



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service, Southern Region
4931 Broad River Road Columbia, SC 29212**

Contact: Michelle Burnett (803) 561-4091

December 18, 2007 (FMS 0727)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forest Service Approves New District Office for Enoree Ranger District

(Whitmire, SC) The U.S. Forest Service announced today a final decision to construct a new district office for the Enoree Ranger District three miles north of Whitmire, SC, on national forest lands midway between the two existing district offices along US Highway 176. The centrally located facility will serve as district headquarters and will conclude the consolidation of the Enoree and Tyger Ranger Districts that began in 1995.

“Due to reduced staffing levels, it is increasingly difficult to keep both offices open and still provide quality customer service,” said Enoree District Ranger Elizabeth LeMaster. “Also, people may drive to one location only to find out that the person or service they need is at the other office. This has been frustrating for both the public and employees; the new building will resolve this issue. It also will provide district employees with a safer and more efficient facility.”

The new office will be located in the area behind the Bethesda Baptist Church just north of the intersection of US Highway 176 and State Road 18 (Old Buncombe Road). The building itself will be approximately 7,500 square feet and the site will have 50-space employee parking; 10-space visitor parking; 24-space fleet parking; an entrance road; water service; a septic tank and drain field; electric service; and an antenna tower. Plans also call for the construction of a work center building, pole shed, paint/oil building and internal roadways as future funding permits. Until funding is available, the existing work center at the Indian Creek office (south of Whitmire) will be used.

More information about the Enoree Ranger District can be found on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests’ web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms>.

###

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.