

TOPIC: Public Meeting November 29th, 2005

SUBJECT: Uwharrie National Forest Land Management Plan Revision

LOCATION: Troy/Montgomery Senior Center, 200 Park Road, Troy, NC

PARTICIPANTS WHO SIGNED IN AND FS ATTENDEES: Chris M. Cagle, Don Childrey, Steve Novak, Boon Chesson, DJ Gerken, Lane Poole, Kevin Redding, Elizabeth Earnhardt, Janet Becker, Bruce Hatton, Ben Prater, John Blanton, David Poole, Scott Pohlman, Mike Schafale, Tommy Taylor, Richard Queen, Karen Katula, Scott Fields, Marla Coulthard, Sue Hennessey, Dave Muhly, Leon Peele, Ruth Berner, Anthony Matthews, Steve Hendricks, Steve Simon, Sheryl Bryan, MaeLee Hafer, Leigh Marston, Rodney Snedeker, Joel Hardison, Brady Dodd, plus at least three others who didn't sign in.

**MINUTES:**

The meeting opened at 6:10 PM with a presentation on “suitable uses” – the main subject of the meeting. The approach for the meeting tonight is to discuss how certain “uses” of the national forest are “compatible” with various desired conditions previously developed.

Handouts of the following were available: Uwharrie Strategic Overview, Uses/Desired Conditions Matrix, and the Compatibility of Uses Comment Form.

Participants divided into two groups for discussion of two trigger questions: (1) How is timber harvest compatible with the desired conditions? and (2) How is outdoor recreation compatible with the desired conditions.

The big group reconvened for brief report-outs from the two groups and to hear what will be going on over the next few months: December & January – the Forest Service Team will be putting together the draft plan components worked on to date and developing “ecological sustainability” information. They will also be meeting with their Regional Office counterparts to update them and to be briefed about the Environmental Management System (EMS) process that will be required in the future. In January there may be field trips and small focus group discussions. The next big public meeting is expected to be in February.

The meeting ended around 8:45 PM.

On the following pages are the compiled notes from the two discussion groups. Participants are invited to submit individual comments as they see fit.

**Pre-draft Ideas for Potential Objective from November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting Display Boards:**

**POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES FOR ROADS**

1. Grade surfaces, and clean culverts and ditches of all open system roads at least annually.
2. Evaluate an average of 20% of the road system annually for special road management and maintenance issues such as public safety, potential for eroded sediments to reach streams, and the condition of stream crossings including fish passage. Recommend follow-up actions

**POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES FOR TRAILS & FACILITIES**

1. Mark all intersections where trails cross open Forest Service roads to increase visitor safety by 2008. Recheck yearly, on average.
2. For trail segments that are not in the desired conditions, improve an average of 10% per year.
3. Apply for at least one trail improvement grant (such as is available through the Transportation Equity Act or other sources) annually.
4. For an average of one trailhead per year: increase visibility of trailhead if needed for ease of locating; provide needed information at trailhead, establish, maintain or improve parking area.
5. A “trail partners” group averages 1 annual trail design and maintenance workday that include field work to fix or maintain erosion control and proper drainage on problem trail segments, and removal of litter.
6. Maintain or establish vistas on an average of (5 miles?) of trail per year.
7. Evaluate an average of one unauthorized trail per year for potential obliteration and to identify environmental concerns such as erosion/sedimentation. Recommend follow-up actions.

**POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES FOR VISITOR INFORMATION**

1. At least one detailed Uwharrie National Forest recreation opportunity guide will be produced by 2010. Additional or updated information will be produced at least every third year thereafter.

2. At least one Uwharrie National Forest conservation education/natural history guide will be produced by 2011. Additional or updated information will be produced at least every third year thereafter.
3. At least one Uwharrie National Forest cultural heritage education/conservation guide will be produced by 2012. Additional or updated information will be produced at least every third year thereafter.

### Vegetation Potential Objectives

- Restore and average 200 - 400 acres of oak-hickory and 100 acres of longleaf pine annually on sites where occurred historically.
- Restore XXX subpopulations of Schweinitz sunflower over the next fifteen years.
- All longleaf pine restoration areas and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of oak-hickory restoration areas will include prairie-like openings centered in areas where Schweinitz sunflower or other rare species found in this habitat will be recovering.

### POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES FOR HERITAGE RESOURCES

1. Identify and map (GIS) significant heritage resources zones. Determine site / zone limits for all areas within the first five years of the plan.
2. Work with partners such as NC SHPO, Tribes & others to develop a proposed National Register district boundary and contexts for defining contributing and non-contributing elements within the first five years of the plan.
3. Eliminate adverse impacts to designated significant sites and heritage resource zones. Salvage or stabilize impacts at a rate of 5% of impacted sites per year.
4. Develop a long term plan identifying needs and opportunities for public interpretation, preservation zones and research zones by 2010. Begin implementation by 2011.

### POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES FOR WATER QUALITY AND STREAM CHANNELS

Maintain and improve forest vegetation in streamside-areas when planning and implementing management activities.

Develop watershed improvement projects designed to reconnect streams with their flood plains by removing man-made levees (e.g. lower Barnes Creek) and rehabilitating degraded streams (e.g. lower McCleans Creek).

Develop watershed improvement projects designed to restore stable channel conditions and aquatic habitat diversity, and improve water quality in streams degraded by historic mining (e.g. lower Big Creek, tributary to Uwharrie River).

Perform regular maintenance and implement road and trail Best Management Practices (BMP's) on all Forest system roads.

Reconstruct or relocate system roads and trails that are a continual sediment source to streams using road and trail design BMP's.

Control access of system roads and trails that are a continual sediment source to streams.

Consider closure of unneeded system roads and trails that are located near streams.

Decommission non-system roads and trails that are located near streams.

### **POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES FOR AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS**

? Using NCIBI and NCEPT, what ratings are acceptable or what do we want to see across the Forest, and by when?

? Should mussel restoration sites be identified in the Plan? Timetable for implementation?

? Using VBET, what parameters are critical to high quality habitats across the Forest? How will we maintain or restore these characteristics? How will we prioritize?

? How will we manage invasive aquatic species occurring on the Forest, such as the flathead catfish?

### **POTENTIAL WILDLIFE OBJECTIVES**

Create 150 acres of permanent grass/forb habitat dispersed across the forest over the planning period.

Maintain 2200 acres of existing longleaf pine as pine woodlands. Restore 700 acres of longleaf pine to conditions suitable for red-cockaded woodpecker over the planning period (by removing the midstory using prescribed fire or mechanical methods).

Protect all bogs, swamps, and wetlands. Create 10 acres of vernal ponds dispersed across the forest during the planning period.

Increase the amount of oak/hickory in pine dominated stands to at least 30% of the basal area for mast production.

**The following written comments were submitted by participants at the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

Build and maintain silt catch basins at the end of each water bar, i.e. hay bails, screens or pools, on gravel roads and trails.

There is no objective listed that creates understanding of how outside forest service lands factors are influencing water quality, and what forest service should be doing to influence factors that are causing threats or negative impact to the desired condition.

How “doable” are objectives listed with current resources so an objective to address the non-doability of the objectives.

Please try to further limit the use of chemical herbicides.

“Trail partners” should do at least 4 workdays a year including trail assessments, monitoring conditions, recording data, etc.

Get a handle on OHV use off designated trails. Have enforcement staff who give tickets to violators. Have it be known among users that if it doesn’t stop, OHV will be closed.

Trailhead for Uwharrie Trail on Tot Hill Farm Rd. (Northern end of trail in Randolph County).

Objective for OHV Trail use:

Limit or control numbers of users to reduce impacts on water quality, heritage resources and soil disturbance.

This could be done by restricting parking to existing parking lots, selling only a certain number of annual permits, or a limited number of daily permits.

Evaluate trails before closing to see if they could be added to the system.

More ambition on dealing with unauthorized trails – Evaluate and close numerous per year – hopefully faster than they are being created.

Perform regular and continuous outreach to private landowners where Uwharrie Trail has gaps for purposes of acquiring land and easements to complete/connect the trail.

Adopt-a-Trail by clubs and Businesses – let signs be installed at their Trail.

Forest Service do advertising for Trail Volunteers – more incentives for volunteers. Get ATV or Jeep suppliers to donate items.

Disperse trails from main recreation area to other less used areas.

Monitor # of users on current # of trails.

Require fees from All users to fund projects.

No Objective that addresses using the monitoring and objectives to communicate to interested parties so they can assist in showing support and interact with congress in getting resources especially id objective is not being met.

OHV Large parking lot, enlarge existing parking and camping/parking adjacent to OHV Trail System. Our own camping area.

Deal with 33 miles of unclassified roads. Decommission and obliteration of those not added as system roads should be accomplished over the life of the plan.

#### TRAIL CONDITIONS (DESIRED)

Maybe you can involve more volunteer work on trail maintenance/improvement:

School children

Student conservation association

Juveniles (or adults) who need community service

Electric hookups at Canebrake.

Campground for OHV users adjacent to the OHV trail system.

Monitor “open camping.”

Work toward ending perpetuation of loblolly plantations.

Address existing loblolly plantations, and develop a plan for their removal or conversion to a more natural forest type.

Begin restoration of “glades”, then determine whether to transplant Helisch. i.e. Walkers Mt. in Wood Run area (south slope) has a woodland look currently and appears to be potential Helisch habitat. If site is restored, then decide whether to use as a Helisch recovery site.

In fall 2006 start annual monitoring of all *Helianthus schweinitzii* populations.

Select 5-7 high priority populations and begin restoration (thinning and burning, dispersing seeds).

Need a specific objective of maintain the best examples of all community types. Are all examples at rare areas?

Need an objective about prescribed burning – reasonable acreage, and goal to focus burns on places where they will provide the most benefits – high quality fire-adapted communities; rare species sites, restoration sites.

Need an objective addressing other rare plants besides Schweinitz sunflower.

### Desired Conditions of Uwharrie Forest

I want to first show you some facts that will help you understand why I would desire some of the conditions I would like to see in the forest. I am interested in timber and timber is a big part of the forest. Good timberland well managed is very low in maintained cost. It protects our soils, waters and air. A lot of our other uses of the forest are very destructive to the land, water and air. I am for growing longleaf and shortleaf pines, but we need to manage and save some of our loblolly pines (the plantation that the USFS got in a land exchange with Jordan Lumber Co in the South Eastern part of Montgomery County) they are in the natural range for loblolly pines. They need little maintenance except a good thinning. This should be done as soon as possible.

EXAMPLES Attached is a copy of a timber sale of loblolly pine in 2004. This stand of timber was natural regenerated and was never managed. It had a large variety of wildlife, including turkey, deer, foxes, raccoon, beaver, mink, otter, squirrel, fish and many other types of wildlife on it. The trees and the scenery were beautiful. This was a good place to hike, bird watch, fish and hunt.

EXAMPLE OF INCOME --- The deed to the land was very old and called for fifty acres more or less. It was surveyed and it was 46 acres. The selling price for the timber was \$272,444.00.  $\$272,444.00 \div 46 \text{ acres} = \$5922.69$  per acre for the timber. The timber was 68+ years old.  $\$5922.69 \div \text{age } 69 = \$87.09$  per acre per year. Well-managed loblolly pine timber will give you over \$100.00 per acre per year. That is a good investment for the USFS and not harmful to the environment and also has excellent recreational values.

I would see some loblolly pine management done in the South Eastern Part of the Uwharrie National Forest.