



File Code: 1950-1

Date: April 4, 2008

Dear Interested Members of the Public:

The Grandfather Ranger District is proposing to harvest and regenerate trees in an area of the Pisgah National Forest in Burke County known as the Roses Creek Project (see Figure 1, Vicinity Map). Approximately 10 harvest areas from 13 to 40 acres in size would be harvested using the two-age system, which leaves a portion of the overstory trees on the site and allows regrowth of the forest from naturally occurring new seedlings and any already present seedlings, saplings, and sprouts (see Table 1). Many of the trees to be harvested are white pine, including white pine within riparian areas as per Forest Plan standards and guidelines. Removing white pine would allow for more oaks and other hardwoods to develop. Animal den trees and mast producing hardwoods are selected as trees to leave uncut if they are available. The Roses Creek Project is located about 15 miles northeast of Marion, North Carolina; it is also within the 8,457 acre Roses Creek Forest Plan Analysis Area (AA) which comprises compartments 293, 294, 295, 297, 298, 299, and 300.

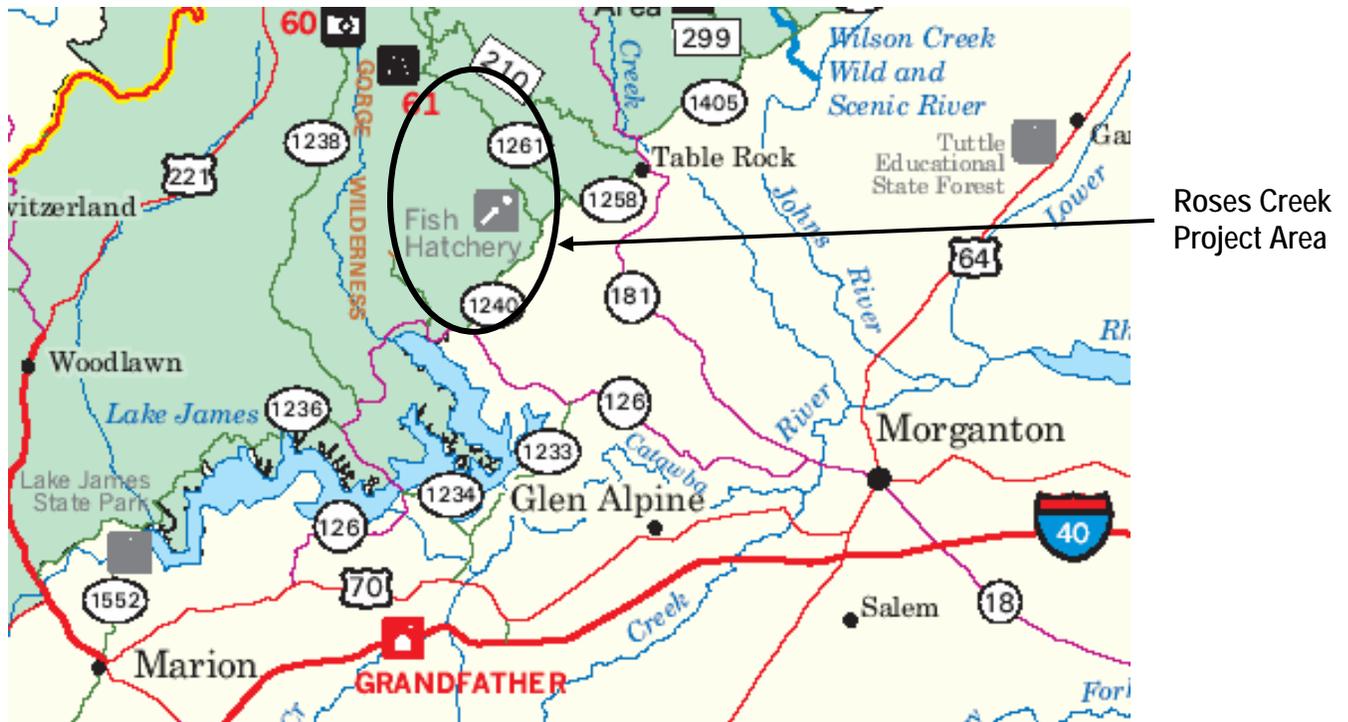


Figure 1: General Vicinity Area of Roses Creek Proposal

Proposal

The Grandfather Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest proposes the following actions in Management Area 3B, and Compartments 294, 295, and 300 (Roses Creek project area – see also Figure 2):

Table 1: Roses Creek Project Timber Harvest Proposal

Unit	Comp.-Stand #	Mgt. Area	Acres	Forest Type ¹	Age ² (2010)	Cutting Method ³	Residual Basal Area per acre (ft ²)	Harvest Method
1	300-12	3B	15	White Pine (WP) – Upland Hardwood (UH)	50	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
	300-13	3B	5	UH – WP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
2	300-19	3B	10	UH – Yellow Pine (YP)	85	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
	300-21	3B	20	WP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
	300-23	3B	10	UH – YP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
3	295-09	3B	14	WP – UH	97	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
4	295-08	3B	13	UH – WP	97	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
5	295-12	3B	15	WP – UH	82	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
6	295-12	3B	25	WP – UH	82	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
7	294-10	3B	34	UH – YP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
8	294-12	3B	35	UH – YP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
9	294-23	3B	35	WP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
10	294-21	3B	35	WP	90	Two-Age	15-20	Skidder
Total			266					

1 – Forest Type determined by Forest’s Continuous Inventory of Stand Conditions (CISC) database

2 – Age determined by CISC

3 – In the two-aged shelterwood regeneration method, the mature stand is partially cut. A new age class is established either by natural or artificial methods, with residual overstory (measured in square feet of basal area per acre) left in place for an indefinite period.

In addition, the Proposal would:

- Use and maintain existing classified (system) roads.
- Utilize and reconstruct about 2.3 miles of existing unimproved temporary roads (old “woods” roads) to access units for timber harvesting activities. The roads would be disked, seeded, and permanently closed for all access following harvest activities.
- Utilize and reconstruct about 1.0 miles of existing improved non-system road and construct about 0.3 miles of new system road to access units 9 and 10. This road would be placed onto the Forest’s Transportation System and would have a Road Management Objective (RMO) of D3 (linear wildlife opening, open to non-motorized use) and would be closed with a gate.
- Control/manage non-native invasive plant species along roads with herbicides and manual treatment (about 5 acres total).
- Control/manage grass, herbaceous, and woody plants growing through and along about 1.4 miles of the paved Table Rock Road, Forest Service Road (FSR) 99, using herbicides.
- Site preparation for natural regeneration with herbicide and hand tools on an estimated 266 acres (all units) of regeneration harvest using Triclopyr amine formulations with the cut stump application method to ensure establishment of a satisfactory stand within 5 years after final harvest. All regenerated stands would be monitored for desired stocking density and species variety with a stocking survey conducted 3-5 growing seasons following site preparation.
- Site preparation burn for partial artificial regeneration (shortleaf pine restoration) with fire on an estimated 139 acres (units 7, 8, 9, 10) of regeneration harvest.
- Release of newly regenerated stands (if needed) with herbicide on an estimated 266 acres (all units) using Triclopyr ester formulations by streamline application method 3-5 years following site preparation.

- Designate at least 50 acres of small patch old growth communities in Compartments 294, 295 and 300 (at least 150 acres total).
- Prescribe burn about 3,000 acres on a rotational basis within the AA, including within portions of units 4 and 5. The private inholding would be excluded from the burn unless the landowner requests it be included.
- Create and maintain a fuel break around facilities and improvements within the Outward Bound complex.
- Reintroduce populations of the sensitive brook floater into lower reaches of Steels Creek and Upper Creek with assistance from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.
- Perform stream rehabilitation along about 1.2 miles of Back Creek and a tributary by placing large woody debris and constructing log vanes in about 35 sites/structures. Activity would be completed by trackhoe and would use entire trees (root wad included) from outside riparian areas where available.
- Discourage unauthorized equestrian access use onto Back-Irish Creek Road (FSR 118) at or near Irish and Reedys Creeks by placing trees/brush within accessing routes.
- Daylight about seven acres along the Back-Irish Creek Road (FSR 118). Daylighting would occur for 30 feet on either side of the road for about 1.75 miles and would exclude riparian areas, areas with potential scenery impact to the Wilderness, and where the 2007 Linville Gorge wildfire burned along the western side of the road.

Purpose and Need for the Proposal

There is a need to develop between 5%-15% early-successional (0-10 year age class) wildlife habitat (ESH) in the project area because there is currently no 0-10 year wildlife ESH. The purpose of the approximately 281 acres of harvesting is to develop early-successional wildlife habitat in the project area and increase the amount of hard mast producing tree species (oaks and hickories). The Roses Creek area is the next area the Grandfather Ranger District has identified to ensure each compartment is scheduled for management analysis at a 10-year interval.

There is a need to control/manage populations of non-native invasive plants in the AA because they have become established in the AA. The purpose of the herbicide treatment of non-native invasive plants is to reduce potential for spread of them in the project area.

There is a need to improve water quality and fish habitat along and within stream reaches because sedimentation and erosion have been found in the project area and a culvert restricts fish passage. The purpose of rehabilitating stream channels and providing fish passage is to improve water quality, stream bank stability, and fish habitat.

There is a need to designate small patch old growth communities in Compartments 294, 295, and 300 because no old growth communities are currently designated in them. The purpose of designating small patch communities in Compartments 294, 295, and 300 prior to harvesting is to ensure there is a network of old growth communities across the Forest.

There is a need to reduce hazardous fuels because excess fuel loading poses a threat to resources in the project area. The purpose of prescribe burning up to about 2,300 acres in the western portion of the AA where the 2007 Linville Gorge fire burned and 670 acres within Compartment 300 and creating and maintaining a fuel break around Outward Bound facilities is to reduce fuel loads and reduce potential for future wildfires to burn with adverse impacts – wildlife habitat would also be improved by the prescribed burning. All prescribed burning would be outside the Linville Gorge Wilderness. The purpose of burning within portions of units 4 and 5 is to

improve habitat conditions for the sensitive botanical species *Thermopsis* (burning would only occur if the population exists within the units).

There is a need to improve rare aquatic species distribution in the AA. The purpose of augmenting brook floater populations in Steels Creek and Upper Creek is to ensure a sensitive aquatic species is not extirpated.

There is a need to rehabilitate streambanks and improve aquatic habitat in the AA. The purpose of placing large woody debris, constructing log vanes, and discouraging equestrian use within and adjacent to Back creek is to redirect flow; dissipate stream energy; and reduce potential impacts from sedimentation and erosion within Back Creek and a tributary stream.

There is a need to develop additional acres of grass/forb wildlife habitat in the AA because there is currently 14 acres of permanent grass/forb wildlife habitat. The purpose of the additional 12 acres of wildlife fields and seven acres of daylighting is to ensure about 33 acres of grass/forb wildlife habitat is established in the AA, further moving the area towards the desired condition of 42 acres.

Forest Plan Direction

This proposal was developed to address management opportunities identified for timber, wildlife, and other forest resources within the project area. Management opportunities were identified through a comparison of existing conditions with desired current and future conditions defined by the General Direction and Standards for Management Areas (MA) 3B and 18 in the Land and Resource Management Plan, Amendment 5, for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests (Forest Plan, USDA March 1994). The general direction and goals for **MA 3B** is to **emphasize a sustainable supply of timber with few open roads while permitting** road construction for resource management and to **manage habitat of mixed ages of forests** primarily for wildlife species such as wild turkey, deer and other animals requiring similar environments (Forest Plan, pages III-63 and III-71). Embedded within MA 3B is MA 18; which **consists of the aquatic ecosystem, riparian ecosystem, and closely associated plant and animal communities** and is **actively managed to protect and enhance, where possible, the distinctive resource values and characteristics dependent on or associated with these systems** (Forest Plan, page III-179). Forest Plan direction states to use prescribed fire (controlled fire) to **reduce fire hazards** (Forest Plan, page III-52). Management Area 3B Forest Plan direction prescribes needed stand treatments to emphasize quality hardwood sawtimber as the primary product (Forest Plan, page III-75) and by applying appropriate timber harvest methods to produce a continuous (sustainable) supply of sawtimber and other wood products (Forest Plan, page III-71).

Management Areas 1B (sustainable timber harvesting and motorized access), 4C (visually pleasing scenery without timber harvesting), and 7 (Wilderness) are within the AA, but no harvesting or road development is proposed within them.

The Roses Creek AA contains a portion of the designated old growth Large Patch 28 which satisfies the medium patch requirement for this AA. Large Patch 28 is the only large patch within the AA evaluated and designated as an old growth large patch. Within the AA are stands of Forest Plan initial inventory old growth; however, no harvesting is proposed within them. A portion of the Linville Gorge Addition Inventoried Roadless Area is within the AA; however, no harvesting or road development is proposed within it. There are no North Carolina State proposed Natural Heritage Areas or wild and scenic river designations in the AA.

I recognize the many interests and concerns the public has regarding management on National Forest lands, and this is why I am requesting your comments concerning the Roses Creek Project proposal. Your specific comments to the proposal will help me identify key issues and possible alternative ways of meeting the project's purpose and need. ***Please return your comments to me by May 7, 2008.*** Comments may be mailed to: Grandfather Ranger District, ATTN: District Ranger, 109 East Lawing Drive, Nebo, North Carolina, 28761, or e-mailed to: comments-southern-north-carolina-pisgah-grandfather@fs.fed.us.

We will also be holding an open house meeting at the Grandfather Ranger District in Nebo, North Carolina on Thursday, April 29, 2008, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Forest Service staff will be on hand to share information on the proposal as well as answer questions members of the public may have.

Please contact Ted Oprean, Project Leader, at (828) 877-3350; or Michael Hutchins, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at (828) 682-6146, if you have questions or need additional information regarding this proposal. I appreciate your continued interest in the management of your National Forest.

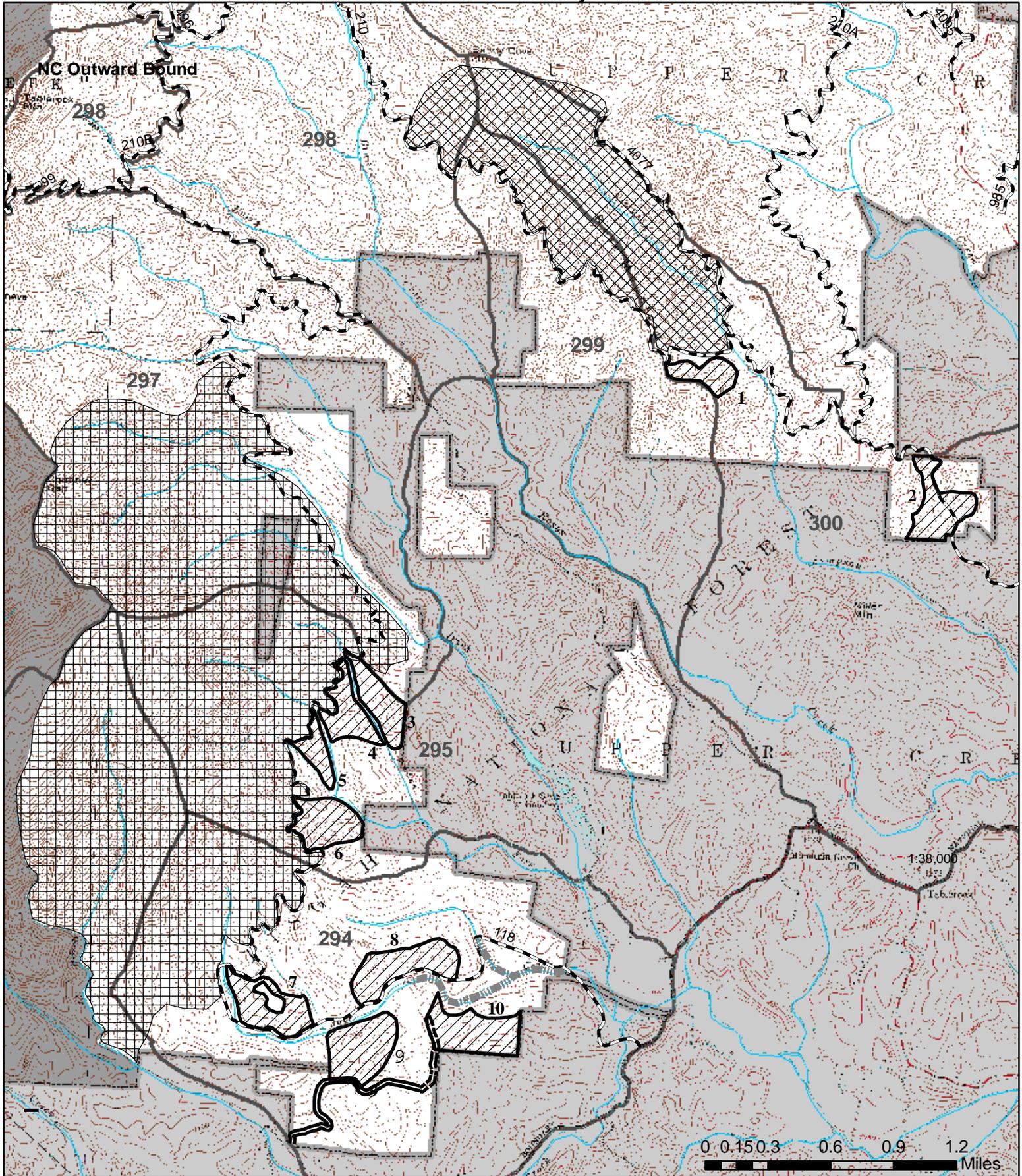
Sincerely,

/s/ Joy W. Malone

JOY W. MALONE
District Ranger

Enclosure

Roses Creek Project Area



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|  Roses Creek Proposed Units |  Stream Stabilization |  Compartment Boundary |
|  Existing System Roads | Proposed Rx Burn Areas |  Linville Wilderness Boundary |
|  New Road Construction |  Chimney Gap Burn |  National Forest Lands |
|  Existing Road - Add To System |  Simpson Creek Burn | |