

# Integrated Resource Management on a Landscape Scale

*Providing for a shared vision to address complex conservation challenges  
on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests*

Beginning in 2016, the Forest Service will engage partners, stakeholders and communities in a landscape-scale, all-lands approach to conservation across the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests.

## The right work in the right places for the right reasons.

The process is:

- Strategic
- Science-driven
- Collaborative
- Adaptive
- Understandable and transparent

Integrated resource management on a landscape scale will engage the public early and often to build a common understanding of the roles, values and contributions of national forest lands, and evaluate existing assessments to understand the condition and trends of natural resources, resource pressures, access needs and values, and the management intentions across identified landscapes.

This practical and shared approach to understanding and grounding management within a landscape context will result in:

- Restored and resilient forests that can adapt and thrive in changing climates
- Enhanced community health and wellness
- Sustainable clean and abundant water
- Greater protection for communities from wildfire
- Awakened and strengthened connection to the land for all people

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United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Southern Region

September 2015

# Landscapes

**Cohutta Landscape** – 69,886 acres – is made up of 35,500 acres of Wilderness – half of the landscape, and has few roads compared to other areas of the forest. Hardwoods dominate, and it is a favorite destination for backcountry recreationers with more than 100 miles of hiking and horse trails. It includes a portion of the Cohutta WMA.

**Escarpment Landscape** – 48,243 acres – is a unique area home to hardwood forests, mountain streams, lakes and diverse animal and plant habitats. Steep gorges, cool, clear, high-gradient streams and waterfalls occur in this rough, dissected landscape which is home to the Congressionally-designated Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. 4% of the landscape is Wilderness, and it includes the Warwoman WMA, the Bartram Trail, the largest rare Table Mountain Pine community in the state, and the highest mean rainfall on the forest.

**Foothills Landscape** – 143,419 acres – stretches across the Chattahoochee National Forest and marks the area where the mountains are visibly reduced to foothills. Shortleaf pine and pitch pine forests are the dominant forest types, with hardwoods accounting for about a quarter of the landscape. The area offers a plethora of recreation opportunities, with nearly 200 miles of hiking, biking, horse and OHV trails and dozens of recreation sites, and includes a portion of the Cohutta WMA.

**High Mountains Landscape** – 244,320 acres – is home to some of the highest natural diversity of rare plants and animals found anywhere in the world. It has more acres of high elevation (3000+ ft) than any other landscape, with some of Georgia's highest peaks including Brasstown Bald. More than a quarter of this landscape is Wilderness, with the entire length of the Appalachian Trail in Georgia running through it. The landscape is dominated by hardwood forests, predominantly dry-mesic oak forests. It includes the Chattahoochee, Chestatee and Swallow Creek WMAs and a portion of the Blue Ridge WMA.

**Lower Piedmont Landscape** – 116,328 acres – includes the entire Oconee National Forest with lower elevations and less precipitation than the other landscapes, and is made up mostly of pine forests. It offers bountiful wildlife, including many game species and the federally endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker. This landscape has the highest number of miles of impaired streams among the all the landscapes, and has the most roads per acre. Diverse recreation opportunities include camping, fishing, hunting, recreational shooting and nearly 70 miles of hiking, horse and motorized trails. It includes the Redlands and Cedar Creek WMAs.

**Ridge and Valley Landscape** – 64,702 acres – is part of what is sometimes called the Great Valley in Georgia, and is a relatively low-lying region characterized by a series of narrow, steep ridges separated by wide, flat valleys. Its diverse habitats contain many unique species of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna, including mountain longleaf pine. Pine or pine-hardwood make up half of the landscape, and visitors enjoy more than 100 miles of hiking, biking and horse trails here. It includes the cooperatively managed John's Mountain WMA.

**Toccoa River Landscape** – 136,932 acres – has high elevations and big rivers. Wilderness makes up 8.5% of the landscape. The majority of the landscape is hardwood forest type, with white pine making up 13%. There are more than 100 miles of trails, including the forest's only canoe trail. It includes the Coopers Creek and Rich Mountain WMAs and a portion of the Blue Ridge WMA. The landscape is home to the only known breeding record of the rare Golden-winged Warbler in the state.

**Upper Piedmont Landscape** – 43,836 acres – is part of a rolling, hilly, transitional area between the mostly mountainous ecoregions of the Appalachians and the relatively flat coastal plain. Almost half of the landscape is made up of shortleaf pine forests with the rest hardwood and mixed pine-hardwood. The only population of Smooth Coneflower on the forest and a substantial population of Georgia Aster are among a large variety of threatened, endangered and at-risk species found in this landscape, which also has a large number of miles of impaired streams. Home to the Lake Russell WMA, recreation opportunities are numerous in this small landscape that offers easy access with numerous roads and 50 miles of trails.

