

Hi Neighbor



USDA Forest Service Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

Message From the Forest Supervisor

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new newsletter for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. I believe that this newsletter will serve as a much needed tool to keep you, our neighbors, informed about the upcoming activities, policies, and events that are important to you.

I don't want this newsletter to be something that just adds to the stack of unwanted mail, so I ask you to please help us make this newsletter valuable to you. Tell

us what you like about this issue and what information you would find useful in future issues. In addition, if you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact us at:

Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, Supervisor's Office
1755 Cleveland Hwy,
Gainesville, GA 30501 or call us at (770) 297-3000.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Atkinson
Forest Supervisor

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Did You Know?

There are two national forests in Georgia. The Chattahoochee National Forest (749,690 acres) stretches across the scenic North Georgia mountains. The Oconee National Forest (115,354 acres) is located in the spacious pine lands of Central Georgia. The Chattahoochee National Forest was established in 1936 and the Oconee National Forest was established in 1959.

Hunting Season

Hunting is a popular sport on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests in Georgia. Seasons and bag limits are set by the State of Georgia, Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division. If you live next door to the national forest, it is important for you to know that hunting may occur on federal land adjacent to your property.

Generally, hunting is allowed from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset, except for species such as raccoons, opossums, and a few others. It is unlawful to discharge a firearm within 150 feet of a residence, building, or campsite. It is unlawful to discharge a firearm

within 50 yards of a public road or to shoot from or across a public road.

If your property is adjacent to one of the State's Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), then special seasons apply to those areas. Generally, the hunting season within WMAs is shorter than the statewide season.

If you are planning on visiting the national forest during hunting season, it is always a good idea to wear bright colors, preferably blaze orange.

To report violations of these or other game regulations, please call 1-800-241-4113.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is a popular pastime on the two national forests in Georgia. The new Land Management Plan calls for a significant change in the use of horses on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests. Previously, horseback riding was allowed almost anywhere on the national forests. This policy resulted in the creation of a system of unplanned horse trails stretching across the forest. Many of the unplanned trails were created in inappropriate locations, for example, too close to sensitive streambanks. Before the Forest Service can build a new trail for any type of use and add it to the trail system as a designated trail, specialists must complete all the necessary environmental surveys to ensure that the trail is not located on top of a culturally sensitive site, near an endangered species, or at another inappropriate location.

The new Forest Land Management Plan allows horseback riding only on designated trails (about 200 miles on the forest) or on designated roads (about 1,600 miles on the forest). To ensure that there is an adequate distribution of trails on the forest, the Forest Service is currently in the

process of working through a trails analysis. This analysis will identify where all types of designated trails are currently located on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forest. This analysis will help managers determine where there are opportunities for locating additional trails (based on current distribution, user need, and appropriate location) as well as finding opportunities for designating trails for more than one type of use.



The Forest Service currently has some multiple use trails that combine uses such as horseback riding and mountain biking. Forest Service managers will work closely with equestrians and other interested individuals to ensure that there are adequate opportunities on the national forest to pursue their recreation opportunity while protecting the natural resources of the forest for future generations to use and enjoy.

For a list of designated trails and additional information, please visit the following website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/rec/rogs/horse/horse.htm>

Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) in the National Forest

Because unmanaged recreation is threatening the health of national forests, the Forest Service recently released a new national policy for use in deciding which roads, trails, and areas will be designated for off highway vehicle (OHV) use.

The proposed rule calls for the Forest Service to continue to work with motorized sports enthusiasts, conservationists, state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and others to identify routes offering the best recreational opportunities for the public while enabling the Forest Service to meet its responsibility to protect the environment.

Currently, each individual forest has guidelines regarding OHV use. The proposed rule represents a nationally consistent approach to travel

management.

Here in Georgia, the national forests are consistent with the proposed policy, which calls for OHV use only on designated trails. A list of these trails can be found on the Forest Service website at www.fs.fed.us/conf/ or you can request a listing of OHV trails from your local Forest Service office.

The proposal was released on July 7, 2004. Comments were accepted for 60 days after the proposal was published in the Federal Register on July 16, 2004.

For additional information or to find out where you can send your comments, please visit the following website <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/>

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

The hemlock woolly adelgid, a serious pest of eastern and Carolina hemlock trees, has made its way into northern Georgia. First reported in Rabun County in 2002, the pest has since spread to other counties in north Georgia such as Habersham, White, and Towns.

Because the full extent of the spread of this insect is unknown, surveys are being conducted across the Chattahoochee National Forest to determine areas that are affected. Currently, this forest pest infests about one-half of the native range of hemlock, all the way from Pennsylvania to New Hampshire to northeastern Georgia. The pest has caused considerable mortality and decline of hemlock trees, particularly in Virginia, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

In an effort to combat the spread of the adelgid, the Chattahoochee National Forest has stopped issuing permits to transplant hemlock seedlings.



A typical infestation of the hemlock woolly adelgid produced by overwintering adults.

Another alternative that is used to reduce pest numbers is a biological method that involves the rearing and release of predator beetles, which in turn attack and kill the adelgid. The predator beetles are host specific and will only prey on the hemlock woolly adelgid. Release of predator beetles is done in cooperation with Forest Service researchers and university officials.

White cottony sacs at the needle base are good evidence of a hemlock woolly adelgid infestation. These sacs resemble the tips of cotton swabs. They will be present throughout the year, but are most

prominent in early spring.

If you see signs of the hemlock woolly adelgid in trees near your property, please contact the U.S. Forest Service office or Georgia Forestry Commission office nearest you.

Who is Who in the Forest Service?

Ranger Districts

A ranger district is the basic administrative unit for managing the national forests. It is at the district level that most Forest Service employees work. They are responsible for carrying out the day-to-day management of the national forests. Each district is managed by a District Ranger. Here on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests we have six ranger district offices located in Chatsworth, Blairsville, Clayton, Blue Ridge, Eatonton, and Clarkesville.

Supervisor's Office

District Rangers report directly to a Forest Supervisor. In Georgia, the Forest Supervisor's office is headquartered in Gainesville. The Forest Supervisor is Kathleen Atkinson. Supervisor Atkinson

oversees the management of the two national forests in Georgia.

Regional Office

The Forest Supervisor reports directly to the Regional Forester. There are nine Regional Offices in the United States. The Southern Region is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The Regional Forester is Bob Jacobs.

Washington Office

The Regional Forester reports directly to the Chief of the Forest Service located in Washington, D.C. The Chief oversees the management of 154 national forests located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The Chief is Dale Bosworth.

Fuelwood Permits

In the winter, people often ask if firewood can be cut or gathered from the national forests. Federal laws and regulations require the Forest Service to issue permits for the removal of any forest product, however, obtaining a permit for firewood is a simple process. Below is the firewood policy set by each District Ranger in Georgia. Please contact the appropriate district office if you have questions about firewood or any forest product. The minimum charge for personal use firewood is five dollars per cord with a minimum permit value of twenty dollars.

Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District, Chatsworth, GA, Phone: 706 695-6736: Permits issued only for dead and down wood along the edge of forest roads in specific areas approved on a case by case basis. No designated fuelwood areas.

Toccoa Ranger District, Blue Ridge, GA, Phone: 706 632-3031: Permits issued only for dead and down wood in specific areas approved on a case by case

basis. No designated fuelwood areas.

Brasstown Ranger District, Blairsville, GA, Phone: 706 745-6928: Permits issued only for dead and down wood in specific areas approved on a case by case basis. No designated fuelwood areas.

Chattooga Ranger District, Clarkesville, GA, Phone: 706 754-6221: Permits issued only for dead and down wood in specific areas approved on a case by case basis. No designated fuelwood areas.

Tallulah Ranger District, Clayton, GA, Phone: 706 782-3320: Permits issued for dead and down wood in the specific location identified. One designated fuelwood area in south Rabun County is currently open with plenty of firewood available.

Oconee Ranger District, Eatonton, GA, Phone: 706 485-7110: Permits issued only for dead and down wood in specific areas approved on a case by case basis. No designated fuelwood areas.

USDA Forest Service Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

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[Http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/](http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/)

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