

These correspond, in order, to the numbered list in the document “November 29th Comment Form.”

Vegetation

Draft Desired Conditions:

1. Woodlands and open forests with small canopy gaps, interspersed with glades and Piedmont prairies, occupy portions of the forest where they occurred historically. These forests contain mixed ages with old trees and old forest conditions.
2. Non-native invasive species are at low levels that do not interfere with native plant reproduction and distribution. New outbreaks soon disappear.
3. Plant and animal communities more common in the past are reestablished on suitable sites across the forest. These include longleaf and shortleaf pine woodlands, oak/hickory forests, glades, and canebrakes.
4. Schweinitz sunflowers are restored throughout its historical range across the forest. Other rare species are sustaining or increasing in population.
5. Biological diversity is evident across the forest, and is further enhanced by a network of areas maintained in a natural condition. Rare plant and animal communities are well represented in this network.
6. Regenerating hardwoods are evident following disturbances in tree canopies (canopy gaps) in multi-age forests.
7. The forest is in a healthy condition. Most trees are in good health, well-formed, and with little evidence of widespread insect and/or disease damage. A healthy forest includes some dead and dying trees as well as snags and den trees that contribute to wildlife habitat.

Water Quality and Fisheries

Draft Desired Conditions:

1. Aquatic ecosystems are diverse, functioning properly, and providing high quality habitat for all indigenous aquatic species, including non-game species.
2. Fish are plentiful in streams and lakes. Water is clean and clear, and there is in-stream habitat for fish to hide, spawn, and find food. Non-native aquatic species do not threaten UNF lakes, rivers, or streams.
3. Native fresh water mussel communities are thriving.

DRAFT DESIRED CONDITIONS (partial list for compatibility discussion November 29, 2005)

4. Streamsides are covered in native riparian vegetation, including trees capable of adding large woody debris for hydrologic stability and instream fish habitat. Stream channels are connected to their floodplains so that high streamflow events can be processed through the ecosystem without creating gullies or eroding stream banks.
5. Bogs and seeps have only native vegetation and are maintaining or increasing their size.
6. Stream channels degraded by historic mining are exhibiting improved biological and hydrological conditions.

Wildlife

Draft Desired Conditions:

1. The Forest exhibits the diversity of native ecosystems and species typical of the Piedmont ecoregion.
2. Wildlife fields and openings in the forest are predominantly filled with native grasses, herbs, and shrubs of species that native wildlife use for food. Forest openings are dispersed across the forest.
3. Some non-native non-invasive plants such as grains are growing in a fraction of wildlife openings in order to provide the wildlife viewing experience desired by forest visitors.
4. Populations of -the diversity of native species typical of the Piedmont ecosystem - vertebrates, invertebrates, game and non-game, and including herptiles - are at healthy levels in balance with their habitat.
5. Habitat structural components such as dens, snags and downed wood is evident in most stands. However the amount of dead wood is limited near private developments to reduce fire danger.
6. Suitable habitat for red-cockaded woodpecker is restored on sites where is occurred historically.
7. Regenerating hardwoods are evident, such as oaks and hickories for continual mast production following disturbances in tree canopies (canopy gaps) in multi-age forests. Acorns and hickory nuts (important wildlife food sources) are abundant most years in oak-hickory forests.
8. Ephemeral pools, ponds, swamps, seeps, bogs, and other wetlands are frequent throughout the Forest and visited by many wild animals. Conditions are secure for animals that use these habitats for reproducing such as amphibians.

Heritage Resources

Draft Desired Conditions:

1. Archeological treasures are protected from loss and appropriately restored, including and significant prehistoric and historic sites (i.e. Thornburg place). Cultural resources are intact yet available for interpretation.
2. Visitors to the Uwharrie have opportunities to learn about the past, including how to protect these resources, through interpretive programs and information.

Wilderness

Draft Desired Condition:

The wilderness exhibits little evidence of modern human disturbance, and is remote from the sights and sounds of 21st-century civilization such as traffic from roads. Natural processes such as succession, decomposition and natural regeneration, and disturbance factors such as fire, wind, and water shape vegetation. Large areas of uninterrupted habitat provide a safe haven for animals. Visitors to the area include nature enthusiasts, hikers, hunters, and researchers. No facilities are present other than the occasional fire ring. Motorized or mechanical vehicles, equipment, or devices are absent. Information signs are not seen within the wilderness boundary.

Scenery

Draft Desired Conditions:

1. Scenery is pleasant and generally consists of older, closed canopy forests with a park like or semi-open understory, except in young regeneration areas, prairie-like openings, glades, and wildlife openings.
2. The Uwharrie National Forest is free of litter and refuse.