130	92
131 - 140	46
141 - 150	20
151 - 160	52
161 - 170	16
No Data	16

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

National forest land is generally found on the unit's northern and western boundaries, and private land is found on its southern and eastern boundaries.

The Pink Knob area borders the Cohutta Wilderness on its northwestern corner except the two areas are separated by a major Forest Service road, FDR 64.

Other surrounding land contrasts dramatically with the area as State roads are paved, forest development roads are improved, roads are graveled, utility corridors are present, major recreation developments occur on national forest land, permanent dwellings and other improvements are present on private land, and future development is beginning.

Key Attractions

The Benton MacKaye Trail, Pinhoti Trail and Mountaintown Creek Trail are key attractions. Mountaintown Creek with its outstanding trout fishery, Heddy Creek, the diversity of native flora, and the remoteness of the area are also key attractions.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

Natural processes are operating within the area, and the area is minimally affected by outside forces. Pink Knob appears to be natural, but there are signs of recent disturbances. There are 5 miles of improved roads within the area and about 17

miles of maintained trails. One of these trails, Mountaintown Creek Trail, is a heavily used, nationally recognized, and publicized mountain bike route. Lower Mountaintown Creek, between Dyer Creek and the government property boundary, contains nearly 100 constructed fish structures. There are 30 wildlife food plots totaling about 55 acres. Old roads in the area are having their appearance muted by the forces of nature.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The Pink Knob area is 12,174 acres in size and could be a stand alone designated wilderness. It is located entirely on National Forest. Visitor use is currently moderate to high for mountain biking on the Mountaintown Creek Trail and low to moderate for hiking on maintained trails. Should this roadless area be designated as wilderness, mountain biking will no longer be permitted and use of the Mountaintown Creek Trail will decline to a low to moderate level. Use of the Pinhoti Trail is expected to increase after the entire trail is completed. Trail use is well distributed during the “warm weather” months, with Spring and Fall being peak periods, and low during the winter. Fishing pressure, generally confined to the lower Mountaintown Creek drainage, is considered low except during a Spring peak period coinciding with the opening of trout season.

Other dispersed recreational activities receive low use. Most of the recreational use of the area occurs on weekends. A lack of access, particularly access limitations due to the placement of private lands to the south, contributes to overall low visitor use of the area with the exception of mountain biking. However, this improves the opportunities for solitude. Sights and sounds of traffic is negligible due to the placement of National Forest lands to the north and west and the sparsely populated, rural nature of private lands to the south and east. However, illegal ATV activity arising from the Cashes Valley and East Mountaintown areas creates unacceptable noise on the east side of the roadless area in the vicinity of Sassafras Gap, Flat Top mountain, and the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Much of the terrain is steep and rugged, offering the visitor good opportunities for self-reliance and challenge in orienteering and backcountry primitive camping. It is possible that one may encounter life-threatening situations or become lost. The level of personal risk increases as one gets further away from the edge of the roadless area and away from roads and trails. The features of the area require the visitor to use a degree of outdoor skills to traverse the area.

Pink Knob roadless area does present a range of dispersed recreational activities to include mountain biking, hiking and backpacking, ramp hunting, dispersed camping, hunting and fishing. There is a suitable number of trail miles already existing to serve the area.

Special Features

The Pink Knob area is steep and rugged, it area borders the Cohutta Wilderness on its northwestern corner, however, the two areas are separated by a major Forest

Service collector road, FDR 64. Most of the northern boundary of the area is over 3000 feet in elevation stretching from Betty Mountain on the west to Double Hogpen on the east and southeast to Fowler Mountain.

There are several known occurrences of rare plants in the area (categorized as Sensitive or Locally Rare by the Forest Service; no federally-listed Threatened or Endangered plants are known). This area lies in the Metasedimentary Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 35,502 acres of existing wildernesses and 3 inventoried roadless areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The size and shape of the roadless area makes its preservation as potential wilderness possible. However, management of the boundary to include establishment and maintenance will be difficult as much of it follows natural terrain features and in several locations, no terrain features at all, just a mapped location delineated by a sidehill.

Although surrounding private lands contrast with the area, the effects are generally limited to the periphery along the more southeastern boundary of the roadless area.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Part of the boundary follows human-made features such as roads and property line boundaries. Much of the area, however, follows natural terrain features such as ridges and stream drainages. The boundary also is delineated on the sidehill of slopes and crosses drainages. As such, it will be very costly to establish and maintain and very difficult, if not impossible, to accurately delineate on the ground.

An offset from FDRs 56, 56A, 64, 64A, 68, 269, 304, 394 and 797 would enhance wilderness characteristics of the area by avoiding impacts that are a result of engineering work to the road (brush clearing, grading, culvert installation and cleaning, gravel placement, etc). An offset of 100 feet from the centerline of FDR's is recommended.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, Including Tourism

There are no developed recreation sites within the area. Hiking, hunting, fishing, ramp digging, and dispersed camping would remain viable under wilderness designation. The opportunity for mountain bicycling, which is a high-demand recreation activity in north Georgia, will be lost along with some tourism dollars based on that particular activity. Mountain biking is currently a popular pursuit on the Mountaintown Creek Trail.

The Pinhoti Trail, under construction, could have regional, if not national, significance as it could serve to effectively extend the Appalachian National Scenic Trail into Alabama via the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Mountaintown Creek is popular trout fishery, which has received extensive fish habitat improvement work. The Forest Service in partnership with Trout Unlimited has constructed and maintained nearly 100 fish structures in the stream, more than any other stream on the forest. 16 existing wildlife openings will need to be allowed to revert to natural conditions, which will mean an investment loss to the Forest Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high-elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevation habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

As the age class structure table shows, there is a balance between the early age class habitats and the late habitats that are available for all wildlife within the area. The loss of wildlife and fisheries habitat improvement investments, as well as associated access roads, is a concern.

Water Availability and Use

The Pink Knob roadless area encompasses the headwaters of three major streams: Mountaintown Creek, Fightingtown Creek and the south fork of the Jacks River. Other named significant streams are Heddy Creek and Dyer Creek.

Limestone Valley Soil Conservation District retains a special use permit, covering 27.98 acres north of Hills Lake, that provides floodwater rights for a floodwater retarding structure on property of the Homer Hill estate.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

Livestock has not been grazed within the area for 75 years. Livestock is grazed on nearby private property.

There are 4459 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from the suitable category.

As the Age Class Structure Table shows, there has been a great deal of forest and wildlife management taking place within this area for a number of years. Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area.

There have been no mineral extractions within the area.

Cultural Resources

Surveys have been taken where soil disturbing activities have occurred. There are sites expected in various locations based upon previous archaeological finds.

Land Uses

Limestone Valley Soil Conservation District retains a special use permit, covering 27.98 acres north of Hills Lake, that provides floodwater rights for a floodwater retarding structure on property of the Homer Hill estate. No other special-use permits have been authorized for use in this area.

Management Considerations (forest health, fire, non-federal lands)

The loss of a high-demand mountain bicycling trail is a concern. Encroachment by ATV's is a management problem and is a continuing challenge to law enforcement.

Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

A long private/forest boundary could increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. A management buffer could be put in place to aid fire management/equipment use. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase. Vegetative restoration by prescribed burning is necessary within the area.

The cost and unreliability of establishing and maintaining a boundary line without either definable human-made or natural features are concerns. The amount of common-boundary private land holdings, encroachment, and conflicting use are concerns. The road access issues with private landowners from the Hills Lake area is a management problem that needs resolution.

Private property line encroachments will require increased monitoring.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

KEN MOUNTAIN

Reference # 03025

527 Acres

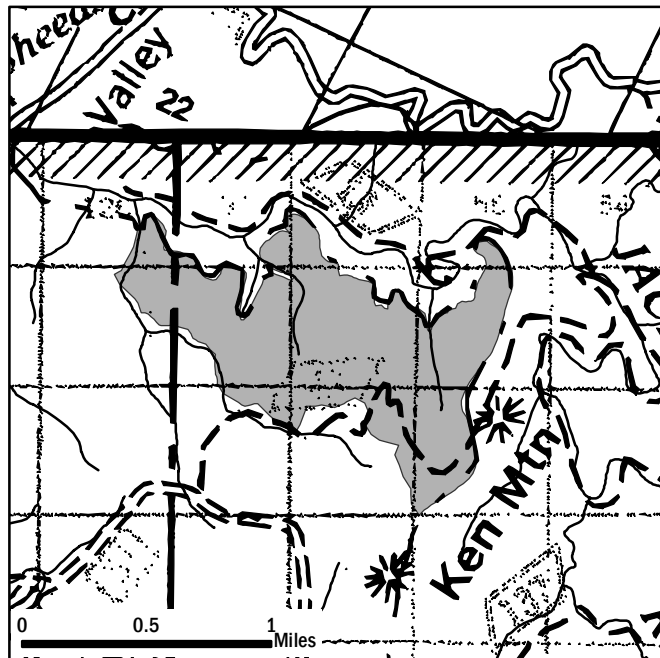
Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

OVERVIEW

Location, Vicinity and Access

This area is located in Fannin County, Georgia, on the Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District, about 13 air miles west of McCaysville, Georgia and 15 air miles northeast of Chatsworth, Georgia. At 527 acres in size, it averages about one mile in length and 1.5 miles in width, and is found within the Hemptop U.S.G.S. Georgia Quadrangle. About 60 percent of the roadless area on its northern and eastern borders adjoins the Cohutta wilderness, between Ken Mountain, the Jacks River and the Alaculsy Valley. Access is provided by FDR 51C, Ken Mountain road, a gated road managed for administrative use only and FDT 43, the Horseshoe Bend Trail which provides access to the Cohutta wilderness.

Figure C - 26. Ken Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Humid Temperate Domain, Hot Continental Division, Central Appalachian Broadleaf-Coniferous Forest-Meadow Province, the Blue Ridge Mountains Section, the Metasedimentary Mountains Subsection, and the Cohutta Foothills Land Type Association. Geologic materials are described as phyllite, conglomerate, and metegraywacke (empire sandstone) in Georgia.

Topography is northern to westward trending of less than 2000 foot elevation ridges descending from the higher elevations of the Cohutta Mountains to the east. Ridges are broader and slopes are gentler in this area of the Cohutta Ranger District than further west or south of the Conasauga River gorge, slopes range from 15 to 30 percent and stream gradients are low, under 10 percent. There is no distinctive terrain, but Ken Mountain is a named terrain feature and serves to identify the general area.

Soils are generally classified in Cowee-Evard-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout; on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains, and with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Vegetation is typically Virginia pine or Virginia pine - oak on ridges and south or western slopes, and oak on sheltered slopes. Cove hardwood types do not occur as pure stands but individuals of yellow poplar, beech, northern red oak, and other mesic hardwoods occur as scattered individuals along with white pine and hemlock in narrow, streamside stands.

Current Use

The area is used for dispersed recreation activities such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and dispersed camping and for multiple-use management. Use is considered low to moderate. Open to hiking and equestrian use, the 3.5-mile Horseshoe Bend trail passes through the area providing access to the Cohutta wilderness and Jacks River. The roadless area is located within the Cohutta WMA. FDR 51C, a gated road, 1.8 miles in length provides administrative access into the area and is a portion of the southern boundary of the roadless area. The road is managed as a linear wildlife opening and receives routine mowing. There are four wildlife openings in the area which are also maintained by mowing.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

There is a diversity of vegetative species as well as a diversity of age classes. Four stands in the area have been harvested in the last 20 years.

Table C- 30. Age Class Structure – Ken Mountain Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	83
11 - 20	47
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	0
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	0
61 - 70	191
71 - 80	155
81 - 90	32
91 - 100	20
101 - 110	0
111 - 120	0
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

With the exception of 130 acres of regeneration harvests, and the existing system road and trail which are visually evident, the majority of the area is semi-natural appearing. There are several old roads in the area, but they are reverting back to a more natural appearance over time. The forest exhibits a mostly continuous canopy.

No private land borders the roadless area; it is encircled by National Forest. The northern and eastern boundary of the roadless area adjoins the Cohutta wilderness.

Key Attractions

The Cohutta wilderness, the Horseshoe Bend Trail, the Jacks River, and Jacks River Campground are key attractions in this area.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

Natural processes are operating and the area is minimally affected by outside forces but the area reflects the management of the last half-century showing signs of disturbance. The roadless area has 6 age classes as well as several small openings and the linear wildlife opening (a total of 10 acres). The area lies just south of the Jacks River adjacent to Cohutta Wilderness and is less than 2000 feet in elevation.

There are about 0.9 miles of system road (FDR 51C) on the southern border of the area and about 0.2 miles within the roadless area. If this roadless area becomes an

addition to Cohutta wilderness, the road within the boundary will be permanently closed and removed from the transportation system. Old roads in the area are having their appearance muted by natural forces. About 0.8 miles of FDT 43 pass through the roadless area, but foot and horse travel only is permitted.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

Due to its small size, the Ken Mountain addition area could not be a stand alone designated wilderness. It is located entirely on National Forest. The amount of visitor use is generally low, although trail use reaches a moderate level by hunters during the deer rifle season. Hunting pressure is also moderate during this time period and low at other times. Due to the remote nature of this area, there is little to no human noise. Terrain is less rugged than what is typically found in the Cohuttas. However, due to its proximity to the Cohutta wilderness, the roadless area will effectively add more acreage to an existing wilderness thus providing more opportunity for solitude, challenge, and primitive recreation. It will specifically add acres to the Jack's River "cherry stem" of the Cohutta wilderness which will give that area more seclusion.

Ken Mountain roadless area does offer a range of dispersed recreational activities such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and dispersed camping.

Special Features

The Cohutta Wilderness adjoins the roadless area. The Jacks River lies just to the north of the area. This area lies in the Metasedimentary Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 35,502 acres of existing wildernesses and 3 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The size, shape and location of the roadless area make its preservation as potential wilderness practical although it would not add significantly to the acreage of Cohutta wilderness. The additional acres will afford the Jack's River "cherry stem" of the Cohutta wilderness some width and make the wilderness boundary more manageable. The boundary follows either a system road (FDR 51C), a marked wilderness boundary, or natural terrain features.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The northern and eastern boundary borders an existing marked wilderness boundary. Part of the southern boundary follows FDR 51C. The remainder of the boundary follows natural terrain features. A boundary will need to be established where it follows the natural terrain. An offset from FDR 51C would enhance wilderness characteristics of the area by avoiding impacts that are the result of engineering work to the road. An offset of 100 feet from the centerline of the FDR is recommended.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, Including Tourism

There are no developed recreation sites within the area. Hiking, horseback riding, hunting and dispersed camping would remain viable under wilderness designation.

Wildlife

Habitat for typical Blue Ridge Mountains wildlife such as black bear, wild turkey, and ruffed grouse is present. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. Both forest-interior dwelling songbirds and species that occupy open land and young forest habitats are present. There are four permanent wildlife openings and a linear wildlife opening (totaling 10 acres) in the area. Four stands are in various stages of regeneration (11 to 21 years old) and provide dense cover and abundant browse and soft mast. As the age class structure table shows, there is not a balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class).

With wilderness designation, the diversity of age classes and habitats will eventually decrease as the forest ages and no timber harvest or prescribed burning is permitted. Species that require edge and early-successional forested habitats will go away. The loss of a wildlife habitat improvement investment in developing the wildlife openings and FDR 51C (linear wildlife opening) is a concern.

The roadless area is located within the Cohutta Wildlife Management Area.

Water Availability and Use

The roadless area lies directly south (and above) of the Jack's River and encompasses several unnamed streams that drain directly into the river.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

There has not been livestock grazing in the area for over 75 years.

There has been multiple use management in the area in the past 20 years.

No mineral extractions have occurred.

Cultural Resources

Approximately one-quarter of the entire area has been surveyed. There are no known sites, but sites could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No special use permits have been authorized in this area.

Management Considerations (forest health, fire, non-federal lands)

The area would be an addition to Cohutta wilderness and will add some solitude to that area.

The existing forest is healthy, except for mortality in the old Virginia pine stands either resulting from decadence, southern pine beetle or blow-down. Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address current and future pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect and disease outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Present fire control techniques will be altered if this designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase and fire intensities could increase. Prescribed burning to restore shortleaf pine and oaks to the area will not be permitted.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Reference # 03010

4,306 Acres

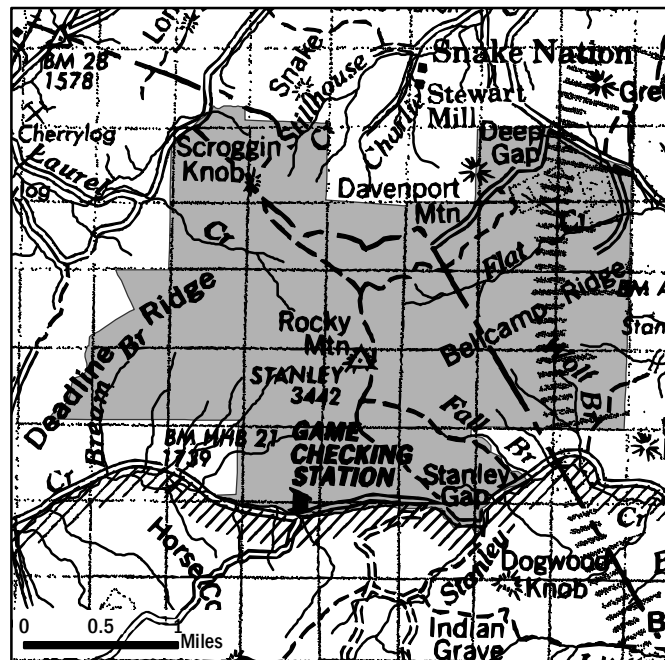
Toccoa Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

OVERVIEW

Location and Vicinity

The area is located in Fannin and Gilmer Counties, Georgia, on the Toccoa Ranger District. It is situated north of Gilmer County Road 153 and is generally surrounded by private property on the other three sides. Access is via Gilmer County Roads 153 and 157, Fannin County Roads 09 and S810, and FDR 712

Figure C - 27. Rocky Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Rich Mountain Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc16. The landform is a rugged with the highest elevation at approximately 3,442 feet. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

The portion located in Gilmer County is generally classified in the Ashe-Edneyville-Tusquitee soils group. This group is characterized by mainly steep, stony soils that have loamy subsoils occurring on mountain ridgetops, in coves and at the base of slopes. These soils are well drained and have mesic temperatures and udic moisture regimes. In Fannin County the soils are classified in the Cowee-Evard-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout; on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains, and with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, chestnut, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at low elevations, pitch pine on dryer and disturbed sites and northern red oak at moderate elevations.

The average annual precipitation is about 78 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Hunting; wildlife management. Part of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area. There is 3.15 miles of hiking/bicycle trail within the area. This area is under multiple-use management, and some timber harvesting has occurred in the last 20 years.

Off Highway Vehicle use occurs around the area on some poorly maintained roads.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Natural in appearance, some evidence of past timber harvesting activities such as old roads and skid trails are still visually evident. The overstory is primarily mature pole timber and sawtimber. There is approximately 140 acres of potential old growth identified within the area of various forest types.

The area is typical of southern Appalachian ridges and mountaintops; mixed oaks, hickories and pine on the majority of the acreage. Some acreage over 3000 feet. Stream corridors are generally narrow and headwater areas for each representative creek. Creeks are short, but typical for the Blue Ridge region.

Key Attractions

This area lies across the Tennessee Valley Divide, and includes the Aka trails. Rocky Mountain is the highest peak on that part of the divide at 3442 feet. Hunting is popular within the WMA.

Table C- 31. Age Class Structure - Rocky Mountain Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	249
21 - 30	8
31 - 40	1
41 - 50	421
51 - 60	814
61 - 70	598
71 - 80	360
81 - 90	275
91 - 100	692
101 - 110	185
111 - 120	210
121 - 130	371
131 - 140	109
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity of the Area

There are 2.53 miles of open road within the area. Some evidence of human activity, primarily roads and harvest areas. The natural ecosystem within the area has developed and been maintained during the last century. Tree species in the forest stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past management.

Natural processes appear to be operating freely on the steeper slopes and ridgelines.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

Some remoteness and solitude can be found. Near Rich Mountain wilderness and adjacent to Indian Grave Gap roadless area. The Rocky Mountain area is 4306 acres in size which is not large enough to be considered for a stand alone designated wilderness. This area would have to be combined with the Indian Grave Gap inventoried roadless area to create a stand alone designated wilderness. It is located entirely on National Forest. Hunting occurs during the appropriate seasons.

Special Features

The area lies across the Tennessee Valley Divide. Rocky Mountain is the highest peak on that part of the divide at 3442 feet. Most of the area is 2500 feet or less in elevation. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wilderness and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape and Manageability

The size is 4,306 acres, by itself the area is not normally eligible to become a stand alone wilderness area. The area lies north of Indian Grave Gap inventoried roadless area. The area is sort of rectangular in shape and abuts private property in some locations.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

Boundaries would simply involve the national forest boundary (or some set-back) and existing roads. There are many miles of private land/forest boundary.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Hunting within the Rich Mountain WMA is the largest draw. Some OHV use on an old road along the northern boundary. The Aska Trail system lies on Bell Camp Ridge on the eastern portion of the area. Limited increased recreational opportunities will be provided with this addition to the wilderness system. Hunting and camping pressure in the area should see no change.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, and black bear inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a fair balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class) but none in the last 15 years.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high-elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevation habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Water Availability and Use

Portions of Flat Creek, Stillhouse Creek and Wolf Branch are within the area. There

are no private water systems or permits that originates within this area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, timber and minerals

No livestock grazing has occurred here in the last 75 years.

There are 1724 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The wilderness designation would remove this acreage from the suitable category. Evidence of silvicultural and wildlife management activities are present within the area as shown by the age class structure table with 249 acres in the 11-20 year age class. Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area.

Large, active (2003) rock quarry on private land lies just west of the area.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Limited surveys; known sites; Additional sites could be expected based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

There are no special uses authorized within this area. No future permits are expected to be needed.

Management Considerations

A long private/forest boundary could increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. A management buffer could be put in place to aid fire management/equipment use. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Private property line encroachments will require increased monitoring. Boundaries should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns. OHV users will continue to be a conflict in or around the area which competes for remoteness and solitude.

Designation as wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age and the number of tree stems increase.

Rocky Mountain is the last section of Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area to have motorized access for management opportunity.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need – Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

LANCE CREEK

Reference # 03017

9,064 Acres

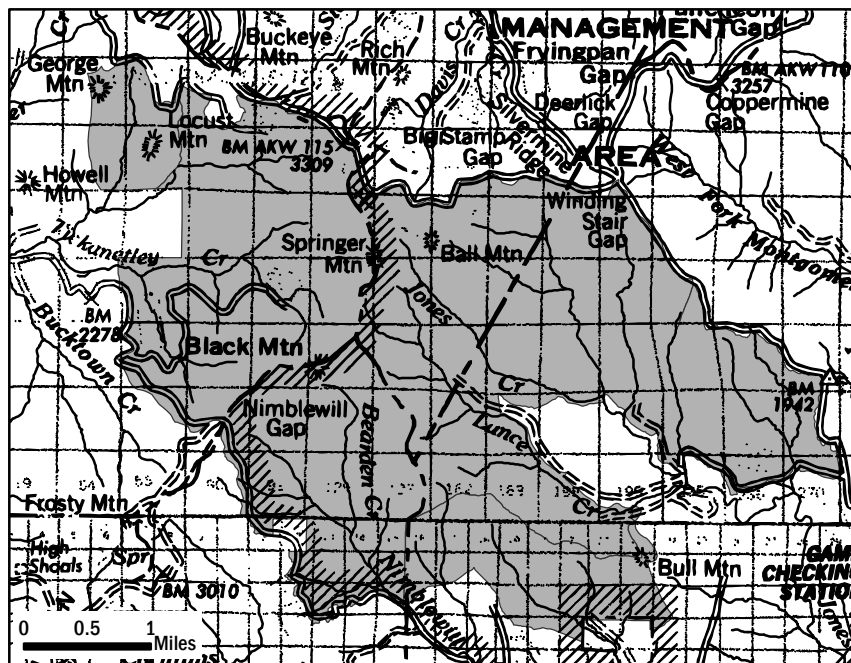
Toccoa Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

OVERVIEW

Location and Vicinity

Most of this area is within the existing Ed Jenkins National Recreation Area. This area is located in Lumpkin, Fannin, Gilmer, and Dawson Counties, Georgia, on the Toccoa Ranger District. It lies south of FDR 42 (Blue Ridge Road) and west of FDR 77 (Winding Stair Gap Road). George Mountain, private property, and FDR 28 (Nimblewill Road) form the western boundary. The southern boundary follows ridgelines and FDRs 877 and 77A. Access is via the surrounding all-weather roads.

Figure C - 28. Lance Creek Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is in the Suches Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc18. The landform is a rugged mountain crest with the highest elevation at 3,782 feet on Springer Mountain. There are steep to very steep upper slopes, numerous side ridges, and perennial streams with narrow V-shaped valley bottoms.

The portion located in Gilmer County is generally classified in the Ashe-Edneyville-Tusquitee soils group. This group is characterized by mainly steep, stony soils that have loamy subsoils occurring on mountain ridgetops, in coves and at the base of slopes. These soils are well drained and have mesic temperatures and udic moisture regimes. In Fannin County the soils are classified in the Cowee-Evard-Saunook soil group, characterized by moderately deep and very deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils that are loamy throughout; on ridges of intermountain basins and on side slopes of the lower mountains, and with mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes. Soils in Lumpkin County are classified in the Edneyville-Porters-Ashe soil group, characterized by moderately deep, well drained to excessively drained, sloping-to-steep soils on mountainsides. These soils have mesic temperature and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white, scarlet, southern red, and chestnut oak, with yellow poplar at lower elevations; shortleaf and Virginia pine on dryer, disturbed sites, and northern red oak at moderate elevation north facing slopes. The average annual precipitation is about 60 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Lance Creek lies mostly within the existing Ed Jenkins National Recreation Area. There are 3.24 miles of roads within the area. The southern terminus of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is within this area. The trailhead is at Springer Mountain. Overall there is 2.66 miles of hiking trails and a large horse trail system that stretches for 23 miles.

Horseback riding, hunting, fishing, hiking, and dispersed camping is popular. Trout fishing is very popular on Nimblewill and Tickanetley Creeks. The area is within the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Area which contains 5 managed wildlife openings; managed trout stockings and managed hunting seasons.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Mostly natural in appearance, past management is evident. The vegetation is primarily mature hardwoods and pines with numerous streams.

Table C- 32. Age Class Structure – Lance Creek Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres	
	Lance Creek	Ed Jenkins NRA/Lance Creek
0 - 10	45	26
11 - 20	61	103
21 - 30	202	461
31 - 40	0	50
41 - 50	214	27
51 - 60	3	125
61 - 70	59	226
71 - 80	42	959
81 - 90	397	1874
91 - 100	281	768
101 - 110	477	226
111 - 120	34	621
121 - 130	0	832
131 - 140	57	522
141 - 150	157	208
151 - 160	0	0
161 - 170	0	0
No Data	0	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

Evidence of current and past activities such as logging, old roadbeds, and a few old home sites. There is approximately 1312 acres of potential old growth identified within the inventoried area. As the age class structure table relates, past forest and wildlife management has occurred and is very apparent to the user in the lower elevations (less than 2500 feet).

The entire area is rugged and steep in places with elevations well over 3000 feet.

Key Attractions

Springer Mountain, the official beginning of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Amicalola Falls State Park is 10 miles to the west and is connected to Springer Mountain by the “Approach Trail.”

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity of the Area; Natural Appearance

The area reflects the management of the last half century. The exclusion of fire in many of the stands that make up this area has allowed an overabundance of undergrowth to develop. Tree species in the timber stands throughout the area are those that would be expected based on geology, soils, geography, and past

management. Elevations range from 1,800 ft to 3,782 ft. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

Some semi-primitive experiences and solitude can be achieved. Long distance hiking and associated overnight camping is unique to the area. Heavy use occurs along the A.T. corridor year-round. Hunting occurs during the appropriate seasons. There are opportunities for challenges away from the A.T. corridor in the steeper slopes and ridgelines. Primitive recreation is a challenge to those that choose to trek off the established trails.

Special Features

The terrain is rugged. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wilderness and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The shape of the area is irregular with significant indentations of the boundary over a number of mountain ridges and watersheds in a northwest to southeast aspect. About 2100 acres is outside the NRA, the balance within the NRA.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The proposed boundary follows roads, ridges, and drains. Marking and line location will require extensive work to establish on the ground.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the associated approach trail from Amicalola State Park are very popular. There is a trail shelter at Springer Mountain. The hike to Springer and back to the State Park is a very popular weekend backpack trip. This is a very popular recreation zone with the Appalachian Trail corridor, Blue Ridge WMA, and driving for pleasure.

Reduction in the access of the area (road closures) could curtail certain hunting, horseback riding and fishing related uses. Hiking use will not be effected.

Wildlife

The northern-northwestern side is over 3000 ft in elevation and special management considerations for early-successional, high-elevation wildlife habitats should be made

available for management opportunities. Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a pretty good balance between early-successional habitats and late-successional habitats (age class). It also is evidence that active forest/wildlife management takes place within the area.

Wildlife habitat restoration, especially in the over 3000 foot elevations, is needed. A diversity of habitats are necessary for various birds and other wildlife including early-successional habitats. Loss of the potential to manage for high-elevation habitats, especially in early-successional stages, will be detrimental to wildlife needs in this area. (For further discussion regarding high-elevation habitats and species see Support Documents at the end of this appendix.)

Wildlife management within the Blue Ridge WMA will also be affected by the loss of maintained openings. Designation will restrict management opportunities of what Georgia DNR can do to provide for wildlife and fisheries.

Water Availability and Use

Numerous streams and some springs such as Tickanetley, Nimblewill, Jones, Lance, Bearden and other unnamed drains are present. Water quality from this area is good, and no changes are expected if the area is designated or remains.

Livestock, Timber, and Minerals

No livestock has been grazed here for over 75 years.

There are 1747 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. All acres will become unsuitable after wilderness designation.

The area is primarily mature hardwood forest types. Some past harvesting and vegetative manipulations have occurred within the last 40 years. Vegetative restorations for forest type or wildlife habitats, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting are necessary. The forest will continue to age.

Minerals have not been extracted, No mineral activity, other than rock hounding, is occurring at this time.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Limited areas have been surveyed, and there are some known sites. Additional sites could be expected, based upon similar locations within the southern Blue Ridge.

Land Uses

No special use permits exist within this area. No future permits are expected to be needed.

Management Considerations for fire, forest health, recreation

Loss of the suitable acreage in this area will require a reduction in potential silvicultural activities for restoration for Forest Health that are identified for the area (See EIS chapter 3, for effects discussion). Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. More frequent insect outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age.

A long private/forest boundary in the Tickanetley Creek area may increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. A management buffer could be put in place to aid fire management/equipment use situations. Present fire control techniques will be altered if the area is designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase. Prescribed fire has been utilized within the area in the past and could continue with a wilderness fire plan.

Private encroachment along the boundary will require increased monitoring.

The Springer Mountain AT shelter has potential to be incompatible with wilderness designation when maintenance is due or required.

Boundaries should be offset from roads and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need –Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

INDIAN GRAVE GAP

Reference # 03021

1,024 Acres

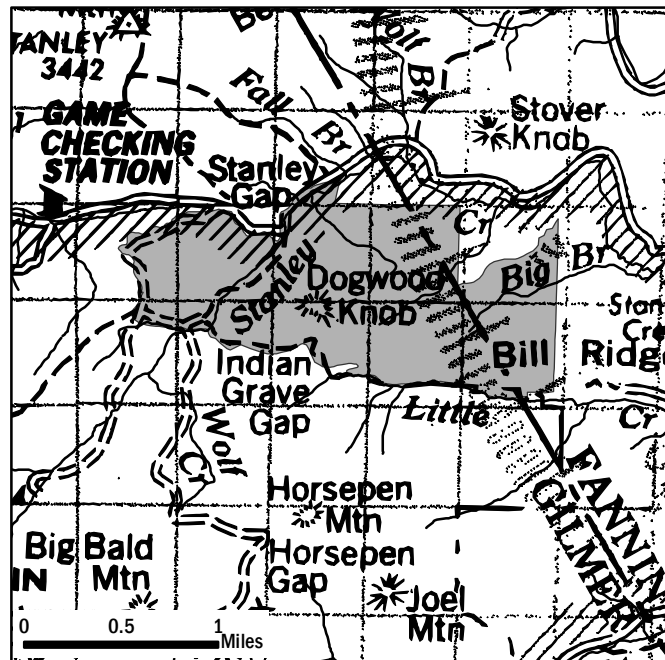
Toccoa Ranger District, Chattahoochee NF

OVERVIEW

Location and Vicinity

This area is located in Gilmer and Fannin Counties, Georgia, on the Toccoa Ranger District. It adjoins the northeast corner of Rich Mountain Wilderness. It is bounded by Gilmer County Road 153 and private property on the north, private property on the east, Rich Mountain Wilderness on the south, and FDR 338 on the west. Access is via Gilmer County Road 153 and FDR 338.

Figure C - 29. Indian Grave Gap Inventoried Roadless Area



Geography, Topography, and Vegetation

This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. It is the Rich Mountain Landtype Association, R8#-M221Dc16. The landform is rolling with elevation ranges between 2,200 to 2,800 feet.

Soils are generally classified in the Ashe-Edneyville-Tusquitee soils group. This group is characterized by mainly steep, stony soils that have loamy subsoils occurring on mountain ridgetops, in coves and at the base of slopes. These soils are well drained and have mesic temperatures and udic moisture regimes.

Common species are white oak, chestnut oak, southern red oak, and scarlet oak with yellow poplar at lower elevations, and shortleaf and Virginia pine on dryer and disturbed sites. The average annual precipitation is about 65 inches, and the average annual temperature range is between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Use

Hunting within Georgia DNR Rich Mountain WMA which has two maintained wildlife openings. Stanley Creek supports trout fishing. Dispersed camping and cross country hiking also occurs.

There is a little more than one-half mile hiking trail. OHV use is popular on the unmaintained roads in and around the area. Unauthorized OHV use is also popular.

Appearance of the Area and Characteristics of Surrounding Contiguous Areas

Natural in appearance, the area shows some evidence of past timber harvesting activities such as old roads, and stumps. This area is under multiple-use management. The age class structure table shows 43 acres regenerated in the last 40 years.

The area is primarily mature hardwood. The area is typical for the southern Blue Ridge. mixed oaks, hickories and pine on the majority of the acreage. Stream corridors are forested and rocky and are typical for the Blue Ridge. The entire area is less than 3000 feet in elevation.

Key Attractions

Rich Mountain wilderness which lies to the south of road 338. The Tennessee Valley Divide is within the western edge of the area at Stanley Gap. Little Creek forms the boundary with Rich Mountain wilderness.

Table C- 33. Age Class Structure – Indian Grave Gap Roadless Area

Age Class 2000 Base Year	Roadless Area Acres
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	22
21 - 30	0
31 - 40	21
41 - 50	0
51 - 60	83
61 - 70	23
71 - 80	261
81 - 90	321
91 - 100	293
101 - 110	0
111 - 120	0
121 - 130	0
131 - 140	0
141 - 150	0
151 - 160	0
161 - 170	0
No Data	0

Source: GIS stands and inventoried roadless data layers, 2003.

WILDERNESS CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance

There is some evidence of human caused activities. No roads exist within the area, just the boundary road 338. The area is generally natural in appearance with wildlife openings and past timber harvesting areas being the main contrasting features. Natural processes appear to be operating freely. The landform is rolling with elevation ranges between 2,000 to 2,800 feet. This is primarily a climax forest type, where generally no major disturbance has taken place since the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Opportunity for Solitude, Challenge, and Primitive Recreation

The area offers some chances for a semi-primitive experience; solitude would increase if area was an addition to Rich Mountain wilderness. The area is not large enough to be a stand-alone designated wilderness. Hunting occurs during the appropriate seasons. Some OHV use could violate any chance for solitude some weekends.

Special Features

This area is adjacent to Rich Mountain wilderness and south of Rocky Mountain inventoried roadless area separated by the Stanley Creek road. The Tennessee Valley divide is in the western section of area. Otherwise, it is an unremarkable area. This area lies in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains Subsection of the Blue Ridge

Mountains Section of the ecological classification system. There are 82,623 acres of existing wilderness and 20 inventoried roadless areas on the Chattahoochee National Forest in this subsection.

Size, Shape, and Manageability

The area is sort of rectangular running east to west. The shape of the area is irregular with significant indentations of the boundary over a number of mountain ridges and watersheds.

Boundary Conditions, Needs, and Management Requirements

The north-northeast boundary follows a private property line boundary. The remainder of the area follows road 338, and natural terrain features such as ridges and stream drainages. The boundary should be offset from road 338 and exterior boundary lines due to maintenance, fire, and private interface concerns.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation, including Tourism

Hunting within Georgia DNR Rich Mountain WMA, which occurs during the appropriate seasons. Stanley Creek supports trout fishing. Dispersed camping and cross country hiking also occurs.

There is a little more than a ½ mile of hiking trail. OHV use is popular on the unmaintained roads in and around the area.

Wildlife

Typical Blue Ridge wildlife populations such as migratory songbirds, deer, turkey, bear, and trout inhabit this area. Herpetofauna include box turtle, common garter snake and timber rattlesnake. As the age class structure table shows, there is a lack of balance between early-successional wildlife habitats and late-successional wildlife habitats (age class). It also is evidence that some forest/wildlife management has taken place within the area.

Wildlife habitat management includes two maintained wildlife openings within the Rich Mountain WMA. Designation would restrict management of this area and limit what DNR can do to provide for wildlife and fisheries.

Water Availability and Use

No special use water systems exist and no known un-permitted systems exist. Stanley and Little Creeks are the largest streams within the area. Water quality should remain the same if designation occurs or not.

Livestock, timber and minerals

No livestock has been grazed here for over 75 years.

There are 1012 acres of this area classified as suitable for timber production in the existing plan. The wilderness designation will remove this acreage from that category.

The area is primarily mature hardwood forest types. Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area for wildlife habitats and for forest types.

No minerals activity has occurred in this area in the past, and none is expected in the future.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

Limited surveys have been done, and there are known sites. If future surveys are conducted, more sites are expected to be discovered.

Land Uses

No special use permits exist within this area. No future permits are expected to be needed.

Management Considerations for Fire and Forest Health and Recreation

Designation of wilderness will restrict management alternatives to address pest outbreaks in this area. There have been a number of Southern Pine Beetle spots adjacent to this area. More frequent outbreaks could occur as the forest stands continue to age.

Vegetative restoration, either by prescribed burning or limited selection cutting, is necessary within the area.

A long private/Forest boundary on the eastern side, will increase risk of wildfire, with the attendant equipment restrictions in wilderness. Management buffer could be put in place to help with fire management/equipment use situations. Present fire control techniques will be altered if designated as wilderness. Fire suppression will be primarily by hand tools. Burned acreages will tend to increase, and fire severity could increase.

Private land encroachment on the forest boundary will require increased monitoring.

Hunting will remain as the primary recreational use within the area.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

See chapter 3 of the EIS.

See Wilderness Need – Roadless Area Evaluations at the end of this Appendix.

WILDERNESS NEED

The concept of wilderness is multifaceted as envisioned by the authors and framers of the 1964 Wilderness Act. As such there are a number of factors to consider in assessing the need for additional wilderness.

Outdoor recreation is one of the benefactors of wilderness and is one of the drivers of wilderness demand and wilderness management. According to trend data collected from 1965 to 1994, the trend in recreation visits to National Forest Wilderness has paralleled designations and increased over time (Cordell, 1999). In the Southeast and in the Chattahoochee National Forest Market Area, participation rates and trends in wilderness or primitive areas indicate a continued increase in visitation to wilderness or primitive areas - climbing an estimated 171% to approximately 7,430,000 visits by people within the forest market area by the year 2050. (See EIS Chapter 3, Developed and Dispersed Recreation discussion and associated tables based upon the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, NSRE.) Folks who participated in the survey said that 34% of them visited a wilderness or primitive area.

In addition to recreation in wilderness, there is a non-user component that values wilderness and is important to understand when analyzing roadless areas, allocations and the need for additional wilderness. Studies have shown that the non-visiting general public values the knowledge that natural environments exist and are protected. This motivation can be considered an existence benefit. The current generation also obtains the off-site benefit of knowing that protection today will provide Wilderness to future generations. Existence and bequest motivations are sometimes referred to as non-use or passive use benefits. Several studies have shown the importance and value people place on these passive use benefits of wilderness (Cordell, 1999). These values are reflected in the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE, 2001) finding that 69.8% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed to the question, "How do you feel about designating more federal lands in your state as wilderness?" Over 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I enjoy knowing that future generations will be able to visit and experience wilderness areas." Wilderness, as designated by Congress and managed by the USDA Forest Service was not explained, so the interpretation of "wilderness" is open to further discussion.

The Chattahoochee NF has the largest number of wilderness acres of any national forest in Region 8. It contains 117,000 acres or 33% of all wilderness on national forests within the Southern Appalachians. At the national/regional scale, wilderness is valued for preserving representative natural ecosystems, diversity of landscapes and for research. National forest land accounts for 81% of existing wilderness within the Southern Appalachians. There are 29 designated wildernesses and 90 inventoried roadless areas which lie within Province (M221) - Central Appalachian Broadleaf Forest - Coniferous Forest - Meadow. All of the Chattahoochee's

designated wildernesses and inventoried roadless areas lie completely within the afore mentioned province, too. Section M221D contains 0.6% of the United States land area or 21,000 square miles, in which there are 670 square miles of designated wilderness which is 3% of the region represented on federal or state land. In that Province, section (M221D) Blue Ridge Mountains, is represented in north Georgia.

On the Chattahoochee NF, 1000 square miles (640,000 acres) of the province exists and 100% of all wilderness examples fall within that province which is 183 square miles or 18.3% of the total area of north Georgia. Accordingly, there is another 83 square miles of other Congressionally-designated (primitive) areas on the Chattahoochee NF. Combined with the wilderness areas, this is 26.6% of the province that is currently protected in Georgia (Chattahoochee NF). Combining the Chattahoochee NF inventoried roadless areas as primitive areas, the square mile area increases by 100, to 366 or 36.6 % of the entire province being protected in Georgia (Chattahoochee NF). The province in Georgia and its representative ecosystems are adequately protected.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

- Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Final Environmental Impact Statement 2004. Chapter 3 (sections on Subregion units of the C-O NF; Soils, Watersheds; Riparian Areas/Floodplains/Wetlands; Minerals; Forest Health; Biological Elements, Major Forest Communities, Rare Communities, Successional Habitats, Terrestrial Habitat, Threatened and Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, Species Viability; Developed and Dispersed Recreation; Wilderness and Roadless Areas; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Heritage; Range)
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