

**MEETING RECORD**  
**Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala & Pisgah**  
**Plan Revision DRAFT Meeting Record**  
Tuesday March 8, 2016  
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
The Asheville Event Centre – Liberty Room  
291 Sweeten Creek Road Asheville , NC

**Members**

**Kevin Colburn**, American Whitewater  
**JD Diefenbach**, Sierra Club, Wenoca  
Chapter  
**Phil Elliott**, Columbia Forest Products  
**Rob Elliott**, Evergreen Paper  
**Sam Evans**, Southern Environmental Law  
Center  
**Susan Fletcher**, Pisgah Hardwoods  
**Jim Gray**, Ruffed Grouse Society  
**Fred Hardin**, Gilkey Lumber (alternate to  
Jim Sitts)  
**Ruth Hartzler**, Carolina Mountain Club  
**Bill Hodge**, Southern Appalachian  
Wilderness Stewards  
**Lang Hornthal**, Root Cause  
**Hugh Irwin**, The Wilderness Society  
**Josh Kelly**, MountainTrue  
**Andrea Leslie**, Wildlife Resource  
Commission  
**Deirdre Lightsey**, Back Country Horsemen  
of NC  
**Richard Mode**, NC Wildlife Federation  
**Gary Peters**, National Wild Turkey  
Federation  
**Ben Prater**, Defenders of Wildlife  
**Curtis Smalling**, 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**, Commission of  
Agriculture, North Carolina

**Alternates Attending as Observers**

**Greg Yates**, NC State Forest Service  
**Bill Kane**, NC Wildlife Federation  
**Brent Martin**, The Wilderness Society  
**Ryan Jacobs**, Wildlife Resources  
Commission  
**David Reid**, Sierra Club

**U. S. Forest Service**

**James Melonas**, National Forests of NC  
**Michelle Aldridge**, National Forests of NC

**National Forest Foundation**

**Mary Mitsos**, National Forest Foundation  
**Mark Shelley**, National Forest Foundation

**Welcome**

Mary Mitsos welcomed all participants to the meeting. Twenty-five Stakeholders Forum (SF) members and 5 alternates were present. Members were joined by 8 Forest Service staff and 6 additional observers. Everyone in the room introduced themselves.

Mary opened by introducing the objectives to be covered during the course of the meeting, which included recommendations on forest-wide desired conditions by the aquatics,

recreation, vegetation management and ecozone committees, presenting management area recommendations and a review of the spatial data layers in order to discuss potential areas of agreement and disagreement and the process for moving forward. It was agreed that the code of conduct matters discussed in the prior meeting will be dealt with outside the Forum Meeting in order to not waste valuable time.

### **Communications/Statement Committee**

Sam Evans spoke regarding the progress of the committee. The decision was made that the small group was incomplete as they were lacking any members representing timber so they avoided making any resolutions and strove to gain a better understanding of individual needs and desires especially in regards to overlapping areas of interest. The main goal is to see a plan that all the Forum members can be proud of and move forward with in the future. David Whitmire expressed that the group was willing to move forward and work together.

### **Forest-wide Plan Components**

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing forest-wide plan components which included Aquatics, Vegetation Management, Ecozones, and the Management Area Proposal and Descriptions. In each of these, the committees presented their work to date and the SF discussed agreements, concerns and areas of disagreement.

The Sustainable Recreation committee presented their work to date and requested more time to develop their work. Their recommendations will be presented at the April SF meeting.

While language and some specifics were not agreed to by consensus, after discussion of each the SF was comfortable with the intent expressed. The FS expressed appreciation for the huge amount of work done by the committees and then discussed at the full SF meeting because the process has provided significant useful information to the FS. The input most helpful is a high-level analysis of a) gaps (“what is missing”), b) areas that need clarification, and c) an explanation of where and why there is a difference of opinion. Based on the discussion in the committee meetings and then the March SF meeting, and with the help of the documents, the FS specialists have a good understanding of where there is agreement and where there isn’t.

### **Mapping Committee**

Carly Lewis presented the results to date from the mapping committee. The initial step was to find areas of agreement and then identify areas that need more analysis.

Layers that have been included to date are:

1. Currently designated areas.
2. Wildlife Habitat Active Management Areas (WHAMAs) that will likely fall into MA1 or MA2 and will concentrate on six species.
3. Natural Areas Priorities that will likely fall into MA3 or MA4 and include NC Natural Heritage and inventoried old growth sites.
4. Overlapping interests – where WHAMAs and Natural Areas Priorities overlap.

5. Not identified as a priority so no proposal.

In order to draft a decision framework additional information is needed to refine MAs. This information includes:

- Road access considerations
- Current restoration needs
- Maintained wildlife openings
- Recent timber harvests
- Sites specific information

The next suggested step is to refine decision framework by looking closely at particular overlapping areas and specific natural areas.

All data layers are available online. The link will be emailed to SF participants. Request is made at this point not to share the link outside of the SF as it is a work in progress and knowledge of the context is important.

Group members requested some added layers to show restoration areas, recreation sites and labeled roads. Any further requests should be forwarded to Karen or members of the Map Committee.

Allen Nicholas, the new supervisor of the Nantahala & Pisgah National Forests, introduced himself.

#### Next steps

- **CONSENSUS AGREEMENT:** Mary asked the SF for permission for NFF to work with the Forest Service on what would be the most useful information that can be provided to the agency from the SF given the short amount of time left. The SF gave consensus approval for this approach.

#### Actions:

- The FS is planning a field trip for the first few weeks of April. The date has yet to be finalized. Details will be shared via email.
- The NFF will meet with the FS to identify high priority actions for the SF to focus on in the April and May meetings.
- The mapping committee will continue to meet to further develop spatial layers.
- NFF will email out the forest-wide component documents with the updates from the discussion at the meeting.