

*Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala and Pisgah Plan  
Revision*

# Launching a Collaborative Process



*Photo by Jeff Clark*



# Meeting Objectives

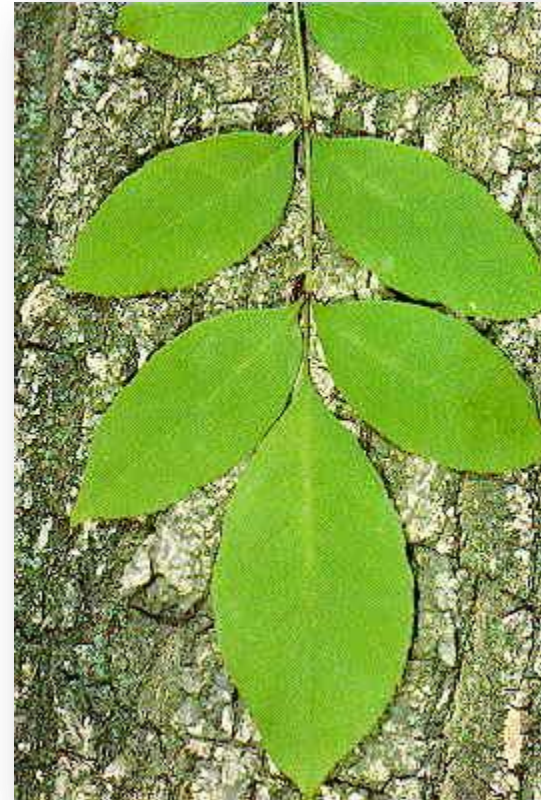
- Kick-off the Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala & Pisgah Plan Revision
- Gain a shared understanding of the Forest Service's management planning process and timeline
- Finalize the Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala & Pisgah Plan Revision purpose, goals, code of conduct, and meeting schedule

# Groundrules

- Stay engaged with the group – keep side conversations to a minimum
- Please turn off cell phones and resist the urge to text
- Listen carefully to others, value the experience and knowledge in the room, and be respectful
- Speak your mind freely and honestly, but be brief and to the point so others may also speak
- Stay focused on the purposes of the meeting and this group

# Who is the National Forest Foundation?

- Chartered by Congress to work with the U.S. Forest Service
- Bring people together to restore and enhance National Forests and Grasslands
- Engage America in community-based and national programs that promote health and enjoyment of the National Forest System
- Administer private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of National Forests



# Why is the National Forest Foundation Involved?

- Neutral convener/facilitator of stakeholder involvement with extensive collaborative process experience
- Facilitate results-oriented partnerships with the Forest Service





# Typical Features of Successful Collaborative Processes

- Diverse participants representing key stakeholders
- Participants are committed to working respectfully together and through consensus to find “zone of agreement”
- Facilitator ensures a fair, open and honest process
- Clear purpose, objectives and timeline



# Process

**June-July 2015**

Complete Collaborative Assessment and Form Organizing Committee

**July-August 2015**

Organizing Committee Drafts Purpose, Goals, Timeline, and List of Suggested Interests

**September 2015**

Kickoff of Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala & Pisgah Plan Revision

**September 2015 until ?**

Convene Stakeholders Forum on a Monthly Basis

*Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Land & Resource  
Management Plan Revision Effort*

# **Collaborative Assessment Summary & Themes We Heard**



*Photo by Jeff Clark*



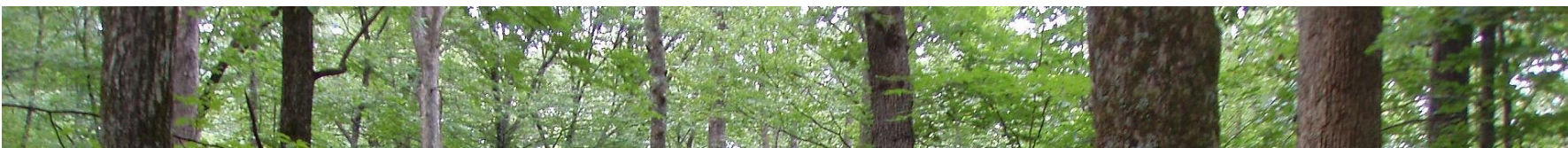




# Themes We Heard

## **The need for clear, substantive dialogue**

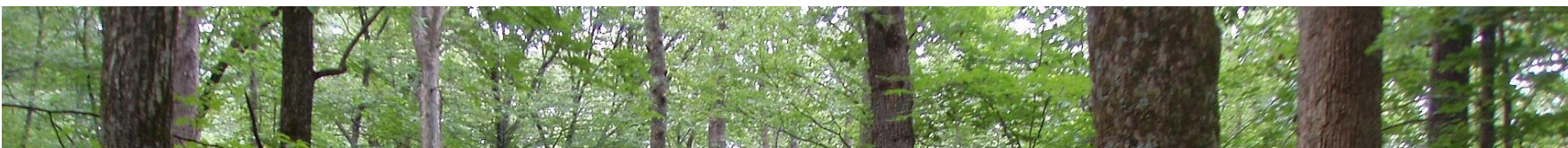
- Improved communication amongst all players – collaborative members, the Forest Service, and stakeholders who are not directly involved with a collaborative group
- Shifting the focus from information sharing and presentations to “drilling down to the details”
- The need for spatial discussions and “drawing lines on the map”



# Themes We Heard

## **Need for a basic understanding of forest planning and the 2012 Planning Rule**

- Many stakeholders do not fully understand the planning process timeline and milestones
- Need to understand the basics of forest planning, including key terms and concepts
- Discuss the challenge of operating without directives, and take steps back where needed (wilderness inventory was mentioned in one instance) to ensure alignment with the new directives



# Themes We Heard

## **The importance of a clear and transparent timeline and sideboards**

- Transparency was brought up many times; stakeholders feel as though communications have improved, yet some feel like input often goes into a “black box”
- Fear of the final plan being too general, leading to "refighting old battles" later at the project level





# Themes We Heard

## **Issues related to power dynamics and leadership**

- Concerns about detracting from existing efforts in this collaborative process
- Perception that some have more of a direct line to the Forest Service, and more power and authority as a result
- Perception that recreation interests or potential conflicts are being minimized in light of the conflict between forest management strategies and Wilderness designations
- Trust between all parties should be strengthened



# Themes We Heard

## Issues Related to Agency Leadership and Expectations

- Concerns that the Forest Service's goals for inclusivity will make consensus – even by a smaller group – impossible
- Role of Forest Service staff in the collaborative process is critical
- Two overarching needs:
  - (1) the need to communicate clear sideboards for the process – what does the Forest Service desire from stakeholders, and what are the agency's limitations?
  - (2) the need for clear, substantive feedback – when stakeholders are out of bounds or on the wrong track, they want to know that the Forest Service will raise red flags





# Themes We Heard

## Visions of a successful collaborative outcome

- Stakeholders generally agree that collaborative success could result in a Forest Plan that is:
  - released without threat of objections or litigation
  - implementable, especially within budget limitations
  - something all stakeholders can live with
- The agency will need the stakeholders in order to implement the plan in the future
- Some see participation in the revision as a way to strengthen partnerships with the agency

# Thank You



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*Photo by Jeff Clark*



*Protecting America's Backyard*