

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.