

TOPIC: Public Meeting March 21, 2006

SUBJECT: Uwharrie National Forest Land Management Plan Revision

LOCATION: Partnership for Children, 404 North Main Street, Troy, NC

PARTICIPANTS AND FS ATTENDEES: Mike Thompson, Liz Matthews, Carly Apple, Amy Cooke, Hazel Poolos, Don Hamilton, Carol Nothstein, Steve Nothstein, Mike Schafale, Tommy Taylor, Tammy Durum, Pete Diamond, Jody Eudy, Joe Harper, Jason, Maghee, Elizabeth Earnhardt, LeeAnn Kimble, Kathryn (sp?) Baker, Sue Hennesey, John Alcorn (sp?), Jeff Hershog (sp?), Alex Leckie, Dahl Winters, Katerina Savvas, Leon Peele, John Fries, Kevin Redding, Jeff Harper, Galen Koan, Clare Reece Glore, Clifton Baker, Mike Chisholm, Judy Chisholm, Rebecca Rea, Dave Muhly, Gabriel Cumming, Mary Joan Pugh, Robert Frohreich, Bridget Frohreich, Larry Blackburn, Chris Cagle, Scott Fields, Richard Queen, Boon Chesson, Gin Wall, Justin Alcaras, Scott Maynor, Elsie Hughes, Lane Poole, Dr. Joe Flood, Kay Hatley, Ron Myers, Wes Rollins, Jason B (sp?), Tom Knopp, Brian Sutton, Marla Coulthard, Jean Thompson, Mark Lewis, Jane Lewis, Ruth Berner, Steve Simon, Steve Hendricks, Julie Trzeciak, Deborah Walker, Mark Carter, Lea Wofford, John Blanton, Gary Kauffman, Carol Milholen. Ian Garner setup the meeting space. Some attendees did not sign in.

MINUTES:

[We want to thank all the participants for sticking with us and being so supportive during this meeting! Our meeting space was way too small and we didn't have nearly enough handouts for the great turnout we had. We'll try to find a bigger space for next time.]

The meeting opened with an update on the status of the proposal before Congress to allow the sale of certain tracts of National Forest System lands. Public comments on the proposal are being received until March 30th.

The main activities for the evening were two breakout session lasting one hour each.

One session was to discuss and gather ideas for "special areas" which are one of the required plan components in the revised land management plan. First, participants were asked for their idea of the most special areas on the Forest. Then, the Forest Service Team presented ideas for "archeological zones" and "botanical special areas." There were numerous questions and comments about these. Finally, Gary Kauffman (Forest Botanist) presented a proposal for "Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas." This last concept seemed to be well received. [The Forest Service Team will use the ideas and comments we received to refine our selection of "special areas" before the next meeting.]

The second session was to discuss and gather ideas for recreation opportunities as they relate to the "suitable uses" component required for the Forest Plan. Steve Hendricks gave an overview of the "Recreation Opportunity Spectrum" which is the methodology

the Forest Service uses for managing recreation “settings” for particular kinds of uses. [The Forest Service Team will use the comments we received to guide us in making changes to the settings established in the 1986 Plan.]

The next meeting (probably early May) will be to gather ideas for “guidelines,” another of the required plan components, and “monitoring items.” That next meeting should wrap up this phase until a draft plan is ready for a final once-over before being published for a 90-day formal comment period in the fall. It is likely there will be a meeting in late July, 2006, to get some review of the proposed plan before it goes to press.

Handouts (and hopefully graphics) from the March 21st meeting will be available on line by March 31st.

Trigger Question in “Special Areas” breakout: What, to you, is the most special area of the Forest?

Answers are recorded in the table below. Numbers correspond to dots placed on a map of the Forest.

Dot Number	Name of site/comments about site
1	River trail – fish trap # 31
2	Giant Monadnocks – Nifty Rocks (from NCNHP) horse trail is close
3	Woodrun scenic areas – 2 old clearcuts that are growing in and need to be cleared again
4	Hiking trail at north end of Wilderness
5	Hanglider - great view
6	Dark Mountain – jumping off rock – scenic, botanical, rock features
7	Falls Dam Slope
8	North of Jumping off rock, rare plants
9	Cotton Place road, high biological interest (maidenhair ferns)
10	Woodrun huntcamp at trailhead for mountain bikes
11	Good tree growing and looking at area
12	Doerschuk (Talbert)
13	Thornberg Homesite
14	Deepwater trail camp – good OHV trail that was closed
15	Uwharrie Trail
16	Flora McDonald Place
17	Correl Road ---- Longleaf Pine Ecosystem
18	Lomax Area ---- Longleaf Pine Ecosystem
19	Deep Water Trail ---- old OHV trail system wants reopened (same as 14)
20	Falls Dam area ----- rare plants including Solidago area
21	Birkhead Wilderness
22	Thornburg Tract----- cultural (same as 13)
23	Badin upland depressions --- botanical & geological

Dot Number	Name of site/comments about site
24	Jumping off rock ---- zoological, botanical
25	Stokes Ferry Forest --- unusual botanical forest
26	Caitlins trail ----- scenic & botanical
27	Barnes Creek—Poison Fork ---- rare mussels
28	Abner Bog ---- rare botanical
29	Outlying Tract --- Zoo visitors like nearby area
30	Little River Headwaters --- near Pisgah Covered Bridge
31	Rocky Creek ---- Botanical and Longleaf

Comments from “PostIts” received in the “Special Areas” breakout.

Topic	Comment
SPECIAL AREAS	I believe that botanical and endangered species should take precedence over heritage since the heritage sites are <u>so</u> spread out! (As mentioned, heavy concentration)
SPECIAL AREAS	Promote recreation already existing so as to defer the focus from archeology sites to recreation.
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	Maximum effort should be made to preserve the Schweinitz sunflower and to restore the Piedmont Prairies.
Archeological Zones	How is an arch site determined? Does one arrowhead define an area as an arch site? How is the age of a site determined? Is it accurate or guess work?
Archeological Zones	Every area can be considered a historical area within the Uwharrie Forest, the county, the state of N.C., or the east coast of the U.S. There have been all types of activities going on here for 100’s of years or even 1000’s of years. People in the past have enjoyed living within the area so why should we not be able to enjoy the same places and go enjoy nature? History is important but not at the expense of living and enjoying today and tomorrow. Use <u>common</u> sense!
Archeological Zones	I feel the archeology regions designated are quite large and heavily concentrated.
Schweinitz sunflower	I would like to see more areas open to “prairie” conditions.

Topic	Comment
habitat management areas	Work with user groups to establish low impact guidelines/standards.
Archeological Zones	<p>I feel it is imperative for resources to co-exist with recreation users at all costs!</p> <p>If we are unable to enjoy these sites why preserve them?</p> <p>- Work together -</p>
Recreation Suitable Uses	Only more people are going to come to the Uwharrie National Forest and to the recreation areas. We are becoming overly used and environmental degradation is resulting. More trails & areas need to be created to create a rotation of rec. uses of these areas to bring the degradation to an acceptable level and create opportunities for recuperation.
Archeological Zones	The areas designated as special for archeology seems very large especially in areas that already being used by the public.
Archeological Zones	Archeologists are our paid experts. They hopefully have identified the most important sites. If we don't save these sites, our ancestor's history is lost forever! For goodness sakes, pay attention to their recommendations. Think past today and think of future generations. Save as much as possible!
SPECIAL AREAS Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	<p>Buffer Zone – only uses that wouldn't adversely affect the special area in any way; at least 100 meters for archeological areas; bigger buffers for recreational areas next to botanical areas to protect them from runoff and trampling disturbances if horseback riders or other users go off trail. Buffer zones should be marked (maybe by painting trees) & the public educated.</p> <p>Maybe places to restore Schweinitz sunflower could coincide with places people want to have trees removed to improve the views from ridge tops.</p> <p>Ruth is doing great work! It must be a lot of pressure having to juggle the demands of people in the community, people from elsewhere using the Uwharries, and people high up in the government giving surprise notices about land sales (sorry to mention it again). The US Forest Service is really reaching out to people. I think they are thankful for it, or will be once they see their public lands protected more.</p>

Topic	Comment
SPECIAL AREAS Archeological Zones	Assuming that the identification of special interest areas will be the prime mechanism (other than federal law) for protecting the unique archeological areas on the Uwharrie, then these areas should be included in the SIA inventory in the new plan.
SPECIAL AREAS	Is there a possibility of showing an analog version of <u>all</u> the GIS special interest layers on one single map of we can see the various uses/interests?
Archeological Zones	Archeological sites must be protected. ALL are special places.
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	More Prairie Habitat
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Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	Increase size of prairie-like openings to 10 acres or more.
Recreation Suitable Uses	OHV – Proposed Recreation Change – Build tighter, more technical trail and track area on a low site quality area to concentrate OHV riders in a smaller, easier to maintain area. This would be easily managed and very profitable. Motorcross is the fastest growing sport in America!
Recreation Suitable Uses	River Cross access bridge for hiking/horses between 109 and mouth of Uwharrie.
Suitable Uses	Reforestation of woodland areas within recreation areas
SPECIAL AREAS	Special Interest Area – Re-opening old OHV Trails west of FR516 close to deep water trail. Old trail names: Falls Dam Extension, CCC, Big Branch, & Elk Horn. These were part of the original “Loop” Trail System. They were closed in the early 90’s due to Bald Eagle.

Recreation Opportunity breakout notes:

Group 1

More trails open, same rules for all, more enforcement

Trails maintained and kept open – OHV

Outlying tracts of land – smaller blocks off limits to heavy impact

Longleaf Pine – restoration and increase longleaf

Birkhead Wilderness

Some signs – regarding impacts may be helpful – more information on impacts

Wildlife viewing – lower impact especially during nesting and birds that nest on ground

Increase the trails availability, perhaps a rotation of use to reduce impact to resources

Group 2

Trails could have nice vistas, with a little maintenance

Archeological sites – open to volunteers – PIT

Uwharrie Trail – fill in the gaps – purchase or exchange – proper trailhead

Have separate opportunity for different uses

Maps and rules posted at places where passes are purchased – use areas

Welcome Center – information available

Signage at locations – bilingual – English/Spanish

Written Comments from ROS breakout group are recorded in the table below:

(1) Where are your favorite scenic places on the Uwharrie National Forest?
Hilltops where there are wide open view – I think everyone's named a lot of these. All the mountains – hang glider especially, although it's starting to grow up along the side of the mountain so the views are being blocked.
Uwharrie Trail – Harvey's Ridge Mountain – Birkhead Wilderness in general
Piedmont Mafic Cliff community – Jumping Off Rock – Falls Reservoir – Black

Mountain – Barnes Creek & Poison Fork area – Birkhead Wilderness
Along river – along the lakes – on the high ridges – Big Rocks (Nifty Rocks) – some of the pine forest
Falls Lake – Deep water area – Keep the Birkhead Wilderness wilderness
Keyanwee Mountain Bike trails overlooking Morrow Mountain/Lake Tillery – creek crossings on mtn bike trails – the last rapid on the Uwharrie River – Top of Shingeltop Mountain and Horsetrough Mtn – Walker Mountain – Dennis Mountain – waterfall at Falls Lake area – the Uwharrie River
Hanglider – Falls Dam – Badin Lakeshore – Uwharrie River – Big Rocks – old trails on south end where U. River meets Badin/Dams – west facing slopes along Badin Lake
Deep Water OHV areas
Badin Lake Area - Deep Water OHV Area
Birkhead Wilderness – OHV area ridge views
Barnes Creek – anywhere with natural longleaf
Any natural longleaf pine site
The equestrian trails in general which are narrow, with different terrain and vistas – one area specially on trails on way to Badin with big rocks – great plant diversity in the area
Falls Lake – Hunts Creek Camp – Jumping Off Rock area – Birkhead Wilderness – Thornburg Tract – fishing pier – Narrows picnic area – unique bogs I’ve been to
Birkhead Wilderness Area - Jumping Off Rock – the Narrows – Uwharrie River – any remote, little used location
Any area where there are remote or semi-remote tracts deep into forests with as many steep hills as possible.
All OHV areas, specifically Daniel, Dutch John, Rocky Mount . . .
Enjoy the OHV trails
Group camp and remote trails
Views – intersection of 516 and Falls Dam trail – top of Daniel’s hill climb – top of Dickey Bell OHV trail climb – creek bottom on Dutch John OHV trail – creeks

Ridgeline on Dickey Bell OHV trail – forest overlook Falls Dam OHV trail – River overlook 553/Dickey Bell OHV trail
Non-designated trails (top of Kaitlyn, etc.) – river trail – lake
Non-designated trails (Kaitlyn’s trails) – river and lake trails – HangGlider – Big Rocks – the old trails
Dark Mountain – Holts Cabin Area – Big Rocks area – Uwharrie River – Many other places where there are native trees and plant communities and natural areas
Dark Mountain – Big Rock Trail – Uwharrie River
Badin Area – especially southern half – bluffs above Falls Dam, Nifty Rocks – Shingletop Mountain area – Dark Mountain area
Falls Reservoir
(2) Are there specific areas of the Uwharrie where you think there could be new or additional trail opportunities? If yes, where and what type of trail?
Areas not near conservation, sensitive places or running alongside streams, but are near places with good views or interesting plant/animal life for sightseeing/photography
Fill in the 4 gaps in the 50-mile Uwharrie National Recreation Trail. Need trailhead at northern end of Uwharrie Trail on Tot Hill Farm Road.
No – there are enough trails and roads that are fragmenting the forest. New trails allow non-native species to invade the forest.
Many of the unmarked (nondesignated) trails could be marked, etc.
Fill in lands around Uwharrie Trail – needs northern trailhead and parking area
Woodrun Trail system – mtn bike/hiking – Skyock
Yes – between 24/27 past 109 to Randolph County “horse trails, biking, hiking.” Multi-use trails “non-motorized” for everyone. Let horses into Birkhead Wilderness
Reopen old Otto trail system, west of 5FR 516, Falls Dam extension, Nig Branch, CCC & Elk Horn as a loop system (OHV)
Additional OHV trails to lesson impact of users. Falls Dam Extension, Big Branch, CCC, Elk Horn
Areas should be identified that encourage quality recreation opportunities without causing ecological impacts especially to T&E species. Plus extra efforts should be made

to ensure quality human experiences are both protected and provided.
Loving Hill Road area – walking trails only
As longleaf sites are improved, trails that educate public to the value of this ecosystem.
Just ongoing possibilities for equestrian trails with equestrians helping <u>maintain</u> and possibly pay a user fee.
Yes if add property – lots of opportunity. 5 gaps identified in Randolph near Walkers Creek – work with landowners to connect to Uwharrie Forest – public/private partnership.
No none at all
With regard to OHV I would like to see every trail old and current used. Where a trail can be extended would be a desirable condition.
Previously opened trails that were closed in the past – to cut down on social encounters (16 miles only exist)
Just reopen some of the old, existing trails (OHV)
Open up previously closed OHV trails.
Re-open OHV trails west of 516 closed in early 1990's due to bald eagle impacts. Old trail names are: Falls Dam Extension, C.C.C, Big Branch, Elk Horn (a loop system_ easy to re-open.
OHV trails – there are several old/non used trails.
Connecting to Kaitlyn – horse – other such area as well. Cross country trails
You could add the old trails to the designated trails and pub them on the maps.
Hiking trails along lake. Hiking trails by Uwharrie River.
Canoe access Uwharrie River
Hiking trails – all over. E.g. norther Badin unit, Walker Mtn area, longleaf pine areas. Maybe OHV trails in less sensitive areas – e.g. Pekin area.
Nifty Rocks (boulder Field Overlook). Horse trail now – hiking trails up to rocks and over to island area.

(3)Has your recreation experience on the Uwharrie ever been diminished because of other types of recreation uses or large numbers of people? If yes, where?
Horse riding and OHV aren't compatible. Hikers also don't want to hike over horse trails due to the waste and muddiness – same for OHV trails. People who come for remoteness and naturalness (hikers, campers, kayakers, canoers) have different things they want than people who come for thrills/adventure (horse riders, mtn. bikers, and especially OHV users) – ideally there should be separation between the two.
Yes, the Badin Lake area
Loud noise from the rifle range. Over-use of trails by OHVs. Littering, especially along waterways (and especially by fishermen).
Yes – the whole Badin area – lots of vehicles speeding everywhere – loud – firing range area – loud – Yates Place Camp 500+ boy scouts – very loud. I don't go there now
No
Yes – traffic on roads – ATV's off their system. Cove Ramp – boating. River at 555 and Daniel. The recent running event had one way traffic near Jumping Off Rock.
Yes – on OHV trails due to lack or available trail mileage.
Yes, OHV areas. Increase facilities at other trailheads to promote wider use. Double parking lot is crowded.
As a non-motorized user, I find the ecological and social impacts to be unacceptable. Efforts need to occur to ensure users are segregated to diminish user conflicts while still protecting the experiences and protect wildlife habitat and visitor experience.
I don't use the main forest because of over use of horses and ATVs
Unauthorized trail bikes and 4 wheelers in sites not designated for OVH west of Troy.
NO
Yes – while camping at Uwharrie River – high traffic & motorized ATVs. Yes – while camping off gravel road. Falls Lake boat put in – drunken behaviors felt unsafe. Jet skis on Badin – hard to canoe the lake.
Yes – one person is one too much
A little – any time there is a traffic jam on the trail system I don't like it. We could build

bypasses on major obstacles (OVH).
4-wheel Quads in large numbers not staying on provided trails. Full size vehicles stay on trails.
No, not really, seems some ATV users can be found off trails, just riding through woods.
AT V riders not staying on the trails and making OHV look bad for the responsible users.
Lots of horses using OHV system. OHVs have to postpone their recreation and wait on slow moving horses – “constantly” – totally separate horses and OHVs. Inconsistency of treatment of users – OHV-vs-horses.
Holiday weekends the 16 miles of OHV trails can become overcrowded – more trails could lessen the impact on individual trails
.
No – never
The shooting range
Noise around boat landing
ATV’s
Yes. Frequently in the Badin area. The shooting range detracts from recreational experience over a large area. OHV users also. Serious noise intrusion. The Badin area is the larger contiguous part of the forest, the most scenic, one of the most ecologically interesting, but is largely given to highly intrusive uses. Other users would like this area too if not for incompatible uses. Excessive development of campgrounds has diminished the camping experience.
Yes – all night parties at Deep Water – play music loud and disturb other primitive campers.
(4) Have you seen any evidence of excessive impacts to forest resources due to recreation use or poor trail location (such as erosion?) If yes, where?
OHV trails all over the Badin Lake area and the mountain bike trails in the Woodrun area. The lower lying the areas, the muddier the trails can get with heavy use.
Yes, but research (both from state and USFS) has found that ORV’s doing excessive damage. Horse trails, hiking trails & bike trails who have less impact if expanded. This is also in the research. Expansion of these trails lessens the impact.
Yes – on mtn. bike trails – major areas have been repaired.

<p>Yes – Daniel mountain from other side of river. Yes – Big Rocks. Many trails that don't use switchbacks. Overcamped primitive sites are barren. Most “favorite” areas are overused.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>NO</p>
<p>Although diversity of forest users are important, measures need to be put in place to protect poorly located trails – relocate to reduce erosion & be sure to restore the trails that are left behind or exotic/non-native invasive species will take over.</p>
<p>ORV trails near Hathwanger Retreat</p>
<p>OHV trails at Hathwanger Retreat. Cotton Place.</p>
<p>Unfortunately I often see trash on some trails, parts of equestrian trails. Each time I ride I get off my horse, walk, & fill up a small grocery bag or 2 with trash.</p>
<p>Yes – near Uwharrie River – Hunt Creek Camp OHV trails off gravel road on way to Falls Lake Falls Lake perimeter End of road near fishing pier on way to campground at Badin Badin Lake campgrounds</p>
<p>Any trail impacts forest resources. Off-trail use (eg hikes, horses, ORVs) severely impacts nesting birds – trails should be used for intended purpose only. OHVs are a major adverse impact on everything – <u>no more OHV trails!</u></p>
<p>Yes, mud pits are bad on the trail (OHV)</p>
<p>Areas where quads spider web existing trails in all OHV areas</p>
<p>Hill climb on Dutch John is eroding rapidly</p>
<p>Falls Dam OHV Trail – ATV's (fourwheelers) traveling off trail into creek bottoms. More mileage would be spread over a larger area.</p>
<p>Along many of the designated OHV trails there is widespread evidence of ATV's going “off trails” and doing forest destruction</p>
<p>There are a few trails with some erosion however, these trails currently add to the degree of difficulty as it relates to trail riding. In those areas possibly cut out small connectors for those who wish to avoid that particular part of the trail. In addition the trails directly behind the old horse camp at the food of the trail where the wooden bridges land (mud) need attention.</p>

The trail bridges right below the old horse camp are really muddy and sort of dangerous for people on horses.
Tony trail (horse) should be moved away from the big mafic rocks (near the lake)
Big Rocks Trail Poor climbing techniques – pitons ATV's
Abundant areas with heavy trail erosion and resource damage on the OHV trail system. Limited areas on horse and foot trails.
Horse trails are eroded. Shoreline areas are eroded where people fish at Falls and more so at Badin up from Cove boat ramp.
(5) At what specific places on or near the Uwharrie do we need to have better information about recreation opportunities available?
In all local towns so potential visitors are aware of recreation opportunities – this would help the local economies a lot. Rules and regulations should be provided to OHV users when they buy their passes. They shouldn't just list the miles, but also why the rules exist (so there won't be erosion, damage to vegetation, protection of scenery, etc.) Roads leading into the cities near the area need more signs. Maps, brochures at the Welcome Centers/Visitor Centers and local tourism offices such as the Randolph County TDA and the future visitor center/rest area on I-73/I-74 at the Randolph/Moore County line
Any of the archeological, prehistoric locations. History. Participation on digs – volunteers. I'm not familiar with any particular site, but I want to become familiar with some.
Trailhead in Randolph County at Tot Hill Farm Rd.
Badin Lake area needs visitor center, maps, brochures, trail map and info on trails and lesser used areas of forest; interpretation (natural and scenic info) more historical/archeological interpretation Maps also need to be available to area visitor centers, chambers, etc, stores, etc.
Woodrun trailhead off of 24/27
Entrances off highway. Campgrounds. Info center, rules/explained why. Also online. <u>Not</u> at the store – where you get passes at?
At all trailheads, especially at the stores that sell the OHV permits.

OHV trailheads. Hunt camp. Many new OHV users are unaware of rules and regulations.
Instead of having most of the recreation opportunities occurring in the Badin Lake area use different diverse areas to provide quality experience opportunities throughout the forest while making sure that conflicts and impacts to ecological conditions are minimized.
Maps – equestrian trails – color coding and maps need to be more clear The Sauratown Trails Association in Stokes County was able to get a retired surveyor to help with mapping. Their maps are beautiful! (good process – thanks!)
Welcome centers on highways Randolph County TDA Businesses like convenience stores or fish/bait stores Local discount stores Hiking/camping stores
Need info in many places explaining how high-impact recreational activity (e.g. anything noisy) affects low-impact usage. While this will not affect the behaviors of those who “don’t care,” it may change the behaviors of those who simply “don’t know.”
Maps are fine[?] We make our own.
Label OHV trails with more signage throughout the trail system.
At stores that sell day/year passes for OHVs’ They need to handout, with every pass, Tread Lightly info. Possibly OVH user could sign that they understand rules dealing with staying on trails – what the damage causes!
At any of the local stores that are selling the OHV passes.
At horse camp areas as well as OHV and foot use gathering or starting places.
Possibly at the old horse camp and places where people camp out.
More interpretive information regarding the significance of what is there
North end of Uwharrie Trail.
Trailheads – Need visitor center in the Badin Recreation area