



File Code: 5430

Date: June 5, 2007

Dear Interested Public:

Mr. Tom Phillips, a resident of Jasper, Georgia has proposed a land exchange with the Forest Service that involves land in Towns and Habersham County, Georgia.

The United States of America (USA) would receive approximately 42 acres in one tract that would become part of the Chattahoochee National Forest (CNF). This tract of land is located in the 11th District, Land Lot 33 of Habersham County. The property is a partial inholding within the CNF and lies in the headwaters of the Soque River, containing 1000 feet of Moates Branch, which is a large tributary to Raper Creek. The property is in the Raper Mountain area of Habersham County. This tract is essential to the long term protection of water quality in the Soque River headwaters. This area of the forest is under heavy development pressure. The property will also provide excellent access into a portion of the CNF that does not currently have access.

In the proposal the USA would convey two tracts (C-2322 and C-2322a) totaling approximately 100 acres located in Towns and Habersham Counties. Tract C-2322 (50acres+-) is in the 19th District, Section One, Land Lots 22 and 21 of Towns County, Georgia. The property is a portion of an isolated 90 acre tract, located approximately eight miles southeast of Hiawassee, Georgia, adjacent to and east of US Hwy 75. The property lies in the Hiawassee River drainage. Mr. Phillips owns property adjacent to and east of this federal tract.

Tract C-2322a lies in Land Lot 133 and 134, 11th District, Habersham County, Georgia. The property is in the Rogers Creek drainage and is adjacent to a gravel County Road. This tract will be used to adjust values on the exchange. The estimated acres to divest is 50, however it is likely that the number of acres will be somewhat less. The final approved appraisals will determine the actual acres to divest.

All land exchanges are on equal value basis as determined by real property appraisal which must be approved by the Forest Service. If appraisals indicate unequal value of the two properties, either party may equalize values by payment of cash. The cash may not exceed 25% of the value of the Forest Service land. The acres in the proposal are a result of preliminary estimates of value. The actual appraisals will determine the final acres of Federal land to be divested.

The purpose, benefits and reasoning in proceeding with this proposal relate only to how the proposal would affect the CNF and associated public benefits. This includes:

- Acquisition of the headwaters of Moates Branch and the protection of water quality associated with the headwaters of the Soque River.
- Consolidation of a partial inholding that will provide increased management efficiency



and result in long term monetary savings. The primary emphasis for landownership adjustment in the current Land and Resource Management Plan for the CNF is consolidation of the CNF. Consolidation from this proposal will result in the elimination of 4000 Feet of boundary line and four corners.

- Provide excellent public access into an interior portion of the CNF. Property be acquired touches a paved county road. There is no legal access into this portion of the National Forest at this time.
- Property will support and enhance the protection provided by a recent acquisition adjacent and north of the nonfederal tract by the Conservation Fund. The cumulative protection provided by the two tracts will be 3600 feet of Headwaters to the Soque River.

As an adjoining landowner and/or due to your interest in NF projects, we are informing you about this **proposed exchange** involving the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Significant work is yet to be done on this exchange proposal, but we anticipate that all will be accomplished and the exchange potentially consummated in the first half of the calendar year 2008, if a decision is made to proceed with the proposal. Colored maps of the entire exchange proposal can be viewed in the planning section of the Chattahoochee-Oconee NF web site (www.fs.fed.us/conf). Written comments about this proposal should be addressed to George Bain, Acting Forest Supervisor, at the address on this letter. A request for hard copy maps and questions should be referred to Terry Stolz at this same address (770-297-3090). To be assured of consideration all comments must be postmarked or delivered within 30 days of this letter.

Sincerely,

/S/ ALAN POLK

ALAN POLK
District Ranger