



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service, Southern Region
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOREST SERVICE TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING ON MONDAY IN WALHALLA

Agency seeking public input on proposal to establish Southern Appalachian Farmstead in Oconee County

(Mountain Rest, SC) August 27, 2009—The U.S. Forest Service will hold a public meeting on Monday August 31, 2009, at the Oconee Heritage Center in Walhalla from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. to discuss a proposal to establish a Southern Appalachian Farmstead in Oconee County. Formal presentations will be given at 4 p.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. The Oconee Heritage Center is located behind the Bantam Chef at 123 Brown Square Drive in downtown Walhalla.

The agency is requesting public comments on a proposal to permit the Oconee Heritage Center to establish a Southern Appalachian Farmstead living history interpretive site on 20 acres on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District at the existing Russell Farm Historic Site on Highway 28 near the Chattooga River in Oconee County.

Activities being considered in the proposal include the restoration and maintenance of the existing historic structures; placement and interpretation of up to 12 additional relocated historic buildings; partial reestablishment of the historic landscapes on an additional 15 acres of the Russell Farmstead; the construction of a parking lot; and the installation of public restroom facilities (modern, pit-type toilets).

A copy of the proposal and scoping letter is available on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests' Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/sumter/resources/projects.current.php>. Comments on the proposal are due no later than September 4, 2009.

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.