

Decision Memo

Lake Conasauga Partial Decommissioning

Conasauga Ranger District

USDA Forest Service – Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests Murray County, Georgia

Decision & Purpose and Need:

I have decided to partially decommission the Lake Conasauga Recreation Area. The changes to be made at Lake Conasauga focus on little used facilities within the recreation area, not the sites more frequently used by the public. The overall mix and variety of recreational opportunities will not change. Once a facility is removed, the site will be rehabilitated to a natural condition. The following facilities will be removed:

1. Loop B Campground.

Loop B consists of four campsites, a chemical toilet, an access road, and an access trail to the lake. Loop B was closed during the 2007 use season, yet visitor use of the remaining 31 open campsites never exceeded capacity.

2. Arrowwood Picnic Shelter and three picnic sites.

The day use area currently contains 17 individual picnic sites and two group shelters. The shelter and picnic sites to be decommissioned are the ones most removed from the picnic area parking lot and the farthest from the lake. They are seldom used.

3. Overflow Campground well.

The well and hand pump have been out-of-service for three years without any known impacts on the recreating public.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision:

I have determined that this action falls into a category of actions that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. Specifically, the project falls within the following categorical exclusion from the Forest Service Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook (1909.15), Chapter 30: Category 5, Section 31.12: Repair and maintenance of recreation facilities.

Based on the results of internal and external scoping, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist that could cause the project actions to have significant effects.

Public Involvement:

Scoping letters were mailed on January 9, 2008 to all individuals, groups, and agencies listed on the district scoping list. Two comments were received, none of which identified any issues or concerns with the proposed project.

Findings Required by Other Laws:

This action is consistent with the 2004 Forest Plan for Management Prescriptions 7.B, 8.E.3 and 11. This project adheres to the applicable standards and monitoring requirements in the Forest Plan.

This project complies with the seven requirements of 36 CFR 219.27(b) by following the Forest-wide standards as mentioned above. These requirements include goals for the area, potential effects on residual biota and adjacent biota, site productivity and conservation of soil and water resources, and the desired effects on the environment.

No Proposed, Endangered, Threatened or Sensitive (PETS) plants or animals were present in the project area during inventory. The biological evaluation determined that there would not be any adverse effects on species of special concern.

This action complies with the National Historic Preservation Act.

This project will be implemented with appropriate erosion control measures for developed recreation facilities planned and designed to comply with Georgia's Erosion and Sediment Control Act and current Forest Plan standards. This project complies with applicable sections of the Clean Water Act.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities:

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f).

Implementation Date:

This project may be implemented immediately.

Contact Person:

For further information concerning this decision, contact Larry Thomas by phone, letter, e-mail or in person. The address of the Conasauga Ranger District is 3941 Highway 76, Chatsworth, GA 30705 and the phone number is 706-695-6736. Office hours are from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Contact Larry by e-mail at lrthomas@fs.fed.us.

Signature and Date of Responsible Official:

/s/ Michele H. Jones
MICHELE H. JONES
District Ranger

July 3, 2008
Date