



Brasstown Bald  
Visitor's Center

USDA Forest Service Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

## Message From the Forest Supervisor

Welcome to the second issue of "Hi Neighbor." I was pleased at the positive comments and suggestions we received on the first issue. I look forward to your continued feedback on how we can make this publication useful.

This year the USDA Forest Service is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The centennial celebration will be a combination of nationally promoted "signature events" and locally sponsored events that will be held throughout the year.

To help us commemorate the centennial we would like to invite you, our neighbors, to join us in our celebration. We encourage you to visit the centennial web page at

<http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/centennial/>. Here you will find up-to-date information on local events as well as forest facts and histories of the national forests in Georgia.

Thank you for your interest and support. If you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list or if you would like additional copies, please feel free to contact us at (770) 297-3000.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Atkinson

Forest Supervisor

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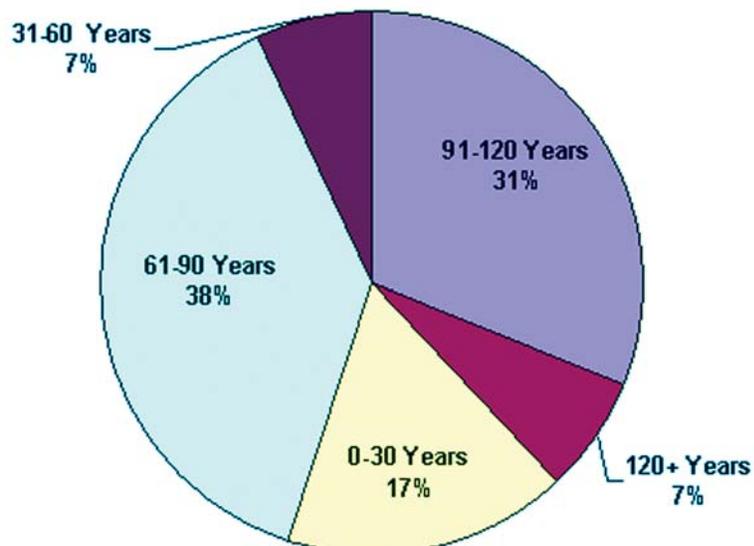
## Did You Know?

President Bush selected Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns to serve as Secretary of Agriculture. Secretary Johanns has been dedicated to agriculture since his childhood days on a dairy farm in Iowa. His Cabinet appointment followed the resignation of former Secretary of Agriculture Ann Venneman, who is now serving as head of the United Nations children's agency.

## Age Distribution of Trees

This chart shows the age distribution of trees on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National

Forests as of 2004. As you can see, most of the trees in the forests are between 61-120 years old.



## Hurricane Damage - Clearing Roads and Trails

Approximately \$3.1 million has been appropriated by Congress to repair the damage inflicted upon the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests by hurricanes during the fall of 2004.

According to Recreation, Engineering, Archeology and Lands (REAL) staff officer Larry Luckett; the three priorities for the relief money are roads, trails and recreation facilities because of the direct impact on visitor safety.

"Our roads took the worst hits and suffered major loss of surfacing, land slides and some sloughing of banks that supported the roads," Luckett said. "Damage to trails included the loss of a majority of our smaller trail bridges, downed trees and the sloughing of banks that obliterated entire trail profiles."

Luckett said damage to recreation facilities was minor, mostly consisting of downed trees. Three

contracts for road repair will involve the replacement of gravel, maintenance and blading of the roads and equipment rental to repair slides and sloughing. Trail repairs will focus on safety and bringing damaged sections up to minimum width requirements. Luckett anticipates the contracts and repairs being completed in the fall of 2005.



Tree Down in Road After Hurricane

## Coming This Fall - New Rules to Enhance Hunter Safety

The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests are managed for many uses and they provide a variety of recreational opportunities-from sightseeing to hunting. When managing multiple uses, Forest Service officials strive to protect the health and safety of all users. When a certain activity poses a risk to public health and safety, the forest supervisor can issue a closure order to prohibit an activity in the national forest. Closure orders are enforced by Forest Service law enforcement officers and can entail a heavy fine.

Based on recommendations by the Forest Management Team, forest law enforcement officers, Department of Natural Resource officers and forest users; the Chattahoochee-Oconee forest supervisor has decided to prohibit two activities while hunting: the transportation of loaded long guns or cocked crossbows in a motor vehicle and possession of an alcoholic beverage while hunting. As a result of this decision, the forest will become a safer environment for visitors.

For the purpose of this order, a firearm is considered loaded if a round of ammunition is in the chamber or magazine, a percussion cap is on the nipple or powder is present in the frizzen pan.

Long guns are defined as firearms with an extended barrel, and usually are designed to be fired from the shoulder. Long guns shall include all rifles, shotguns, carbines, muzzleloaders and other similar weapons. While hunting, the possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited outside of hunt camps and on roads open to vehicular traffic.

If you would like to view the supervisor's order for additional information, please contact the supervisor's office at (770) 297-3000 or check the forest website.

## Recreation Fees

In 1996, Congress authorized the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program (through Public Law 104-134 (as amended: 16 United States Code 4601-6a) for the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The intent of the program was to test the application of recreation fees that are reinvested in recreation areas on federal lands and used to maintain and improve natural resources, recreation facilities and services.

This Recreation Fee Program was scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, 2005. Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior testified before Congress in strong support of a long-term, multi-agency recreation fee program. Recreation fees provide crucial resources that allow the federal agencies involved in the program to respond to increased demand on federal lands.

A new law, the 10-year Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) is part of the 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, signed by President Bush on Dec. 8, 2004. The Act permits federal land management agencies to continue charging modest fees at campgrounds, rental cabins and other high-impact recreation areas on federal lands.

At least 80 percent of fee revenues is retained at the site of collection and is used to enhance the sites and services. Close to \$1 million is collected each year on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests. This revenue is important

because it allows for significant improvements at recreation sites to make your visit more pleasant.

One example of how recreation funds are used is the new toilet installed at Jacks River Fields Campground. The new toilet was constructed with a concrete sidewalk that aids in accessibility. Recreation fees also provided Jacks River Fields Campground with a new information bulletin board, new hitching posts and an improved horse watering station.

A complete list of recreation fee accomplishments for the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests is available by request. For additional information on recreation fees for federal lands please feel free to contact your local ranger district, or the supervisor's office for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests at (770) 297-3000.



Jacks River Fields Campground

## Forest Website

We would like to encourage you to visit the website for the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests.

Our website can provide you with a wealth of information about the forests including closure updates, recreational opportunities, maps,

directions and updates on current issues. This "Hi Neighbor" newsletter is also posted on our website. If you have access to a computer, all the comings and goings of the USDA Forest Service are right at your fingertips; just visit: <http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/>

## Road Closures

During winter months, adverse weather can cause the temporary closure of certain roads within national forests. These closures are necessary for the safety of the public and to protect natural resources.

Most closures occur in the Chattahoochee National Forest due to the terrain and topography associated with the area.

Alan Polk, the ranger for the Brasstown and Toccoa District, explained that the primary reasons for road closure during the winter are potential damage to roads by extensive rutting and loss of road surface.

"Most roads remain open to provide access, but the ones that are closed are those not designed for normal traffic flow during freezing and thawing periods," Polk said.

Information on which roads are closed and when they will be reopened can be found on the forest website at [www.fs.fed.us/conf](http://www.fs.fed.us/conf) or by contacting your local ranger district.

## USDA Forest Service Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

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Visit us on the web:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/>

## Hazardous Tree Removal Can Protect Your Property

Here are some basic guidelines on what you should do if a hazardous tree on a national forest is endangering you or your property.

Your first step should be to call your local district office and report the hazardous tree. The office may send personnel to assess the situation. Remember that it is unlawful to remove timber on the national forest without a permit.

If the district determines that the tree needs to be removed, the forest service will issue a permit for you to remove the tree. If special circumstances arise, the district will determine what measures need to be taken to resolve the situation.

Contact the forest supervisor's office at (770) 297-3000 to be referred to the district nearest you.

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