

MEETING RECORD
Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala & Pisgah
Plan Revision D R A F T Meeting Record

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

10:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

North Carolina Arboretum

Asheville, North Carolina

Members

John Culclasure, Ruffed Grouse Society

Kevin Colburn, American Whitewater

Tracy Davids (Alternate for Ben Prater)

JD Diefenbach, Sierra Club, Wenoca Chapter

Sam Evans, Southern Environmental Law
Center

Rob Elliot, Evergreen Paper, forester

Susan Fletcher, Pisgah Hardwoods

Jim Gray, (replaced Jeff Johnson)

Ruth Hartzler, Carolina Mountain Club

Steve Henson, retired, former ED of S.

Appalachian Multiple Use Council

Bill Hodge, Southern Appalachian Wilderness
Stewards

Lang Hornthal, Root Cause

Hugh Irwin, The Wilderness Society

Bill Kane, NC Wildlife Federation

Josh Kelly, MountainTrue

Zach-Lesch Huie, Access Fund

Andrea Leslie, Wildlife Resource Commission

Deirdre Lightsey, Back Country Horsemen of
NC

Gary Peters, National Wild Turkey Federation

Tyler Ross, (Alternate for Kyle Brown)

Curtis Smalling, National Audubon of NC

Morgan Sommerville, Appalachian Trail

Conservancy

Megan Sutton, The Nature Conservancy

Gordon Warburton, Wildlife Resources

Commission

Julie White, SORBA/IMBA

David Whitmire, Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Council

Bill Yarborough, Comm of Ag, North Carolina

Alternates Attending as Observers

Bob Gale, (Alternate for Josh Kelly)

Richard Mode (Alternate for Bill Kane)

Greg Yates (Alternate for Bill Yarborough)

Jill Gottesman, (Alternate for Hugh Irwin)

U. S. Forest Service

James Melonas, National Forests of NC

Michelle Aldridge, National Forests of NC

National Forest Foundation

Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation

Mark Shelley, National Forest Foundation

Mary Mitsos, National Forest Foundation

Welcome

Karen DiBari welcomed all participants to the meeting. 27 Stakeholders Forum (SF) members (or their designated alternate) were present. Observers included 4 alternates, 4 Forest Service staff and 8 additional individuals. Karen reviewed the agenda and objectives for the meeting. She also reviewed the ground rules for the meeting.

Moving Forward

In between the December and January meetings, the NFF team spoke with as many SF members as possible to listen to their perspectives about the group, gauge commitment to the effort and discuss ideas about how to move forward. Karen provided an overview of what NFF heard from these conversations

(see attachment).

In an effort to provide clarification to the public about the SF, the NFF Team wrote and submitted an op-ed to newspapers. The op-ed was printed in the Asheville Citizen Times. SF members would like the op-ed to be shared with some of the smaller, county-level papers.

- Action: The NFF will distribute the op-ed again to the SF so members can send directly to media outlets. Alternatively, members may provide media contacts to the NFF and the NFF will distribute.

Mary Mitsos spoke about the importance of diverse representation, and the important role of each member within the SF. The NFF appreciates that this is difficult work, but the continued engagement of the mix of stakeholders around the table is needed for a strong, collaborative result.

James Melonas stated that he continues to be amazed by the potential of the SF, and the time and energy being contributed by everyone. He encouraged the SF members to think differently about the approach to forest management in order to respond to the increased pressures, increased demand and scarcity of special (and contiguous) areas in the east. The work on this forest has national significance. The SF can help turn a corner in western North Carolina and provide a model for working through these issues. James indicated that the Forest Service is “all in.” James asked the SF members to stay with the process.

SF members who signed the MOU explained that it was an effort toward avoiding conflict between mountain bike and wilderness preservation groups that has been underway for several years. They apologized for not sharing the MOU in a timely manner for the SF. Their efforts were driven by the December 15th deadline for comments on the wilderness evaluation. Each of the groups associated with the MOU expressed that they still believe in the purpose and objectives of the SF.

Several SF members expressed concerns about trust within the group, that the MOU undermined the SF’s efforts, and that the public relations campaign is focused on swaying the public on issues the Forum is addressing.

Steve Henson announced a decision to withdraw from the Stakeholders Forum. He recommended Jim Sitts, his alternate, as a replacement.

After full group discussion, in a formal vote all members present agreed on the importance of the SF and that it is important to continue dialogue, keep building trust and move forward.

- CONSENSUS AGREEMENT was reached in support of the SF purpose and goals and commitment by all members, with some reservations expressed, to moving forward with the group’s efforts.

Plan for Upcoming Meetings and Outcomes

The SF reviewed the Conceptual Timeline (see attachment), which includes specific targets for meeting outcomes with the intent of developing recommendations to the Forest Service by the April meeting in advance of the draft EIS release.

- CONSENSUS AGREEMENT was reached in support of the Conceptual Timeline, with commitment to proceed with the timeline and outcomes/deliverables as proposed.

Bucket Descriptions and Desired Conditions (DCs)

The SF broke into groups by interest area. Each group rotated among three stations to discuss Bucket 1 (most intensive/highest pace and scale activities and management), Bucket 2 (medium intensity/moderate pace and scale activities and management), and Bucket 3 (least intensive activities and management). Each group was tasked with reviewing and editing previous committee work and Forest Service management area (MA) descriptions. Breakout groups discussed the following questions in each station:

- What are the goals/desired conditions (management, sustainable recreation, wildlife, other)?
- What types of activities and management strategies are appropriate?
- How do these goals/management strategies translate into management areas?
- Where should this take place on the landscape?

Each group also used sticky notes to mark important areas for different resources on forest maps.

Full Group Discussion

The SF reconvened as a whole. General discussion:

- Some struggled with the difference between the MAs (especially MA1 and MA2).
 - Crossover for wildlife between MAs
 - Perhaps MA1 prioritizes early succession and habitat restoration for game species, and MA 2 benefits non-game species
- Consider zoning specific areas for timber harvesting in MA1 and MA2
 - Would benefit other end of spectrum (special designations/less active management)
 - Politically challenging to talk about this approach
- Attach indicator species to each MA
- Identify priorities
- Roads need to be considered across the spectrum
- MA descriptions should identify where on the landscape we want to do something different
- Looking at paper maps only goes so far; there is a need to have a more sophisticated opportunity for the SF to review spatial data.

A small group will work to advance the recommendations between the January and February meetings.

- Action: A small group consisting of Megan Sutton, David Whitmire, Rob Elliott, Sam Evans, Deirdre Lightsey, and Bill Kane will meet to discuss how to process the work done at this meeting in preparation for the February full SF meeting.
- Action: The NFF will explore how to incorporate spatial data/mapping into upcoming SF meetings.

Forestwide Plan Components

The February meeting will focus on forest-wide desired conditions and other plan components, which includes a lot of information. The Forest Service offered to do a webinar that will provide a review in advance of the next meeting.

- Action: The NFF will work with the Forest Service to schedule a webinar on forestwide plan components in late January.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Mark Shelley reviewed the Proposed Stakeholder Forum Meeting Schedule and Plan with future meeting dates and locations.

- Action: SF members will review the proposed schedule and will send venue ideas and any comments on meeting locations and times to the NFF.

January Meeting Record

CONSENSUS AGREEMENT was reached, through online voting, in support of the draft December 8, 2015 Meeting Record with no substantive changes. This Meeting Record will be posted on the Stakeholders Forum website.

Code of Conduct

The NFF drafted revisions to the Code of Conduct, and distributed copies during the meeting.

- Action: The NFF will email out the draft revisions to the Code of Conduct to the SF list. SF members will review the draft and come prepared to discuss them at the February meeting.

Action Items and Preparation for February Meeting

- The NFF will distribute the op-ed again to the SF so members can send directly to media outlets. Alternatively, members may provide media contacts to the NFF and the NFF will distribute.
- A small group consisting of Megan Sutton, David Whitmire, Rob Elliott, Sam Evans, Deirdre Lightsey, and Bill Kane will meet to discuss how to process the work done at this meeting in preparation for the February full SF meeting.
- The NFF will work with the Forest Service to schedule a webinar on forestwide plan components in late January.
- The NFF will explore how to incorporate spatial data/mapping into upcoming SF meetings.
- SF members will review the proposed schedule and will send venue ideas and any comments on meeting locations (towns) and times to the NFF.
- The NFF will email out the draft revisions to the Code of Conduct to the SF list. SF members will review the draft and come prepared to discuss them at the February meeting.

The next Stakeholders Forum meeting is scheduled for February 9th, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. – 400 p.m in Black Mountain, North Carolina.

Record of Decisions	Consensus
The Stakeholders Forum confirmed their commitment to move forward with the established purpose and goals of the group.	Yes
The Stakeholders Forum committed to proceed with the timeline and outcomes/deliverables as proposed.	Yes
Through online voting, the Stakeholders Forum in approved the draft December 8, 2015 Meeting Record with no substantive changes.	Yes

DRAFT