

OPTIONS

The Suitability of Areas for timber production and the selection of Special Areas had elements that required the resolution of options. One guideline was debated for substance: the gap size range for regeneration in oak-hickory forests.

Suitability of Areas

A presentation and general discussion of the concept of “suitable for timber harvest” took place at the November 28th public meeting. Using the ideas from that meeting and further clarification from the final directives, a proposal for which areas would be suitable for timber harvest and which for timber production was presented at the February 28th public meeting. This proposal appeared to be generally accepted, as there were no comments received on that issue at the meeting. Subsequently, an issue was raised internally regarding needing the ability to manage plantations in the streamside forests, that were proposed as “suitable for timber harvest-other.” The issue was put before the collaborative group, and then presented to the Forest Supervisor. Further information was developed and a recommendation from the ID Team to the Forest Supervisor was to include young pine plantations in the “generally suitable for timber production.” This recommendation was approved. Further notes and a briefing paper on this issue are included as separate documents in this section.

Special Areas

The options for Special Areas proved to be a complex and time consuming ordeal. The steps that occurred are summarized in the following list:

1. North Carolina State Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) presented a proposal for 37 special botanical areas;
2. Screening for special attributes by Forest Service botanist and ecologist resulted in 24 of these areas moving forward as proposed special botanical areas, many with less acres than in the original proposal;
3. The proposed special botanical areas are presented at a public meeting where the participants are given the opportunity to suggest their special areas and react to our proposal. Reaction to the special botanical areas is apparently very positive. Many, but not all, of the special areas proposed by the meeting participants overlap with the Forest Service proposal;
4. The concept of “Archeological Zones (AZs)” as a land allocation is presented at this meeting, to mixed review;
5. Internal debate ensues as to how to deal with the AZs: (1) designate as not suitable for timber production but do not display on a map due to sensitivity of the information; or, (2) designate a few of the more well known AZs as special areas and do nothing more; (3) do not have AZs.

6. Another issue arises internally concerning one specific area known as Daniel's Mountain – the largest of the new botanical proposals. This is a prime recreation area and contains OHV and horse trails. The concern is Forest Service needs to be able to make improvements to the trail system without being encumbered by "Special Area" status. A multi-party field trip results in a recommendation to go ahead with the Special Area designation.
7. These issues are presented to the collaborative participants at the May 8th meeting and two comments are received in favor of the AZs and Daniels Mountain Special Area;
8. Meeting takes place June 29th with Forest Supervisor, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Planning Staff Officer, and Forest Planner. Resolution. It was decided to move forward with the option to have the most well known sites included as Special Areas. Secondly, the Forest Service would strive to complete a Heritage Resources Overview to establish is additional sites needed to be designated to represent the complete array of significant heritage resources on the Forest.
9. The Forest Archeologist, Forest Ecologist, and Forest Recreation Planner formed a sub-team to delineate the final proposed Special Areas using the proposed botanical special areas, the special areas proposed by the collaborative participants, and the most well known significant heritage resource sites. This process identified that in many cases there were overlapping values for the same area: botanical, historical, and scenic, for example. A final proposed list includes 32 areas totaling 5,391 acres.
10. This resulting final proposal for Special Areas was presented back to the collaborative group at the July 31st meeting, and displayed on the draft forest plan map.

Additional information is included in separately in this section.

Guideline: Gap size range for regeneration in oak-hickory forests

Wording in the Desired Conditions for vegetation included the desire for "small canopy gaps" for oak-hickory regeneration. A Guidelines specified gap size would average ½-2 acres. There was some concern internally that more flexibility was needed to establish gaps, and that no acre restriction should be applied to "small."

This issue was presented to the collaborative participants and two comments were received in favor of limiting gap size to an average of ½-2 acres. Additionally, a representative from NC DENR commented that that gap size might be too large. Scientific findings were gathered to support this gap size as appropriate. This issue was discussed at an internal meeting May 15, 2006 (notes included separately in this document). The issue was resolved with all parties at the internal meeting agreeing to the gap size limitation. This was presented back to the collaborative participants at the July 31st meeting and did not receive any contrary comments.

APPENDIX – Areas Considered for Special Area status

Ecological Systems at reference condition or other distinguishing characteristics in proposed SIAs → Developed by Screening all Areas Proposed by NC DENR North Carolina Natural Heritage Program Significant Natural Heritage Areas (5,925 acres total)	Ac	Xeric Oak	Dry Oak Hickory 1/	Dry-mesic Oak Hickory	Mesic / Alluvial	Shortleaf pine-oak	Longleaf Pine	Riparian	Depression Swamp	Xeric Hardpan	Glades and Mafic Cliffs	Seeps & Bogs	Mafic Rock	Rare Species	Arch Sites	
ABNER BOG (11 ac.) 6 ac. currently in SIA	10							√				1				
BADIN UPLAND DEPRESSION SWAMPS AND XERIC WOODLAND (129 ac.) 25 ac. Currently in SIA	129		M					√	2	2			√			
BARNES CREEK BLUFFS (67)	58	√			√			√			1			3		
BIRKHEAD UPLAND FOREST NATURAL AREA (831 ac.) plan says 1,300 ac. currently in SIA (why diff?)	831	In Wilderness, surveys incomplete														
CHEEK CREEK RIDGE (34 ac.)	23		M							1					1	
CLARKS GROVE LONGLEAF PINE FOREST (343 ac.)	140					√	√								1	
DARK MOUNTAIN (424 ac.)	233	√	F	F			√				1				1	
DUTCH JOHN CREEK AREA (214 ac.)	134	√		F	√		√							1	√	
FALLS DAM SLOPE (331)	245	√	MF	MF		√	√				3		√	5	√	
GOLD MINE BRANCH LONGLEAF PINE SLOPE (54 ac.) 23 ac. currently in SIA	54					√	√								1	
LITTLE ISLAND CREEK XERIC SLOPE (33 ac.)	32	√									1				1	
PLEASANT GROVE BOG AND PINE SAVANNA (463 ac.) 3 ac. currently in SIA	44						√	√							√	
POISON FORK SLOPES (254 ac.)	242				√		√					1	√	1	√	
POLLY BRANCH SLOPES (155 ac.)	116		F	F	√		√								√	
ROCKY CRK LONGLEAF PINE FOREST AND BOGS (130 ac.)	94					√	√								√	
SPENCER CREEK HILLSIDE SEEPAGE BOG (76 ac.)	52		F				√				2					
UPPER DENSONS CREEK AND ABNER MOUNTAIN (560 ac.)	237	√	F	F	√		√					1			√	
UWHARRIE MAFIC ROCK AREA (165 ac.)	92		M				√	1	1				√		√	
UWHARRIE RIVER BOUNDARY BLUFF (50 ac.)	28			M											1	
UWHARRIE RIVER DANIELS MOUNTAIN (950 ac.)	751	√	F		√	√	√				1	1		2	√	
UWHARRIE RIVER SLOPES (currently in SIA)	60				√		√								4	
WALKER MOUNTAIN/WOOD RUN NATURAL AREA (382 ac.)	362	√	MF	F	√		√	1		1	1	1	√	1		
WEST BRANCH SLOPES (30 ac.)	3						√								1	
WEST BRANCH/ELDORADO FORESTS (670 ac.)	428	√	MF	F			√	1	1		1	√			√	
Total acres & number of sites where ecological system or other distinguishing characteristic is represented	4,398	9	8F 6M	7F 2M	8	3	4	19	4	4	6	7	6	14	11	

Other Sites considered as Special Interest Areas (Botanical) on the Uwharrie National Forest and the reasons for their exclusion (Proposed by NC DENR but not brought forward).

Ecological Systems at reference condition or other distinguishing features in proposed SIAs →	Ac	Xeric Oak	Dry Oak Hickory	Dry-mesic Oak Hickory	Mesic / Alluvial	Shortleaf pine-oak	Longleaf Pine	Riparian	Depression Swamp	Xeric Hardpan	Glades and Mafic Cliffs	Seeps & Bogs	Mafic Rock	Rare Species	Arch Sites
North Carolina Natural Heritage Program Significant Natural Heritage Areas															
BADIN NIFTY ROCKS <i>Forests < 30 years in age except in section w/o distinct types</i>	50	√								1			√	1	√
BETTY MCGEES CREEK MAFIC FOREST <i>In Wilderness</i>	64		M										√	1	
KIES MOUNTAIN HARDPANS <i>Loblolly (mixed) Forests < 40 years in age needing restoration</i>	334								1	1					√
LITTLE RIVER BUFFER AND CLIFFS <i>Potential longleaf restoration and isolated tract</i>	93														
LOMAX CHURCH LONGLEAF PINE FOREST <i>Young with few old stands, excellent LL and rare spp rest. ops</i>	678						√					2		1	√
LOWER ROCKY CREEK LONGLEAF PINE FOREST <i>Young stands, excellent LL restoration ops, few rare species</i>	348						√					1		2	√
MACHINE BRANCH MAFIC AREA <i>All roadside, include in Schweinitz HMA</i>	40													4	√
NORTH BADIN DAM UPLAND DEPRESSION SWAMPS <i>Swamp in matrix with < 20 year old HWs, protect w/guidelines</i>	21								2				√		√
RAILROAD MIXED PINE FOREST <i>Excellent LL restoration potential, include in Schw. HMA</i>	328						√					2		2	√
ROBERDO BOG AND LONGLEAF PINE FOREST 5 ac. in SIA at bog <i>Longleaf is < 40 yrs in age, include in portions in Schw. HMA</i>	991						√					1		4	√
SAND BRANCH NATURAL AREA <i>Young (< 40 year old) loblolly pine</i>	40											1			
UWHARRIE RIVER COLE MOUNTAIN CLIFF <i>Unique cliff feature in / adjacent to cutover stand; EO rank = E</i>	20							√					1	1	
WALKERS CREEK FORESTS <i>Young forests with only older xeric Oak already represented</i>	724	√												1	√
Total acres	3,731														

Sites proposed as Special Areas by members of the collaborative group and disposition:

Trigger Question in “Special Areas” breakout: What, to you, is the most special area of the Forest?

Answers are recorded in the table below. Numbers correspond to dots placed on a map of the Forest.

Dot Number	Name of site/comments about site	Disposition
1	River trail – fish trap # 31	Part of proposed special area
2	Giant Monadnocks – Nifty Rocks (from NCNHP) horse trail is close	Add as proposed – scenic, geologic
3	Woodrun scenic areas – 2 old clearcuts that are growing in and need to be cleared again	No –a vista that can be opened
4	Hiking trail at north end of Wilderness	NA - wilderness
5	Hanglider - great view	Part of proposed special area
6	Dark Mountain – jumping off rock – scenic, botanical, rock features	Yes - proposed
7	Falls Dam Slope	Yes - proposed
8	North of Jumping off rock, rare plants	Part of proposed special area
9	Cotton Place road, high biological interest (maidenhair ferns)	Add – historic home site
10	Woodrun huntcamp at trailhead for mountain bikes	Part of proposed special area
11	Good tree growing and looking at area	No – proposed for timber production (what this person desires)
12	Doerschuk (Talbert)	Add - prehistoric
13	Thornburg Homesite	Add – historic home site
14	Deepwater trail camp – good OHV trail that was closed	Yes - proposed
15	Uwharrie Trail	No –work needed to bring to desired condition
16	Flora McDonald Place	Add – historic home site
17	Correl Road ---- Longleaf Pine Ecosystem	No –work needed to bring to desired condition
18	Lomax Area ---- Longleaf Pine Ecosystem	No – work needed to bring to desired condition

Dot Number	Name of site/comments about site	Disposition
19	Deep Water Trail ---- old OHV trail system wants reopened (same as 14)	NA
20	Falls Dam area ----- rare plants including Solidago area	Yes - proposed
21	Birkhead Wilderness	NA-wilderness
22	Thornburg Tract----- cultural (same as 13)	Yes - proposed
23	Badin upland depressions --- botanical & geological	Yes - proposed
24	Jumping off rock ---- zoological, botanical	Yes - proposed
25	Stokes Ferry Forest --- unusual botanical forest	Yes - proposed
26	Caitlins trail ----- scenic & botanical	Portions in other proposals
27	Barnes Creek—Poison Fork ---- rare mussels	Eligible Wild and Scenic River Corridor
28	Abner Bog ---- rare botanical	Yes - proposed
29	Outlying Tract --- Zoo visitors like nearby area	No – assign to high scenic integrity
30	Little River Headwaters --- near Pisgah Covered Bridge	No – needs work
31	Rocky Creek ---- Botanical and Longleaf	No – Schweinitz’s HMA

Comments from “PostIts” received in the “Special Areas” breakout.

Topic	Comment
SPECIAL AREAS	I believe that botanical and endangered species should take precedence over heritage since the heritage sites are <u>so</u> spread out! (As mentioned, heavy concentration)
SPECIAL AREAS	Promote recreation already existing so as to defer the focus from archeology sites to recreation.
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	Maximum effort should be made to preserve the Schweinitz sunflower and to restore the Piedmont Prairies.
Archeological Zones	How is an arch site determined? Does one arrowhead define an area as an arch site?

Topic	Comment
	How is the age of a site determined? Is it accurate or guess work?
Archeological Zones	<p>Every area can be considered a historical area within the Uwharrie Forest, the county, the state of N.C., or the east coast of the U.S. There have been all types of activities going on here for 100's of years or even 1000's of years. People in the past have enjoyed living within the area so why should we not be able to enjoy the same places and go enjoy nature?</p> <p>History is important but not at the expense of living and enjoying today and tomorrow.</p> <p>Use <u>common</u> sense!</p>
Archeological Zones Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	<p>I feel the archeology regions designated are quite large and heavily concentrated.</p> <p>I would like to see more areas open to "prairie" conditions.</p> <p>Work with user groups to establish low impact guidelines/standards.</p>
Archeological Zones	<p>I feel it is imperative for resources to co-exist with recreation users at all costs!</p> <p>If we are unable to enjoy these sites why preserve them? - Work together -</p>
Archeological Zones	The areas designated as special for archeology seems very large especially in areas that already being used by the public.
Archeological Zones	Archeologists are our paid experts. They hopefully have identified the most important sites. If we don't save these sites, our ancestor's history is lost forever! For goodness sakes, pay attention to their recommendations. Think past today and think of future generations. Save as much as possible!
SPECIAL AREAS	Buffer Zone – only uses that wouldn't adversely affect the special area in any way; at least 100 meters for archeological areas; bigger buffers for recreational areas next to botanical areas to protect them from runoff and trampling disturbances if horseback riders or other users go off

Topic	Comment
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	<p>trail. Buffer zones should be marked (maybe by painting trees) & the public educated.</p> <p>Maybe places to restore Schweinitz sunflower could coincide with places people want to have trees removed to improve the views from ridge tops.</p>
SPECIAL AREAS Archeological Zones	Assuming that the identification of special interest areas will be the prime mechanism (other than federal law) for protecting the unique archeological areas on the Uwharrie, then these areas should be included in the SIA inventory in the new plan.
SPECIAL AREAS	Is there a possibility of showing an analog version of <u>all</u> the GIS special interest layers on one single map of we can see the various uses/interests?
Archeological Zones	Archeological sites must be protected. ALL are special places.
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	More Prairie Habitat
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	More Prairie Habitats
Schweinitz sunflower habitat management areas	Increase size of prairie-like openings to 10 acres or more.
SPECIAL AREAS	Special Interest Area – Re-opening old OHV Trails west of FR516 close to deep water trail. Old trail names: Falls Dam Extension, CCC, Big Branch, & Elk Horn. These were part of the original “Loop” Trail System. They were closed in the early 90’s due to Bald Eagle.

Final List of Special Areas and Their Special Attributes

#	Site Name	Special Attributes	Size (acres)
1	Abner Bog	Botanical/Historical	10
2	Badin Upland Depression Swamps and Xeric Woodland	Botanical/Scenic/Historic	129
3	Barnes Creek Bluffs	Botanical/Scenic/Zoological	58
4	Birkhead Upland Forest Natural Area (inside Birkhead Mountains Wilderness)	Botanical	827
5	Cheek Creek Ridge	Botanical/Geological	23
6	Clarks Grove Longleaf Pine Forest	Botanical/Scenic	140
7	Cotton Place	Historical	76
8	Daniels/Shingle Trap Mountain	Botanical/Recreational/Historical	751
9	Dark Mountain/Jumping Off Rock	Botanical/Scenic/Zoological	233
10	Dutch John Creek	Botanical	134
11	Falls Dam Slope	Botanical/Scenic	245
12	Falls Mountain	Historical	84
13	Goldmine Branch Longleaf Pine Slope	Botanical/Scenic	54
14	Headwaters	Historical	123
15	Horse Trough	Historical	156
16	Little Island Creek Xeric Slope	Botanical/Geological/Scenic	32
17	Nifty Rocks	Scenic/Geological/Historical	64
18	Pleasant Grove Bog and Pine Savanna	Botanical/Scenic/Historical	44
19	Poison Fork Slopes	Botanical/Scenic	242
20	Polly Branch Slopes	Botanical	116
21	Rocky Creek longleaf Pine Forest and Bogs	Botanical/Scenic/Historical	94
22	Russell Mine	Historical	263
23	Spencer Creek Hillside Seepage Bog	Botanical/Scenic/Historical	52
24	Talbert	Historical	65
25	Thornburg	Historical	168
26	Upper Densons Creek and Abner Mountain	Botanical/Zoological	247
27	Uwharrie Mafic Rock Area	Botanical	92
28	Uwharrie River Boundary Bluff	Botanical/Scenic	28
29	Uwharrie River Slopes	Botanical	49
30	Walker Mountain/Wood run Natural Area	Botanical	362
32/33	West Branch Eldorado Forest	Botanical	428
31	West Branch Slopes	Botanical	2
	TOTAL		5,391*

*Includes 827 acres inside Birkhead Mountains Wilderness

NOTE: Some areas suggested by the Collaboration participants and noted as included are included under different names than the name put forward in the public meeting.

Notes (and my comments) from May 15th Meeting on Uwharrie Plan Revision

Present: Marisue Hilliard, Ken Rago, Anthony Matthews, Terry Seyden, Mary Noel, Deborah Walker, Steve Hendricks, Steve Simon, John Blanton, Ruth Berner, Sheryl Bryan, Rodney Snedeker.

Topics:

1. Suitability for Timber Production
2. Archeological Zones
3. “Daniels Mountain Special Area”
4. Small Canopy Gaps for Oak/Hickory Regeneration
5. EMS (tabled until later due to lack of time)

1. Suitability for Timber Production:

Question – Shall we move forward with the ID team’s recommendation on suitability?

The IDT recommends Option 1:

Not suitable for timber harvest		
Wilderness		5,075 acres
Suitable for timber harvest – other		
Special Areas -	Approx.	4,390 acres
Archeological Zones (AZ) -	Approx.	6,370 acres
Streamside Forests (SSZ) –	Approx.	6,865 acres
Eligible WSR Corridor –	Approx	2,435 acres
Developed Recreation Sites		<u>(acres not determined)</u>
	TOTAL	20,060 (approx.)
	Minus overlaps-	4,415
		<u>Minus pine plantations (embedded in AZs,SSZs, & WSR) –3,785</u>
		11,860 acres (approx)
Suitable for timber production		
Everything else		33,485 acres (approx)

This is the proposal presented to the public at the May 8th meeting. No comments were received at the public meeting on this topic. [To me this is an indication of general acceptance of our approach by the group] Two comments have been received subsequently: Steve Novak (WildLaw) and Hugh Irwin (SAFC) both would rather not have the AZ, SSZ, and EWRS pine plantations included as “suitable for timber production.”

Anthony and Deborah indicated a need for more information regarding the “suitable for timber production” direction in our directive system.

John Blanton shared preliminary estimates of potential annual volume outputs based on this option, which are higher than what we have produced recently.

Anthony reminded everyone that our objectives need to be realistic and based on expected budgets.

Option 2: As above, except do not include the pine plantations in the AZs, SSZs and WSR as “suitable for timber production.” This is the proposal presented to the public at the February 28th meeting. No comments related to suitability for timber production were received at this meeting either.

Option 3: The “nothing is suitable for timber production” option was discussed and dismissed by the IDT.

Our rationale for adding the AZ, SSZ, and EWSR pine plantations back into suitable is as follows: these areas need to be thinned to keep them healthy and growing, and so they may eventually be restored. We are more likely to be able to do this if they are included in the lands suitable for timber production.

Disposition – UNRESOLVED

2. Archeological Zones:

Question – (1) Shall we proceed with acknowledging archeological zones in the plan?(2) If so, shall we proceed with zones being “suitable for timber harvest – other” [that is, not suitable for timber production, with the exception noted in #1 above]?

The IDT **recommends** Option 1: Acknowledgement of large significant sites and concentrations of significant sites as Archeological Zones (AZs). This recognizes the unique value of the Uwharrie sites, and recognizes management of heritage resources as an important focus for this plan revision. At the same time, the plan must recognize that the boundaries of these zones have not yet been firmly established, but will be established over the course of the planning period. In most cases there would be a “designation by description” rather than displaying these sites on a map, due to confidentiality requirements.

Further, IDT recommends AZs be “not suitable for timber production” except for pine plantations within the zones, which will need work to keep healthy and growing. The thinking is that high concentrations of significant sites make it difficult to count on being able to make a viable timber sale. We can go forward with the “approximate zone acreage” for the purposes of calculating long-term-sustained-yield.

Option 2: A more limited approach to defining AZs was discussed, which only identifies those that are well-known and can be put on a map and interpreted (Thornburg, Flora McDonald, a few others).

Option 3: No AZs.

Public response on this is mixed.

Disposition – UNRESOLVED

3. “Daniels Mountain Special Area”

Question – Do we want to designate a special botanical area in a place where we know we will need flexibility to make improvements to the trail systems? Aren’t the current “special areas” sufficient?

The IDT will take a closer look on-the-ground and revisit this question later. This is simply an “awareness” item that may need responsible official’s call in the near future.

Public response to the special botanical areas in general is very positive.

Disposition – REVISIT AT A LATER DATE

4. Does the phrase “small canopy gaps” (for oak-hickory regeneration) need a gap size range stated in the plan? Is ½ - 2 acres too restrictive.

IDT recommends keeping a gap size, but is open to exceptions/ rewording, etc. Our rationale is: (1) gap size is silviculturally adequate; (2) this limitation builds public trust; and (3) the Plan needs to provide personnel with enough guidance to implement what was meant by “small.”

Disposition – ACCEPT ½ - 2 ACRE GAP SIZE RESTRICTION.

Follow-up to this meeting as I understand it: Marisue and Anthony will discuss.

TOPIC: Suitability for Timber Production

Suitable Uses is one of the major plan components. Identifying lands not suitable for timber production is also a requirement of NFMA. The planning directives issued in January 2006 provide guidance in defining what should be excluded from “suitable for timber harvest,” and what should be “suitable for timber production” (a subset of the “suitable for timber harvest”).

Recommendation:

Not suitable for timber harvest			
Wilderness			5,075 acres
Suitable for timber harvest – other	Approximately		10,000 acres
(<u>Not</u> suitable for timber production)			
Special Areas			
Streamside Forests* except for pine plantations less than fifty years old**			
Eligible WSR Corridors except for pine plantations less than fifty years old			
Developed Recreation Sites			
Suitable for timber production			
Everything else	Approximately		35,000 acres

*Streamside Forests are identified as 100 feet on either side of perennial streams.

** There would still be a 30-foot zone on either side of the stream that would be off limits. We are talking about activities in the outer 70 feet

Background

The IDT held two public meetings on the topic of suitable uses, including suitability for timber harvest and suitability for timber production. The first meeting was to discuss general ideas for how timber harvest could be compatible with our desired conditions. The second was to present the IDT proposal for timber suitability (the above recommendation) based on our internal discussion and the previous discussion with the public. There appears to be general support for restoring pine plantations to more natural communities among the people participating in our collaborative process.

While the Revised Plan contains no desired conditions or objectives to produce timber per se, it does contain desired conditions and objectives that are *compatible* with timber production: restoration of longleaf pine, shortleaf pine, oak hickory, and mixed communities on sites currently dominated by loblolly; thinning for forest health; and creation of gaps for oak/hickory regeneration if natural regeneration is not occurring. The directives allow that lands *compatible* with timber production should be identified as “suitable for timber production,” even if timber production is not the primary emphasis. It

is the opinion of the IDT that lands needing restoration and/or forest health work should be classified as “suitable for timber production.”

What lands, then, are not suitable for timber production (“suitable for timber harvest – other” as defined in the final directives)? In the opinion of the IDT that would be lands that are currently close to the desired condition and don’t need restoration activities, or where restoration of natural communities might be secondary to some other desired condition. The IDT generally identified these areas as: 1) “special areas” including botanical, archeological, historical, and scenic, as defined in the directives; developed recreation areas; eligible wild and scenic river corridors; and streamside forests (100-foot zone on either side of perennial streams).

Upon further discussion, the IDT realized that some of these “other” areas contain within them some young (<50 years old) pine plantations that will need forest health thinning and eventual restoration. Otherwise they risk becoming “pine beetle bait.” So the IDT agreed that those portions of the “other” areas should be switched from the “other” category and be included in the “suitable for timber production.” This would be consistent with the concept that areas needing restoration be classified as suitable for timber production. This would also provide a way to fund the work needed to keep the stands healthy prior to eventual restoration. In addition, there is a perception that if land is in this “other” category, timber sales would be inappropriate even to help move toward the desired condition. While this perception is faulty, it is still an impediment to action, both internally and externally.

The revised approach to timber suitability was presented at the last public meeting. Two of the 40 or so public participants submitted comments recommending we not include the young pine plantations in the “other” areas in the “suitable for timber production” acres. With most other participants it appears to be a non-issue. Either way these acres would still be “suitable for timber harvest.”

STATUS: Proceed with recommendation. Include <50 year old pine plantations in the outer 70 feet of streamside forests as “suitable for timber production.” This will facilitate moving these areas toward the desired conditions.

TOPIC: Archeological Zones

Recommendation: Certain well known, well defined significant archeological sites should be included in the “Special Area” designations. Criteria for selecting these archeological special areas shall be documented by the Forest Archeologist with IDT input. Those to be included as “Special Areas” shall have the following attributes described (similar to the attributes assigned to each botanical special area):

- Carefully refined and mapped boundaries (more refined than what is currently mapped);
- A name;
- A detailed description that includes why each specific area deserves special area status;
- A description of management direction specific to the site (that is different from how archeological sites in general are managed).

Part 2 of the recommendation is for the Forest to undertake a “heritage resources overview” during the course of the planning period. This would better identify and define if any additional significant representative sites are needed for special management.

STATUS: Proceed with recommendation.

Background

The Uwharrie area is uniquely important in the Southeast as important for heritage resources – both prehistoric and historic. The exposed “rhyolite” was quarried in ancient times and transported through Eastern North America as material for tool making. In many cases, Projectile Point Typology for entire Southeast is based on Uwharrie area sites (i.e. Uwharrie, Yadkin, Badin, Morrow Mountain, Stanley, and Hardaway). In the more recent past (200 years or so) the area was the site of the first gold mines in the US. The area has been a crossroads for people beginning thousands of years ago through the Civil War era. [This is not the case for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests]

Since the start of the plan revision process, we have had desired conditions and objectives intended to give more recognition, more interpretation and research, and better management to the heritage resources. One of the three major themes that surfaced in the plan revision is:

“Better managing significant archeological sites: The Uwharrie has an abundance of artifacts and historic and prehistoric sites within its boundaries. These need protection, but they also provide opportunities for research, teaching, and interpretation.”

Recognition of special archeological areas is an important strategy for implementing this theme in the Plan. Early on, the IDT presented the concept of “Archeological Zones” (AZs) to be mapped as a part of plan implementation. These AZs were to be either large significant sites, or concentrations of significant sites. This concept received general

support. However, a preliminary map of the AZs presented at a public meeting received mixed responses. This was in part due to the apparent extensiveness of these “zones” as mapped in the Badin area. Badin is the highest concentrated use area on the Forest, with hiking, equestrian trails, OHV trails, highly scenic areas, a shooting range, special botanical areas – most everything the Uwharrie has to offer recreation-wise except for wilderness. Not only were members of the public surprised at the extent of the proposed AZs, so were some members of the IDT and other Forest Service personnel. The AZs as presented were only roughly drawn and were not identified specifically as to their types or importance, in part due to confidentiality. Later internal discussions surfaced the fact that part of the impreciseness of the AZ’s as presented was due to a lack of precise information, and that a Heritage Resources Overview could be the way to get that information. There are already existing legal requirements for site protection, so no loss to the resource should occur while a more complete picture of the resource is developed.

Internal discussions led to the idea that instead of having another delineation (AZs), whatever significant sites were selected to be in the plan would be included as Special Areas.

Further work on the Special Areas plan component revealed a great deal of overlap among the botanically rich areas, the highly scenic areas, and the archeologically rich areas. The bogs, for example, are already included in the botanical special areas. Some of the other botanical area boundaries could be adjusted somewhat to encompass the significant heritage resources. This would give them special area status without precisely revealing the whereabouts the arch site – a confidentiality factor when dealing with heritage resources. Also, at least one of the special scenic areas overlaps with a significant heritage resource site. In the end, many significant archeological sites would be included in the Special Areas, though only a few are specifically identified just for their heritage resource value – for example, Thornburg farm.

TOPIC: Daniels Mountain Special Botanical Area

Update

On May 31st, 2006, Steve Simon, Gary Kauffman, Carolyn Wells (USFWS), Deborah Walker, and Michael Schafale (NCDENR) did a field review of the proposed Daniels Mountain Special Botanical Area. Steve Simon documented and participants concurred with the following discussion points:

- Gary and Steve agreed that this site, proposed by NC Heritage and the USFS Uwharrie Forest Planning Team as a Botanical SA, contained some good quality examples of very rare and fairly common ecological systems that need representation in the special areas 'network';
- The group was impressed, but not surprised at the number of significant archeological sites (at least 10) that occur in the Daniels Mountain Botanical SA.
- Deborah agreed that the Botanical SA designation and hence identification as "not suited for timber production" would not hamper management opportunities for this site in the Badin Lake area where recreation is the primary emphasis - not timber production.
- Deborah and Mike agreed that the Botanical SA designation should also not hamper recreation management flexibility. Specifically the need for reducing impacts of the OHV trails may require some trail redesign that may impact some of the Botanical SA and that this is acceptable - within reason, of course.

Recommendation: Designate Daniels Mountain as Special Area, noting its importance to botanical, recreation, and heritage resources.

Background

The Uwharrie National Forest currently has seven recognized "special interest areas" for a total of 1,422 acres. These correspond to what we will call Special Botanical Areas in the revised plan. About 24 areas, approximately 4,398 acres, were presented at a public meeting as a preliminary list for review among the public and District personnel. The public response to the special botanical areas was favorable. However, one of the areas, "Uwharrie River Daniels Mountain," raised an immediate red flag with the District. It is the single largest new proposed special botanical area at 751 acres, and it is right in the heart of the Badin area with its many OHV and horse trails. A small portion of this area already has "special interest area" status. There are two issues:

1. The Forest needs to have the flexibility to make changes and improvements to the trails systems without being unnecessarily encumbered by some "special area" restrictions.
2. Some personnel believe the "special" part of this area is already recognized and is much less than the hundreds of acres proposed. District personnel were adamant that much of the rest of the proposed area is ordinary oak-hickory forest – nothing

special. Furthermore, if we want to have excellent examples of all forest communities as a part of our “special botanical areas” (part of our strategy for providing for biological diversity) there are better representatives of these communities elsewhere, such as in the wilderness.

Members of the IDT, the District Ranger, and representatives from NCDENR and USFWS took a look in the field on May 31st.

STATUS: Include As a Special Area, recognizing all special attributes: botanical, historical, recreational.