

Categorical Exclusion

Glade, Hicks, and Hedden Creek Road Closures/Obliterations

USDA Forest Service, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, Tallulah Ranger District,
Rabun County, Georgia

DECISION, PURPOSE, AND NEED

The Rabun County Commissioners legally abandoned ownership of the above roads in 2004. The ownership has reverted to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. These roads are heavily eroded and are a source of sedimentation in adjoining streams. This project consists of closing significant portions of these roads to vehicular traffic and repairing the erosion problems to reduce sedimentation into the streams and improve water quality. These objectives will be met by closing the roads with berms and vegetation, repairing eroded gullies, and constructing dips, waterbars, and wing ditches as needed. The roads will be obliterated and blocked extensively at the beginning of each closure with the interior portions receiving only soil stabilization and drainage measures, which will still provide for use by hikers.

Glade Road is located in Management Prescription (Mgmt. Rx.) Areas 4.D – Botanical and Zoological Areas, 4.I - Natural Areas – Few Open Roads, and 11- Riparian Areas. The “Old” Burrell’s Ford Road is located in Mgmt. Rx. Areas 4.I, 9.H - Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential, and 11; and the Hick’s Tract Road is located in Mgmt. Rx. Areas 9.A.3 - Watershed Restoration Areas, 9.H, and 11. This project will move the areas closer to the Desired Conditions, Standards, and Emphasis outlined for these Management Prescription Areas in the Forest Plan. The following table identifies this by Mgmt Rx Area.

Mgmt. Rx.	Desired Future Condition	Standards	Emphasis
4.D	Removes man caused changes to the ecosystem, unneeded roads decommissioned.	4.D-011	
4.I	Human caused change will be mitigated to be made less obvious, stream and water bodies protected from adverse effects,	4.I-010 4.I-011 4.I-014	Recreational op. in isolated areas where users can obtain a degree of solitude.
9.A.3	Aquatic habitats will be improved, unneeded roads will be decommissioned, open road density is less than average for the ecological unit, stream and water quality is protected from adverse effects,	9.A.3-011 9.A.3-012	Improve conditions where past land uses have degraded water quality.
9.H	Streams and water bodies are protected from adverse effects,		

11	Management maintains, or moves toward, the restoration of natural processes, natural processes will modify most of the areas, human caused disturbances that cause environmental degradation are mitigated, facilities are maintained to minimize impacts on stream banks, shorelines, and water quality.	11-001 11-002 11-004 11-007 11-009 11-010 11-011 11-040	Riparian corridors will be managed to retain, restore and/or enhance the inherent ecological processes and functions...
----	---	--	---

Per standard 11-040, these projects will not require the placement or removal of material from live streams and will meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

A segment of the “Old” Burrell’s Ford road serves as the border of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Extension Study Area (See Attached Map). The actual boundary is 66 feet from the existing road. Since these roads were already in existence and counted during the original inventory (Consultation with John Petrick, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Nepa/Planning Staff), the completion of this project will not affect the Wilderness Extension Study as the remaining segments of roads have already been calculated into the roadless area study. Basically, it is a net reduction of miles of roads already counted. Refer to the attached map for the approximate locations of the closures. (Gatins/Williams Response)

I have determined that this action falls within Category #4 (“Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries”) of Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Section 31.12 categorical exclusions. These actions have been determined to have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively, and are therefore categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment.

SIGNATURE AND DATE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

/s/ David W. Jensen
David W. Jensen
District Ranger

1/21/2005
Date