



File Code: 1950

Date: March 3, 2008

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

The Chattooga River Ranger District is proposing three projects to improve watershed conditions and address water quality problems occurring from recreation uses. These projects are located in three different watersheds on the District. Proposed treatments would result in reductions in erosion, sedimentation and soil productivity loss, and improve aquatic habitat conditions in adjacent streams after implementation. Your comments and input on these proposed projects are needed to design appropriate treatments and address any issues related to the proposals.

Two projects are located in watersheds in Rabun County. The first project is located in the upper Tallulah River watershed in the Tate City vicinity north of US 76. Over-use and expansion of a dispersed camping site is causing erosion, loss of vegetation and sedimentation to the main channel of the River. This project site will require site reclamation by smoothing eroded areas, revegetating with appropriate seed species, and mulching to achieve ground cover. Vehicle control barriers will be added to reduce user-created site expansion. (Refer to attached map) The second project in Rabun County is located in the Stonewall Creek watershed, west of old US 441 and Tiger community. This area is adjacent to the existing Stonewall mountain bike trail system and is crisscrossed with numerous old roads and skid trails that are being used by ATV's and 4-wheel drive vehicles. This project will require the construction of berms, sediment traps, gully plugs, check dams, and water bars to close the old roads and impede the ability of these vehicles from accessing the area. (Refer to attached map.)

The third project location is on Chastain Branch, northeast of GA 197 and the Batesville community, in Habersham County. The problem area is a part of a section of the Moates Knob OHV trail to be closed. This project will be done in conjunction with a trail rerouting project that is designed to close the section of trail impacting Chastain Branch. Work to be completed would be reshaping of the old road bed at about 8 locations along the one mile length of the road. The reshaping would be completed by moving the fill material from the road to reshape the area as close to possible to the natural contour of the land. In addition to this, check dams, silt barriers, berms, and seeding and planting of vegetation will occur to revegetate the areas.

The proposed projects would meet the following Goals, Objectives, and Standards specified in the Forest Plan.

OBJECTIVE 34.1 Prioritize OHV, horse and pack stock, bike, and hiking trails for condition surveys based on their risk of causing adverse effects, conduct surveys, prioritize for remedial action those that are found to be adversely affecting soil and water resources, and correct those situations within five years of Plan implementation.

GOAL 80 Maintain structures in a safe, serviceable, and attractive condition suitable for the





intended use.

11-010 All trail construction, reconstruction and maintenance must be accomplished in accordance with current Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia, applicable state or local erosion control regulations, and the current Forest Service Trail Handbook direction.

These proposals are at the starting point for discussion and analysis and no decision has been made. With this letter (and a variety of other methods), we are now in the scoping period, which requires public involvement from concerned citizens like you. Responses from the local community, interested individuals and groups from near and far, and Forest Service employees are needed to help determine the scope or extent of analysis for these projects. Comments received help articulate the environmental issues to be considered, contribute to the development of viable alternatives to the proposals, and/ or indicate mitigation measures needed.

Please make your response as specific as possible so that we can be sure they are adequately addressed. This would include the following information:

- 1) Your name and address.
- 2) Title of Proposed Action
- 3) Specific substantive comments (215.2) on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision.
- 4) Your signature or other means of identification verification. For organization, a signature or other means of identification verification must be provided for the individual authorization to represent your organization.

Comments must be postmarked or received within 30 days from the date of this letter. Send your written comments to the Chattooga River Ranger District office at the address given on the Letterhead. You may also comment by phone, by e-mail to Terrance Fletcher (terrancefletcher@fs.fed.us) or in person at our office in Clayton, Georgia. Phone or hand delivered comments maybe made at the Ranger District office at (see letterhead) within the normal weekday business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. In accordance with regulations, all written comments received, including those submitted electronically will be placed in the project file and will become a matter of public record. Please note that only those responding to this letter will receive future mailings on this project.

Thank you for your interest and involvement.
Sincerely,

/s/ David W. Jensen
DAVID W. JENSEN

District Ranger

Enclosure: Maps (3)

