



**October and November 2014  
Public Sessions Summary**

In October and November 2014, the U.S. Forest Service, National Forests in North Carolina held six public meetings to present the public with some preliminary information for the proposed Forest Plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests (NFs). Each meeting ran from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the vicinity of the six ranger districts at the following locations:

Ranger District	DATE	Meeting location	Approximate number of public attendees
Pisgah	Oct. 21	Mills River	81
Nantahala	Oct. 28	Franklin	54
Tusquitee	Oct. 30	Murphy	44
Appalachian	Nov. 3	Mars Hill	70
Cheoah	Nov. 6	Robbinsville	27
Grandfather	Nov. 13	Marion	80

All information shared at the public meetings was draft and intended to provide context for the revised forest plan to which the public could respond. Each meeting was initiated with a presentation that provided an update on the plan revision timeline, context for how issues were developed, draft management area descriptions, and forest-wide desired conditions. An update on the wilderness inventory and evaluation process was provided as well as a brief tutorial on how to use the online Collaborative Mapping Tool that was made available on November 14<sup>th</sup> for the evaluation of potential additions to wilderness.

Following the presentation, there was a question and answer period with Forest Service staff. The remainder of the public meeting was an open format to allow individuals an opportunity to review information that was presented on posters and maps.

Information presented on posters at each of the meetings included the following:

- Draft management area framework and approximate acres
- Draft forest-wide desired condition statements
- Draft list of priority watersheds for restoration
- Recreation: Place-based settings
- Draft management area maps
- Proposed additions to Special Interest Areas



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### **Desired Conditions**

Draft forest-wide desired conditions were provided by resource area. Desired conditions (DCs) are the social, economic, and ecological attributes toward which management of the land and resources are to be directed. They are aspirations and are not commitments or final decisions approving projects and activities, and may be achievable only over a long time period. While some desired conditions may vary by management area, the DCs shared at the October and November public meetings were those that would be applied forest-wide.

### **Management Area Framework and Maps**



Draft MA maps were displayed at the public meetings to give a visual representation of what the proposed management areas may look like on the landscape and to solicit comments on specific areas. At the Pisgah district meeting, there was some concern from the public that we were not including the inventory of potential additions to wilderness on the draft MA maps. At subsequent meetings, the wilderness inventory maps were displayed alongside the draft MA maps and it was emphasized that any recommendations for wilderness had not yet been included.

### **Next Steps**

The Forest Service Plan Revision team will be using the information gathered from public comments and meetings over the last year to further develop plan components for the proposed forest plan, including objectives, standards and guidelines. Management area descriptions and boundaries will also be updated and refined based on public input and additional internal review.

An updated inventory of potential additions to wilderness was posted on the forest website on November 14<sup>th</sup> with the request for public comments to help inform the evaluation process. The Talking Points Online Collaboration Mapping Tool is being used to solicit place-based comments for the evaluation, and pdf. maps area also available online and upon request.

The public was originally asked to provide comments on the information shared at the public meetings by mid-December. The Forest has extended the timeframe to submit comments on management areas, plan components and wilderness evaluation, until January 5, 2015.