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# FOOTHILLS LANDSCAPE PROJECT

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Collaborative Workshop II

Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

March 28 and 29, 2017

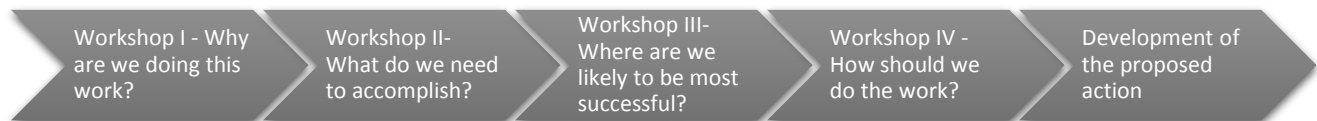


Doing the Right Work in the Right Places for the Right Reasons

## An Overview

The collaborative process started with the community conversations in the fall of 2016. The purpose of the conversations was to reach a diverse audience and to begin to capture the values, beliefs and concerns of the collaborative community. The information gathered at the community conversations is helping us create the discussion topics of the workshops. The workshops are helping to shape the Restoration Plan which includes the collaborative community's recommendations for the proposed action which will be finalized for public scoping. Scoping is the beginning of the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA) process. If you want more details check out the [frequently asked questions](#).

The workshops are designed to work through the process used to develop a proposed action (Figure 1). We started in February with discussions on the existing condition of the landscape and what the achievable future condition might be in [workshop I](#). This document is the summary of workshop II where we started the discussion on the end goals of the project. The third and fourth workshops will be held later this spring and summer and will focus on where we might be able to meet the goals and how we could do the work.



*Figure 1: The four workshops are designed to lead the collaborative community through the steps needed to build a proposed action. Starting with defining the problem, developing goals, determining where to achieve the goals and how to achieve them.*

## Day 1

The participants kicked off the workshop by writing postcards home from the collaborative road trip. The community shared their experiences so far in the collaboration and what they hoped to see in the future.

Once the postcards were “sent” home the group brainstormed a list of potential goals for the foothills. These were written on post-it notes and shared. They were categorized by the participants and posted on the bulletin board. These ideas were the starting point for the stakeholder-led breakout sessions that were to follow.

The stakeholder-lead breakout sessions or stakeout schedule is captured below. Each table was given a designated color to help organize the conversations visually (Table 1). There were a total of fourteen stakeouts – seven concurrent session in the morning and seven in the afternoon. The conversations were boiled down to no more than five potential goals framed as a less than, more than, or need for change statement. The participants then used red dots to show disagreement, green dots to show agreement and yellow dots to show concern with the goal. The harvest from Day 1 on the following pages.

*Table 1: Schedule of stakeouts for the workshop.*

	Blue	Gray	Green	Orange	Purple	Red	Yellow
<b>Morning</b>	Sustainable Trails	Fire in the Foothills	Old Growth	Wildlife Habitat Diversity	Biodiversity	Recreational Improvement	Restoration of Native Species
<b>Afternoon</b>	Water and Soil Quality	Increased Forest Resiliency	Enhancing Recreational Experience	Aquatic Habitat	Non-native Invasive Species	Sustainable Roads	People and the Land



## Post Cards Home



## Bulletin Board of Potential Discussion Topics



## Blue Line

AM

+  
Δ

Topic: SUSTAINABLE TRAILS

1. Adopted TRAILS by groups for maint.  
 2. Better communication as to problem Areas  
 7. Trail check - Instant reporting of issues

—

3. Resource Damage  
 6. less user conflicts

Δ

4. Older Trails redesigned to be easier to upkeep.  
 5. More training opps. for volunteers

1.

RES. DAMAGE

2.

Older Trails redesigned

3.

Increase and develop an Adopted Trail Program  
more training opps

4.

5.

Better communication to problem Areas

# GRAY Line

AM

+  
-  
Δ

Topic:

Fire

Safety of life + property<sup>health</sup> (Urban interface). Increasing exposure - private + public lands borders  
+ Grants for collaborative (private + public borderline areas) work  
+ Risk assessment info  
+ Coordination of different agencies (local fire depts, USFS, GFC, etc.)

Prioritization of Burns - (where, when, how, should burn)  
+ Use risk assessment info  
→ timing of burns - seasons - growing seasons  
→ consider factors (fire windows, smoke, burn windows)  
→ objective driven burns (designated areas)  
→ smaller blocks, more resources required, more time, greater risks

Fire tolerant ecosystems where appropriate

→ Restore herbaceous understory - layers  
→ Multiple treatments - rotation, Ø one + done  
→ long-term investment(s)  
→ based on species, layers of understory  
→ focus on fuels - grass - leaves, etc.

Multiple treatments (mechanical, non-commercial, commercial treatments)

→ more tools, ways to meet objective  
→ restore herbaceous layers  
→ consider current research

Public education (culture, old practices)

+ Prevention  
+ Law enforcement (policy)



# Green Line

AM

$\frac{+}{\Delta}$

Topic:

OLD Growth (OG)

+

Increase % of OG acreage to 5%  
(Forest Plan Standards)

+

Assistance of Partners in  
identifying Future OG Allocation

-

Invasives, NNIS - Plants/trees  
off site competition

$\Delta$

Education + Outreaching OG  
Awareness + Importance  
What is OG???

$\Delta$

Better Prioritization of  
Allocating Small Patch  
OG TYPES (Under Represented)

River floodplain  
dry mesic pine  
northern hardwood

Orange Line


AM

$\frac{+}{\Delta}$

Topic:

# WILDLIFE HABITAT DIVERSITY

  
+

Diversity in Veg. Age Classes  


  
+

SCALE and  
Distribution of this  $\uparrow$  is  
important.



80-yr-old <sup>(we have a lot)</sup> forests need to  
be changed - some younger  
some older





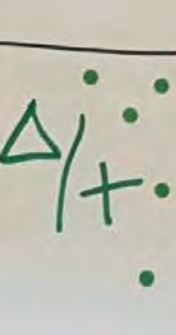
  
+

STRUCTURAL DIVERSITY  
is needed. MORE OPEN.



# Purple Line

Am

$\frac{+}{\Delta}$	Topic: BIODIVERSITY (Forest AND Streams)
	Incorporate Rare Species, Rare Habitat & High-priority Conservation actions, as enumerated in the GA DNR's "State Wildlife Action Plan" (SWAP), into the Foothills project.
	Non-native & Invasive Species (specifically, feral Hogs).
	Homogeneous Forest Habitats (white pines, Loblolly Pines), Closed Canopy Oak).
	Collaborative Conservation & Restoration efforts with multiple partners & stakeholders. (Emphasize outreach & education).
	Increase/maximize Engagement of/ <del>Partners</del> And Involvement With Partners & Stakeholders, to Identify/prioritize Restoration & Conservation actions/projects.



# Red Line

AM

+ Δ	Topic RECREATION IMPROVEMENT
+	More and better Rec info
+	Better Developed Trailheads (ie Accessible)
or + -	Aesthetic considerations around trails
or + -	Rec Areas with a diversity of opportunities (ie multi-use facilities) that meet modern needs
or <del>neutral</del>	Divest of unsustainable sites and/or find partners who are willing to financially support them



# Yellow Line :

AM

+  
Δ 1

Topic: Regeneration/Restoration of native species  
on appropriate sites

2

Address plantations

3

Deal with non-native plants  
and animals

4

Appropriate age class distribution  
( $\frac{1}{2}$  species)  
both young and old forest

5

Restoration of American chestnut

6

Healthy Soil & Watershed

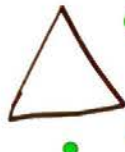
# Blue Line

PM

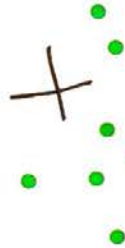
+  
Δ

Topic:

Water & Soil Quality



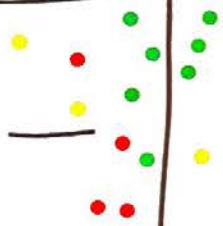
Hard look at BMP's. Where can we improve?  
More education on BMP's and why.  
Plus outreach opportunities



Prioritize Watersheds-impaired  
Effect change where possible



- Monitoring high risk areas more often  
for water quality & soil quality
- Universities, students, etc.



Campsites near streams developed &  
dispersed.



Roads near streams maintenance,  
needed,



# Gray Line

IPM

+  
-  
Δ

Topic

Increase Forest Resiliency



Increased age, species, and structural Diversity

•

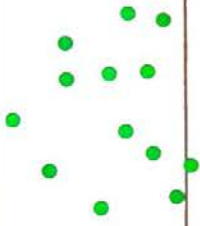
Planned reduction of NNIS both

- Plant and animal

•



Appropriately planned and located native species on the landscape



Well distributed healthy forest across landscape



Minimize stressors to water resources

- sedimentation, thermal pollution, invasive species

•

# Green Line

PM

$\frac{+}{\Delta}$	<p>Topic: <sup>ENHANCE</sup> RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES</p>
$+$	<p>DIVERSITY OF OPPT. • MAINTAIN OPPT.</p>
$+$	<p>HIGH INTEREST &amp; USE •</p>
$-$	<p>• QUALITY EXPERIENCES (TRAILS, FACILITIES) • REDESIGN FOR VISITOR ENJOYMENT • LEO'S</p>
$-$	<p>• FRONT COUNTRY CAMPING Oppt. • ACCESS ROAD MAINTENANCE NEEDED</p>
$\frac{+}{-}$	<p>MANAGE ADVENTURE RACES &amp; REC. SPECIAL USE PERMITS • #'s OF PEOPLE / LOCATION</p>



# Orange Line

PM

+

Δ

Topic:

## AQUATIC HABITAT/BIOTA

- • • 1. INCREASE HABITAT CONNECTIVITY (ie AOP)
- • • 2. MAINTAIN/IMPROVE H<sub>2</sub>O QUALITY
- • • 3. INCREASE HABITAT DIVERSITY. (LWD)
- • • 4. MANAGE ROAD SYSTEM TO DECREASE IMPACTS TO AQUATICS (STORM PROOF)  
    ! TRAIL
- • • 5. ASSESS ~~THE~~ OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETRO-FIT/REMOVAL OF DAMS/DIVERSIONS
- • • 6. ASSESS ! IDENTIFY OPS FOR ACQUIRING INHOLDINGS.
- 7. TREND TOWARDS DELISTING 303(d) STREAMS.
- 8. • •

# Purple Line

PM

$\frac{+}{\Delta}$

Topic:

Non-native species

$-$

Less hogs.

$+$

More collaboration for IPM. emerging species (ex) Emerald Ash borer

$+$

Prioritize what to treat (prevention vs. existing)

$+$

Prioritize based on threat/risk. (ex) bog, rare plants

$+$

Prioritize based on Risk of spread of invasive. (ex) cogon grass

$+$

Expand conservation areas for HWA.

$+$

More community/volunteer involvement with control efforts.

$+$

Consider reintroduction of American chestnut



# Red Line

PM

+  
-  
Δ

Topic: Sustainable Roads

Degrading Road Systems

Cost to Maintain Roads

- maintained thru FS budget, Timber harvests, GA DNR, county DOT

Should Roads be closed? Gated or decommissioned

Should Roads be out-sloped with removal of culverts?

there is lack of money & capacity

Special use permits - may need updated

Change road designs/maintenance strategies

OHV/JEEP USAGE - ~~is it causing problems?~~

↑ IN STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS → ESPECIALLY WITH PARTNERS

FEWER ROADS, Less Year-round opened roads

LAW ENFORCEMENT - DO WE HAVE ENOUGH

Vehicle Types/Road usage - Allowing 2WD ON A Road that should be 4WD only?

Maintenance by VolUNTeers

# Yellow Line

PM

+  
Δ

Topic: People & the Land

+  
•  
•  
•

Build Trust through communication and transparency

+  
•  
•  
•  
•

Follow through on commitments and Be accountable

+  
•  
•

Transparency about short term effects and long term benefits

+  
•

Seek more input and collaborate to increase mutual understanding when/where ever possible

+  
•

Make inclusive space for new people, ideas, interests, opportunities, & processes - to ensure Resilient relationships across groups/ & stakeholders agency employees



## Day 1 - Photos



## Day 2

Day 2 used a facilitation technique called the triad (meaning a discussion with 3 people). We called them roundabouts to stay with the road trip theme. The structure of the conversations is outlined below.

**3 minutes** – Presenter shares idea, travelers listen silently

**2 minutes** – Clarifying Questions, everyone speaks

**5 minutes** – Travelers discuss, presenter listens silently

**2 minutes** – Presenter reflects, travelers listen silently

**3 minutes** – Capture gems, everyone speaks

USFS team used the information from the previous day to develop topics that need more discussion. They presented this information to two “travelers”. The traveler’s job was to help the presenter define the goal or goals associated with the topics being presented. The travelers moved from one roundabout session to the next musical chairs style. We held four rounds to make sure participants got a chance to talk about a wide range of topics. The gems of the conversations were posted on the wall and shared with the larger group. The gems that were captured are in the pages below.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of potential pothole and blind spots. In other words the participants had a chance to share with the Forest areas of the collaboration that could be improved or where more information needed to be shared. The potholes/blind spots shared were:

- The need for more field trips
- Simplify the statistics on the website/need the information in an easier and more simple manner
- Better manage Forest users
- Need to include more “Millennials” in the collaboration
- Need to start sharing the Forest’s constraints and sideboards
- Need to define “old growth” (is it just big trees? Or areas that are undisturbed?....)
- We need a strategy about dealing with watersheds that are not entirely in the Foothills Landscape
- There has been a lack of concrete goals so far. Forest Service experts are the best people to do this and share the perfect plan for the landscape.
- Vested interest groups
- Changes to Forest Service personnel can have an impact on the project – does the Forest have a plan for this?
- How will we find a balance between treating for non-native species and killing innocent by-standing species?
- The process is too nebulous for some potential participants – they don’t know why they should be involved.



TIMBER

Balance  
Mult. Use

Constraints  
vs.

Opportunity  
Stereotype

Balance  
"Clearcut"

Natural  
Decomposition  
Feasible  
by Manage Projects

Use the Biodiversity  
Knowledge

Project  
Planning

Education  
Habitat needs  
& tools

Actions  
vs.  
Consequence

Educate  
each other  
concerning  
socio and forest  
health

Improved  
wildlife habitat  
via  
increased  
forests

Increased  
resilience  
of  
mature native  
diversity

Forest  
Health  
Resilient  
Forest  
Age class

Commercial  
Forests  
lack of  
ESF + OG

Vegetation  
Based Act

True  
Restoration  
Historic data

Tools  
vs.  
Soils &  
Sediment

By fine-tuning  
forest health  
and native sp.  
Develop fine  
tolerance

Resilience  
of Forest is  
a product  
of Past and  
Future use

Forest Health  
Resilient  
Forest  
Age class

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Ideas from Roundabout Discussions on Timber Harvest, Old Growth, and Wildlife Habitat Diversity



## Ideas from Roundabout Discussion on Soil and Water Quality

SOIL &

WATER

Improve  
Impaired  
Streams

Scale  
According  
to Use

Maintain  
Use &  
Quality  
Resource

Tell the  
How  
&  
Why

Explain  
Why

Road  
Access  
(motorized)

Support  
Multi  
Uses

Camping  
Traditions

No

Closures

What  
can we  
live with?

Fishing



DEVELOPED  
REC SITES

ENHANCE  
REC OPPT.

Sustainable  
trail system

- ③ Highlight seasonally  
closed roads for  
hiking, mtn biking,  
horseback riding

Sustainable  
trail system

- ② Have A limit  
balance trade offs  
for new trails

Sustainable trail  
system

- ① Volunteers

QUALITY  
RECREATION

SUSTAINABLE  
TRAIL  
SYSTEM

Enhance Rec  
Oppt

- ③ Agency needs to  
be flexible

Enhance  
Rec Oppt

- ② Using existing data  
(NVUW) & prioritizing  
resources/investments

Enhance Rec  
Oppt

- ① Explore adding tech.  
in Dev. Rec Sites  
to attract  
Hunters etc.

Quality Rec

- ① Increase/Invest  
Partnerships &  
Volunteer Oppt.

Offering variety of  
tasks  
- signs & eas  
- Maintenance  
- etc.

Developed  
Rec Sites

Re Allocation of Funds

Developed Rec  
Sites

- ① ~ Sell timber to raise \$  
to improve Campgrounds

Quality Rec

- ③ Prioritizing funding  
& investments on  
high use sites

Quality Rec

- ② Outside funding  
sources

~ Partnered administrated  
w/ FS

Developed  
Rec Sites

- ③ How do we get  
users to help us  
maintain

## Day 2 - Photos





