



File Code: 1950/2510

Date: March 4, 2008

Dear Forest Stakeholder;

The Blue Ridge Ranger District of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest is taking public comments on project designed to enhance watershed conditions by closing and revegetating approximately 23 acres of unauthorized roads and trails on National Forest lands. The areas under this proposal include:

Watershed Restoration Projects

<u>Area</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Compt</u>	<u>Quad</u>
1. Fish Gap	0.5 acre	504	Mulky Gap
2. Dove Ridge	1.0 acre	347	Hiawassee
3. Big John Creek	0.5 acre	313	Hightower Bald
4. Cowart Gap	0.5 acre	314	Hightower
5. Bell Gap	8.0 acres	304	Macedonia
6. Roaring Fork	5.0 acres	397	Coosa Bald
7. Soapstone	0.5 acre	334	Tray Mountain
8. Knight Branch	0.5 acre	628	Wilscot
9. Mulky Gap	0.25 acre	399	Mulky Gap
10. Jarrard Creek	0.25 acre	501	Coosa Bald
11. Cochran Falls	4.0 acre	577	Nimblewill
12. Garrett Farm	2.0 acres	516	Suches

Total 23 acres

All sites are old roadbeds and/or illegal ATV trails. In all cases, overuse and unauthorized uses are resulting in watershed concerns. The objectives for treating these areas are to control soil erosion, control the movement of sediment into local streams or lakes and stop unauthorized off-road vehicle use on undesignated roads and trails. This project meets Forest Plan Goal 24, "Maintain or restore soil productivity and quality." as stated in chapter 2 of the existing Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Restoration activities will include ripping the roadbed, shaping and water baring with heavy equipment (i.e. Dozer, track hoe or tractor), seeding with a grass seed mixture which will include grasses beneficial to wildlife, liming and fertilizing, mulching, silt fences where needed, and installation of barriers, such as tank traps or guardrails at road entrances to prohibit vehicular traffic. In some cases, trees will be felled into the roadbed to further restrict vehicular traffic. Foot travel will not be excluded on closed roadbeds or trails. On some roads, these activities will



take place only on specific sections that are in need erosion control measures. Portions of roads with establish vegetation will not be disturbed.

Overview maps of these areas are enclosed. More detailed maps of the individual areas are available by request at the Blue Ridge Ranger District office.

We are currently in the process of determining the significant environmental issues and public concerns. I would like to hear from you regarding the proposed activities before making my decision on these projects. The proposed activities appear to fall into a category of actions that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. However, this determination will not be finalized until after consideration of your comments and concerns.

To have your comments considered in our decision process, we would appreciate receiving your comments by April 4, 2008. This will help ensure a complete and thorough analysis of these activities. Send your written comments to the Blue Ridge Ranger District at the address provided in the letterhead. You may also comment by phone or fax (see letterhead), by email to Jim Wentworth at jwentworth@fs.fed.us or in person at our office on Highway 515 West in Blairsville, Georgia. Your comments should be as specific as possible and include your name and address, and the project name (Watershed Restoration Projects).

If you have additional questions or would like more information regarding these proposed activities direct them to Jim Wentworth on the Blue Ridge District.

Thank-you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alan Polk

ALAN POLK
District Ranger

Enclosures