
FRANCIS MARION NATIONAL FOREST
Revised Land Management Plan
Administrative Change#3
New Threatened and Endangered Species
Northern Long-eared Bat

June 2018

Introduction

The 2012 Planning Rule, issued by the Forest Service in April 2012, allows the USDA Forest Service to make non-substantive corrections or adjustments to the revised Forest Plan using a process called “Administrative Changes.” “Administrative changes” as defined by 36 CFR 219.13(c) in the 2012 Planning Rule is “...any change to a plan that is not a plan amendment or revision. Administrative changes include corrections of clerical errors to any part of the plan, conformance of the plan to new statutory or regulatory requirements, or changes to other content in the plan (§219.7(f)).

Background

In June and July 2017, nine federally listed threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (NLEB) were captured on the Francis Marion National Forest, in Berkeley and Charleston Counties.

Northern long-eared bats have previously only been known from the mountain region of northwestern South Carolina: Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville counties. Two coastal captures were first reported in fall of 2016 in Beaufort County.

The Southern Region of the USDA Forest Service falls under the Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) range-wide biological opinion (BO) published in conjunction with the final 4(d) rule. The final 4(d) rule allows all forest management activities to go on except tree removal within 0.25 mile radius of known hibernacula or within 150’ of known maternity roosts during the pup season, which we defined as May 15 to July 31. The Francis Marion National Forest falls under the 4(d) rule and its associated BO.

Findings

A team review was undertaken to determine if the addition of NLEB to the Forest’s list of Threatened and Endangered Species would require an amendment to the 2017 Francis Marion Forest Plan. An amendment to the Forest Plan would be needed if additional plan components were needed to provide the ecological conditions necessary to restore habitat for NLEB. The review determined that the existing direction in the plan did provide for the ecological conditions necessary for NLEB, and that no additional plan components were needed.

One known maternity colony has been located. No hibernacula have been located. Additional inventories are needed to identify the presence of hibernacula or maternity roost trees. Once the locations of any hibernacula or maternity roost trees are known, Forest Service staff can determine if any hibernacula or roost trees fall in any timber sale harvest units. If maternity roosts are identified within a timber sale, we will modify the timber sale contracts to put in seasonal restrictions (May 15 to July 31) within 150' of known maternity roost in accordance with the range-wide BO for the NLEB.

There will be no effects beyond those previously disclosed by the FWS in their range-wide BO. To implement the final 4(d) rule for NLEB, Francis Marion staff will revisit project-level decisions that involve tree removal to determine if any timber sales are within 0.25 miles of known hibernacula or 150' of known maternity roosts and will make modifications as needed. Francis Marion staff will be addressing NLEB in all future decisions.

Administrative Change

Appendix D of the Francis Marion Forest Plan contains a list of at-risk species on the Francis Marion National Forest. The change to Table D-1 is shown below:

Forest Plan, Appendix D, Table D-1. List of at-risk species on the Francis Marion

Taxa	Scientific Name	Common Name	Rank
Mammal	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Northern Long-eared Bat	Federally Threatened

This Administrative Change is in accordance with 36 CFR 219.13(c). This action does not constitute a change to plan components as defined by 36 CFR 219.7(e). It is an action to conform the plan to statutory or regulatory requirements, and it constitutes a change to "Other content in the plan" (36 CFR 219.7(f)).

Administrative Change #3 – New Threatened and Endangered Species - Northern Long-eared Bat is effective upon signature and being posted online. Administrative changes are not subject to the objection process (36 CFR 219.50).



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 Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests

6/19/2018

 Date