

Headquarters Assessment

Public Comments from 2/26/09 Meeting in Old Fort

FIRE/FUELS

Prescribed burn schedules: climber can help USFS spread the word in the “Break Neck Burn” & “Lost Cove Burn” area.

Support landscape burns lit from ridges and allowed to burn in natural pattern. Develop wilderness fire plans for wilderness study areas.

RESTORATION

Implement management techniques which move the AA towards meeting the restoration goals outlined in the Southern Appalachian Ecosystem Restoration Summit as well as meeting critical habitat needs for wildlife species addressed within the State of NC Wildlife Action Plan, including rare early successional communities, fire dependent ecosystems, and forest stand diversity for; species, age class, and stand structure.

RECREATION

Wilson Creek Trail area: Would like to have some or many of these marked as mountain biking. Most mountain bikers are willing to help maintain trails. Would like to have a voice in trail designations. High Country Mountain bike group has cut back overgrowth on Timber Ridge.

Increase contact and communication w/ CCC. We the climbing community can offer significant resources and help to the USFS in the area of: (1) Assist w/ identifying climber impacts in riparian areas. (2) Possibly help w/ impact management through new trail building or rustic parking facilities. (3) Formally allow & recognize rock climbing & bouldering as a recreational activity in area. (4) For purposes of resource protection, management, safety & development allow installation and maintenance of fixed anchors by climbing community. Again we would like to offer our help and significant resources w/any surveys or infrastructure additions. In other words we would like to be a partner to USFS in your effective management & understanding of this area.

Develop parking area for recreational users and hunters at access road to Headquarters Mountain.

Restrict rock climbing activities around any peregrine falcon nests at the Lost Cove Cliffs.

VEGETATION/WILDLIFE/AQUATICS

Adhere to Forest Plan and early successional habitat standards.

When considering early successional habitat acreage, consideration should be given for areas of natural disturbance. Count that in known acreage linear wildlife openings should be left for all non-motorized uses including horseback riding and bicycles.

Close linear wildlife openings within wilderness study areas.

Evaluate stands of Eastern Hemlock which are logistically feasible to implement adelgid treatments to preserve critical riparian drainages within the AA. Move towards meeting the maximum limits for early successional habitat in all compartments within the AA, using both forestry and prescribed fire techniques. Daylight and refurbish to a mix of grass and forbs, all wildlife openings (fields and linear) across the entirety of the AA. Maintain log landings and roads from timber harvests as wildlife openings planted in a mix of grass and forbs. Use proximity of Blue Ridge parkway as an opportunity to inform and teach public of importance of active wildlife and forest management which includes the use of timber harvests and prescribed fire. Continue and expand Northern Red Oak study area within compartment 106.

BOTANY/OLD GROWTH/NON – NATIVE INVASIVES

Incorporate existing O/G into small O/G patches. I'll give you GIS coverage and maps of O/G inventory sites.

OTHER

MA 2C: Increase numbers and acreage of wildlife openings (fields and linear), incorporate prescribed fire to maintain critical pine/oak heath habitats and early successional areas, reduce and address white pine encroachment into high elevation northern red oak stands. **MA 3B:** Evaluate areas to implement an array of timber harvest techniques such as thinnings, clearcuts, and shelterwood methods which focus on oak restoration, creating early successional habitat, and creating stand diversity in both species composition and age structure. Evaluate possibility of using prescribed fire within small site specific areas to accomplish goals as well as help to create areas of early successional habitats. **MA 4A:** Evaluate for areas where timber thinnings may be implemented to increase stand diversity within Management Unit. **MA 4C:** Increase numbers and acreage of wildlife openings (fields and linear), promote and encourage regeneration and health of northern red oak stands as well address issues of encroachment by white pine, mountain laurel, and rhododendron. **MA 4D:** Increase numbers and acreage of wildlife openings (fields and linear), evaluate areas suitable for timber thinnings to promote montane oak/hickory forests, and help to restore stand diversity. Evaluate possibility of using prescribed fire within small site specific areas to promote oak and aid in oak regeneration. **MA 6:** Implement large scale, landscape type prescribed burns to manage for pine/oak heath habitats as well as to reduce the spread of white pine, rhododendron, and mountain laurel from drainages to ridge tops. Allow for prescribed fires to be conducted under varying fire intensities to also create areas of early successional habitats and mimic natural fire regimes. Replace “locking post” gates across AA, with “swing” or “cross-bar” gates.