



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chattahoochee-Oconee
National Forests
Toccoa Ranger District

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Blue Ridge, GA 30513
(706) 632-3031
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File Code: 1950/2350-3

Date: August 16, 2006

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

The Brasstown and Toccoa Ranger Districts are inviting you to comment on the following proposed actions to take place along certain sections of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) and the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) (see attached maps) in Fannin and Union Counties. The purpose of the project is to reduce impacts to the riparian area where the AT crosses Stover Creek, reduce soil erosion at certain locations on the AT and BMT, and provide for a more enjoyable experience for trail users.

This proposal calls for the following actions to further prevent resource damage and support Forest Service Standards as outlined in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan:

- Relocate approximately one mile of the AT in the Justus Creek area, including dismantling and removing an existing trail bridge spanning Justus Creek, and establishing a new crossing on the relocated trail section. The relocation will shift trail use away from a heavily impacted camping area associated with the current trail location, reduce soil erosion by moving the trail to a better gradient, and will help achieve desired conditions for the Justus Creek riparian corridor. The new stream crossing will utilize stepping stones instead of a new bridge. The recreation experience for trail users will be enhanced by providing a trail location that has a more gradual elevation gain and loss along its route. .
- Relocate approximately one mile of the BMT in the Licklog and Wallalah Mountains area. The relocation will move the trail away from several steep fall line locations, and reduce soil erosion by moving the trail to a better gradient. The recreational experience for trail users will be enhanced by providing a trail location that has a more gradual elevation gain and loss along its route.
- Establish 4-6 primitive camping pads along the AT relocation section. This will help shift overnight use away from the riparian corridor.
- Using native materials such as logs, stones, downed brush, and leaves, rehabilitate the sections of trails that will be abandoned.

This proposed project supports the Chattahoochee-Oconee Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) direction for Recreation Opportunities/Experiences Goals 31; "Provide...nature based recreation settings and opportunities...", and 34; "Trails do not adversely affect soil and water resources.", as well as direction for Water Quality and Soil



Protection Goal 22; “Watersheds are managed (and where needed restored) to provide resilient and stable conditions....to protect ecological functions...”.

To ensure that I have examined and considered all alternatives for decision-making, I am allowing a 30-day period to collect comments from you.

Responses should include relevant and informative facts as they relate to your concerns about the design or goals of this specific proposal (Appalachian Trail and/or Benton Mackaye Trail Relocation Project). Should you decide to take advantage of your opportunity to provide comments, I ask that you do so by Monday September 18, 2006. You may respond with your written comments to David Kuykendall, Brasstown Ranger District, P.O. Box 9, Blairsville GA 30514, via e-mail (dgkuykendall@fs.fed.us), or by calling (706) 745-6928 ext. 113.

Sincerely,

/S/ ALAN POLK

ALAN POLK
District Ranger