

Rapid Assessment For the Project Record

Assessment:

Headquarters

Date:

9/14/09

Management Area Objectives

- 2C** Emphasize visually pleasing scenery. Emphasize motorized recreation use. The management area is classed as unsuitable for timber production in order to meet visual quality objectives or lands are not efficient for timber production. Manage habitat of older forests primarily for squirrel, pileated woodpecker, and animals requiring similar environments. (575 acres)
- 3B** Emphasize sustained yield timber management. Close most roads to motorized vehicles. Permit road construction. Base method of harvest on a site-specific analysis. Manage habitat of mixed ages of forests primarily for turkey, and animals requiring similar environments. (2,113 acres)
- 4A** Emphasize visually pleasing scenery. Emphasize non-motorized recreation use. Close most roads to motorized vehicles. Permit timber management modified to emphasize visual quality and wildlife benefits. Permit road construction. Manage habitat of mature forests primarily for bear, and animals requiring similar environments. (325 acres)
- 4C** Emphasize visually pleasing scenery. Emphasize non-motorized recreation use. Close most roads to motorized vehicles. Classify land as not suitable for timber production in order to meet visual quality objectives and wildlife habitat needs, or lands not cost efficient for timber management over the planning horizon. Manage habitat of older forests primarily for bear, and animals requiring similar environments. (3,110 acres)
- 4D** Emphasize high quality wildlife habitat particularly for black bear. Emphasize non-motorized recreation use. Close most roads to motorized vehicles. Permit timber production, but modify to emphasize visual quality objectives and wildlife habitat needs. Permit road construction. Base method of harvest on a site-specific analysis. Do not harvest areas larger than 25 acres in size when even-aged regeneration is selected. [Amendment #4] Manage habitat of mature forests primarily for bear, and animals requiring similar environments. (2,153 acres)
- 6** Wilderness Study Areas recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and Wilderness Study Areas not recommended for inclusion in NWPS but managed as wilderness until Congressional action (emphasis added). (10,791 acres)

Existing Condition(s)	Desired Condition(s)	Statement(s) of Need	Data/Responsibility
Recreation			
* (1) There is unauthorized mountain bike use occurring in MA 6. User created connectors and user created trails from private land near Grandmother Mountain onto NFS lands is occurring. There are impacts to aquatic resources from sedimentation due to some of these routes	<i>Prohibit use of bicycles and other forms of mechanical transport such as wagons or carts with the exception of wheelchairs.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-99). <i>Construct and maintain trails to the minimum standard necessary for protection of the soil water vegetation, visual quality, user safety and long-term maintenance.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-104)	There is a need to ensure unauthorized trail use is not occurring in the AA and adequate maintenance is occurring to reduce impacts to resources	Brady/Leigh/Lorie to assess trails in the AA for rehabilitation/maintenance opportunities prior to scoping
* (2) The Lost Cove area is popular for climbing/bouldering and there are rare plants on rock faces – top rope climbing is managed well, but lead climbing has most potential for impacts to species, especially the	<i>Maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the Planning Area. Protect the following community types when identified as unique in the botanical or wildlife analysis: caves and rare plant communities including bogs, rocks cliffs, granitic</i>	There is a need to harden staging areas/access routes for climbers and limit additional special uses/climbing development in the area	The population of <i>Liatrix helleri</i> at Little Lost Cove has a current monitoring program in place. No additional mitigation

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federally listed <i>Liatris helleri</i> , Heller's blazing star	<i>domes, high elevation rocky summits, barrens and glades, balds, boulder field forests and seeps</i> (Forest Plan, page III-23). <i>Issue no new special use permits, except for outfitter/guide operations</i> (Forest Plan, page III-95).		is required
Archaeology			
(1) Past heritage surveys have identified important archaeological properties and others are likely in the AA: there is a historic Catawba Indian community 6 miles south of the AA that made Burke pottery with soapstone in it that was likely collected within the Grandfather RD's boundary; and DeSoto passed through the AA on his way to the Nolichucky River.	<i>Protect heritage resources by: Completing heritage resource inventories prior to ground disturbing or land transfer projects.</i> (Forest Plan, page 9). <i>Protect heritage resources by: [P]rotecting appropriate heritage resource properties for ceremonial and religious purposes by Native Americans.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-9).	There is a need to complete an archaeological survey/report prior to project implementation	Scott to review map of existing properties and develop interpretive options
(2) Rock climbing is a popular activity in the Little Lost Cove and Lost Cove areas and full archaeological surveys have not occurred in the Lost Cove area	<i>Protect heritage resources by: [P]rotecting appropriate heritage resource properties for ceremonial and religious purposes by Native Americans.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-9).	There is a need to complete an archaeological survey/report to ensure special use and recreational use in the area does not impact archaeological properties.	Archaeological assessment needs to be completed to identify potential protection measures.
Scenery			
(1) The analysis area is heavily used/viewed by members of the public due to its proximity to Asheville and the Blue Ridge Parkway (w/ numerous vistas)	<i>Design Forest management activities to meet the Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) as shown in each Management Area.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-13)	There is a need to ensure management activities meet Forest Plan VQOs from view points in the analysis area	BRP has been contacted and will place the Pisgah NF on its mailing list to receive information on their vista maintenance – their proposal is in Buncombe/Yancey counties and is for improving flying squirrel habitat
Roads			
(1) The USFS may not have an easement for hauling on SR 4007 road(s)	<i>Acquire rights-of-way to provide access opportunities to NFS lands for public and administrative needs.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-45)	There is a need to secure a ROW easement across private lands to access NFS lands in Compartment 34	Linda/Darlene to identify any ROW easement needs.

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<p>* (2) Tropical Storm Fay left silt/ sediment in culverts in the AA and there are no longer any storm funds because the road itself is clear</p>	<p><i>Maintain all roads (open or closed) at a level sufficient to provide appropriate use and protect soil, water, and other resources.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-51)</p>	<p>There is a need to ensure adequate funding is secured to remove silt/sedimentation from culverts to ensure streams are protected and to upgrade culverts in the AA to better handle future tropical storms (especially those hauled over)</p>	<p>Barry/Jason to assess number of culverts needing maintenance/ upgrade</p>																														
<p>(3)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>MA</th> <th>Miles of Road</th> <th>Sq. Miles of MA</th> <th>Miles per Sq. Mile</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2C</td> <td>2.8</td> <td>0.90</td> <td>3.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3B</td> <td>2.2</td> <td>3.3</td> <td>0.67</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4D</td> <td>1.7</td> <td>3.4</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>10.2</td> <td>16.9</td> <td>0.63</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Roads 192, 58, 464 and 981 were used in this calculation</p>	MA	Miles of Road	Sq. Miles of MA	Miles per Sq. Mile	2C	2.8	0.90	3.1	3B	2.2	3.3	0.67	4D	1.7	3.4	0.5	6	10.2	16.9	0.63	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>MA</th> <th>Miles per Sq. Mile</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2C</td> <td>2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3B*</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4D*</td> <td>0.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Limit to current open roads</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>*Where existing open road densities exceed [0.5 or 0.25] miles per square mile, and, if closure of existing roads is prohibitive for administrative or legal reasons, then document these exceptions to the standard and investigate strategies to reduce the open road density.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-69, 87)</p>	MA	Miles per Sq. Mile	2C	2.0	3B*	0.5	4D*	0.25	6	Limit to current open roads	<p>There is a need to determine if there are open roads in these MAs that can be closed to reduce open road densities within them.</p>	<p>IDT to identify during project development roads that can be closed to reduce open road densities where available.</p>
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<p>* (1) There is a peregrine falcon nest at Big Lost Cove cliffs and Alleghany woodrats near rock boulders/cliffs in the AA. A wildlife management plan was developed in 1994 but was not signed -there may be actions proposed in it that can be implemented</p>	<p><i>Maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the Planning Area. Protect the following community types when identified as unique in the botanical or wildlife analysis: caves and rare plant communities including bogs, rocks cliffs, granitic domes, high elevation rocky summits, barrens and glades, balds, boulder field forests and seeps.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-23)</p>	<p>There is a need to ensure management actions do not impact rare wildlife species and develop actions that improve habitat diversity</p>	<p>Sandy to develop habitat enhancement opportunities</p>																														
<p>* (2) The bog in Compartment 106 may provide bog turtle habitat – bog turtle are a federally listed species</p>	<p><i>Maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the Planning Area. Protect the following community types when identified as unique in the botanical or wildlife analysis: caves and rare plant communities including bogs, rocks cliffs, granitic domes, high elevation rocky summits, barrens and glades, balds, boulder field forests and seeps.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-23)</p>	<p>There is a need to assess the potential for the bog to provide suitable bog turtle habitat and to enhance habitat where available</p>	<p>Sandy to assess the bog for suitable bog turtle habitat</p>																														
<p>* (3) There are currently about 4.5 acres of linear wildlife openings (LWO) in the AA and 22.3 acres of wildlife fields</p>	<p><i>Provide at least 0.5% of Management Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in grass/forb openings at any one time including mowed landings and roads except where desired conditions for forest interior birds or old</i></p>	<p>There is a need to develop up to 17 acres of wildlife openings in MAs 2, 3 and 4</p>	<p>Sandy to identify grass/forb habitat and identify if additional grass/forb habitat</p>																														

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	<i>growth management are specified. Select locations to avoid conflict with recreation uses. Do not include openings which receive heavy recreation use as contributing to this standard. (Forest Plan, page III-23)</i>		needs to be developed if below FP standards
* (4) Management Area 4D emphasizes black bear habitat – reduced open roads (<1/4 mi/mi ²) and smaller ESH openings (<25 acres in size). There is 1/2 mi/mi ² of open road in MA 4D.	Manage habitat primarily for black bear (exceptions are shown in Appendix F) (Forest Plan, page III-84) [turkey in Compartments 98, 99, and 105]	There is a need to enhance black bear habitat and turkey habitat in Compartments 98, 99, and 105 and identify if additional roads in MA 4D can be closed year-round to reduce open road densities.	Sandy/Ted/Jason to identify habitat enhancement opportunities
Lands/SUP			
(1) There are existing outfitter guide permits in the AA for climbing. For Little Lost Cove there is commercial climbing. There is no commercial climbing in Big Lost Cove.	<i>Respond to special use requests according to the following priorities: - Those relating to public safety, health and welfare, e.g., highways, power lines, and public service improvements; - Those contributing to the general public benefit associated with National Forest resources; and - Those that benefit only private users, e.g., road permits, rights-of-way for power lines, telephones, waterlines etc. (Forest Plan, page III-44). Allow organized recreational events when they meet management area direction. Require a permit. Forest Plan, III-22</i>	There is a need to maintain existing organized recreation SUPs where compatible with other resources.	Continue to process permits as they arise and manage existing permits.
(2) Rock climbing is a popular activity in the Little Lost Cove and Lost Cove areas and full archaeological surveys have not occurred in the Lost Cove area	<i>Protect heritage resources by: [P]rotecting appropriate heritage resource properties for ceremonial and religious purposes by Native Americans. (Forest Plan, page III-9).</i>	There is a need to complete an archaeological survey/report to ensure special use and recreational use in the area does not impact archaeological properties.	Archaeological assessment needs to be completed to identify potential protection measures.
Aquatics/Hydrology			
*(1) There are rainbow trout in the AA and there are streams that do not have sensitive brook floaters within them that may be able to sustain them if suitable habitat was available	<i>Use habitat restoration, improvement, and reintroduction to re-establish or expand native species populations and diversity (Forest Plan, page III-24). Manage streams for self-sustaining fish populations where conditions are favorable. Provide conditions for the large group of game and non-game animals that are dependent on aquatic and riparian systems. Emphasize habitat for specific Management indicator Species which</i>	There is a need to look in aquatic AA streams for reintroduction opportunities	Lorie/Sheryl to work with NCWRC and organizations to identify suitable streams for restoration

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	<i>represent this group.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-185)		
*(2) Wilson Creek is proposed for listing as impaired under the Clean Water Act for pH levels	<i>Manage activities occurring in watersheds listed in Appendix B to meet water resource objectives and attain the goals of the Clean Water Act.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-41). Note: Wilson Creek is listed in Appendix B	There is a need to ensure management actions do not increase potential for listing	Lorie/Brady to review proposed actions
*(3) Sections of Wilson Creek are deficient large wood and nutrients for fish habitat	<i>Manage streams for self-sustaining fish populations where conditions are favorable. Provide conditions for the large group of game and non-game animals that are dependent on aquatic and riparian systems. Emphasize habitat for specific Management indicator Species which represent this group.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-185)	There is a need to provide large wood and lime riparian areas along Wilson Creek to improve habitat conditions	Lorie/Brady to identify opportunities for proposal
*(4) Many culverts in the AA were replaced following the 2004 storms, but some may still be limiting passage of aquatic organisms	<i>Maintain the natural hydraulic and hydrologic functioning of the stream channel and protect the integrity of the stream system including channel, banks and stream bottom.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-187)	There is a need to assess culverts in the AA for passage concerns and determine priorities for replacing	Lorie/Brady/Barry to identify opportunities for proposal
*(5) There is a bog complex in Compartment 106 that is a proposed State Natural Heritage Area that may be associated with the Avery County bogs higher up that has not been assessed	<i>Maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the Planning Area. Protect the following community types when identified as unique in the botanical or wildlife analysis: caves and rare plant communities including bogs, rocks cliffs, granitic domes, high elevation rocky summits, barrens and glades, balds, boulder field forests and seeps.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-23)	There is a need to assess the potential of enhancing the bog through management actions	Seasonal survey desirable – will need to determine if proposed harvesting could impact existing bog.
Botany/Old Growth/Non-native Invasives			
*(1) There are two proposed State Natural Heritage Areas (SNHA) in the AA; one encompasses the bog near Cold Mountain in Compartment 106 and the other encompasses the Lost Cove area on NFS lands	<i>Maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the Planning Area. Protect the following community types when identified as unique in the botanical or wildlife analysis: caves and rare plant communities including bogs, rocks cliffs, granitic domes, high elevation rocky summits, barrens and glades, balds, boulder field forests and seeps.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-23)	There is a need to assess restoration opportunities of the bog and work with the State's heritage employees concerning the SNHAs and potential management actions within them	Dave to work with State heritage employees on management opportunities
*(2) There is Oriental bittersweet in some higher elevations in the AA and	<i>Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the strategy in managing pest populations to achieve</i>	There is a need to control/manage non-native invasive species in the AA, especially forested areas	Seasonal surveys needed to assess

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developing wildlife openings may increase spread	<i>resource management objectives.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-52)	opened through management activities	species/locations – typically coincides with harvest stand surveys.												
*(3) There are 5,537 acres of large patch old growth (O/G); 200 acres of small patch O/G; and 427 acres of Forest Plan initial inventory O/G in the AA. There is 2,944 acres of Messick proposed O/G in nine compartments, predominantly in 81, 103, and 104	<i>SMALL PATCHES: In each compartment containing more than 250 acres of national forest land, select a small patch for future old growth management. If 5% of the compartment acres are already part of a large or medium patch, an additional small patch is not needed.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-27)	There is a need to designate at least 200 acres total of small patch O/G in Compartments 76, 81, 104, and 106 to meet Forest Plan direction	Assess potential impacts/ enhancement after proposed harvest stands are developed.												
Vegetation															
(1) There is currently no 0-10 year early successional habitat (ESH) in the AA	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>MA</th> <th>Compartment</th> <th>AA</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2A</td> <td><i>At least 5% Not to exceed 10%</i></td> <td><i>At least 5% Not to exceed 10%</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1B & 3B</td> <td><i>At least 5% Not to exceed 15%</i></td> <td><i>At least 5% Not to exceed 15%</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4A & 4D</td> <td><i>Not to exceed 10%</i></td> <td><i>Not to exceed 10%</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Forest Plan, page III-31)</p>	MA	Compartment	AA	2A	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 10%</i>	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 10%</i>	1B & 3B	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 15%</i>	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 15%</i>	4A & 4D	<i>Not to exceed 10%</i>	<i>Not to exceed 10%</i>	There is a need to develop between 64 – 192 acres of ESH in MA 3B and up to 324 acres of ESH in MAs 4A and 4D	Ted/Jason to identify candidate stands for developing ESH prior to scoping.
MA	Compartment	AA													
2A	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 10%</i>	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 10%</i>													
1B & 3B	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 15%</i>	<i>At least 5% Not to exceed 15%</i>													
4A & 4D	<i>Not to exceed 10%</i>	<i>Not to exceed 10%</i>													
*(2) All regeneration harvested stands are candidates for timber stand improvement (TSI) through manual and chemical treatments	<i>Provide for stocking control and species variety through timber stand improvement practices.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-37)	There is a need to control stocking levels and species diversity through TSI applications on up to 1,286 acres	Ted/Jason to identify candidate stands for TSI												
*(3) There is a 40 acre hemlock stand in Compartment 106 and injections for hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA) have occurred in the AA. Loss of hemlock from HWA in riparian areas may have long-term impacts on aquatic habitat and hydrologic function.	<i>Develop conservation strategies for sensitive species beginning with those of highest risk.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-23). <i>Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the strategy in managing pest populations to achieve resource management objectives.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-52).	There is a need to assess condition of stand and there may be opportunities for beetle release in the AA to prolong hemlock diversity and to identify suitable replacement species (likely white pine) for hemlock in riparian areas.	Ted/Jason to determine feasibility of a new hemlock conservation area Lorie/Ted/Jason to determine if suitable replacement trees can be established												
*(4) There is a small northern red oak study area in Compartment 106 with white pine encroaching it	<i>Provide for stocking control and species variety through timber stand improvement practices.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-36)	There is a need to reduce white pine within study area to ensure northern red oak are not suppressed	Jason/Ted to assess white pine removal opportunities												
Fire/Fuels															

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<p>* (1) There is no current rotational burning in the AA—about 2/3 of the AA is in MAs unsuitable for timber harvesting and about 1/2 of the AA is within inventoried roadless areas. There may be opportunities for prescribed burning primarily using aerial ignition</p>	<p><i>Use prescribed fire (controlled fire) to create and maintain desired vegetative composition, scenic vistas, and wildlife habitat, reduce fire hazards, control forest pests, and accomplish other management objectives including site preparation.</i> (Forest Plan, page III-52)</p>	<p>There is a need to identify potential areas for prescribed burning where effective control can be maintained and objectives met</p>	<p>Bart has identified three potential prescribed burns: Breakneck, Lostcove, and Persimmon.</p>

* Potential Restoration Opportunity