



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Blue Ridge Ranger District
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Blairsville, GA 30512

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File Code: 2710

Date: July 15, 2008

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

The US Forest Service is asking for your comments on the following applications for special use authorizations to use National Forest System (NFS) lands:

- ❖ Blue Ridge Mountain EMC has requested authorization to install 3,100 feet of overhead electric power line along Georgia Highway 515 in front of the Blue Ridge Ranger District office in Blairsville, GA. The power line construction would include the installation of approximately eleven (11) new poles, including guy wires and anchors, to support the power line. The power line would require a 40 foot wide cleared right-of-way, 20 feet of which would overlap onto the Department of Transportation right of way for Georgia Highway 515. The line would provide existing customers with a more reliable power source and provide a sufficient power source for the expanding commercial use in this area. The power line would remain in place as long as the customers in this area have a demand for electric power. Construction would be performed and funded by Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and last approximately five (5) weeks. The only other route available is through county property and private easements to the south and west of the US Forest Service route, but is not considered feasible because BRMEMC cannot adhere to the required 200-foot "tree safe" zone along Lake Nottely. Other routes were considered, but the necessary easements needed could not be acquired. The only undesirable effect expected as a result of this activity is that motorists using Georgia Highway 515 would be able to see the power line, which could result in a less appealing visual environment. Construction of the power line would commence upon authorization by the US Forest Service.

- ❖ The Georgia Cruisers 4x4 Club (GC), represented by Josh Schmitt, has requested authorization to conduct a recreation event known as the Beasley Bash at the Beasley Knob OHV Area. The event would utilize staging area 1 (see map) for camping and food vending and the trail system for event activities, which consist of riding all terrain vehicles, motor bikes, and four wheel drive vehicles on the trail system. Staging area 2 would be used for overflow camping only; no noisy activities would be allowed due to the close proximity to private land. The event would occur Friday, September 5, 2008 through Sunday, September 7, 2008. GC is expecting 50 to 75 participants and 25 to 30 vehicles to attend the event. GC would be responsible for removing the trash and temporary facilities (i.e. port-a-potties, food distribution facilities, tents, etc.) from the staging areas at the conclusion of their event. A public address (PA) system would be used to organize activities. Event participants would be expected to pay the normal day use fees and the facility would remain open to the public for non-event riders to use. The Georgia Cruisers have conducted this event in consecutive years and no unexpected adverse effects have been observed following the event. Since this has become an annual event and the venue and activities are the same each year, this scoping will cover the next five Beasley Bash events. If a major factor, such as time of year, type of activity, or location changes significantly, the event will be re-scoped.



- ❖ Audax Atlanta, represented by Mark B. Watson, has requested authorization to conduct a non-commercial group use event at the Brasstown Bald Visitor Center parking lot on Saturday, September 6, 2008. The event is a 200 kilometer brevet in which bicycle riders stop along the designated route to sign a control card as proof that they made it to a particular checkpoint. The event would have approximately 15 to 20 riders that would start in Dahlonega and ride state and local paved roads. This authorization would allow Mr. Watson to set up a 10 x 10 foot shade tent in the picnic area at the south end of the Brasstown Bald Visitor Center parking lot. Mr. Watson would be responsible of cleaning up any trash resulting from his activity and restore the area to the condition it was in prior to his arrival. All other checkpoints for the event are located on non-NFS land.

An analysis is currently being conducted by Forest Service personnel for these types of special use authorization requests, including an assessment of the possible environmental effects of the proposed actions on NFS lands. Also, the Forest Service is closely monitoring the impact that these types of activities may have on other users of the areas.

In general, the special use process involves a review of each application received to determine how the request would affect NFS lands and the public's use of these lands. Special use applications must be consistent with Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and special orders that apply to the National Forests. Applications must also be consistent with the Forest Plan for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (January, 2004), including all objectives and standards for management of the lands where a proposed special use area(s) is located.

I would like to hear from you regarding the proposed activities before making my decision for this request. The proposed activities appear to fall into a category of actions that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. This determination, however, will not be finalized until after consideration of your comments and concerns.

To have your comments considered in our decision process, we would appreciate receiving your comments by August 15, 2008. This will help ensure a complete and thorough analysis of these activities. Send your written comments to the Blue Ridge Ranger District at the address provided on the letterhead. You may also comment by phone or fax (see letterhead), by e-mail to chatt_comments@fs.fed.us, or in person at our office on Highway 515 West in Blairsville, Georgia.

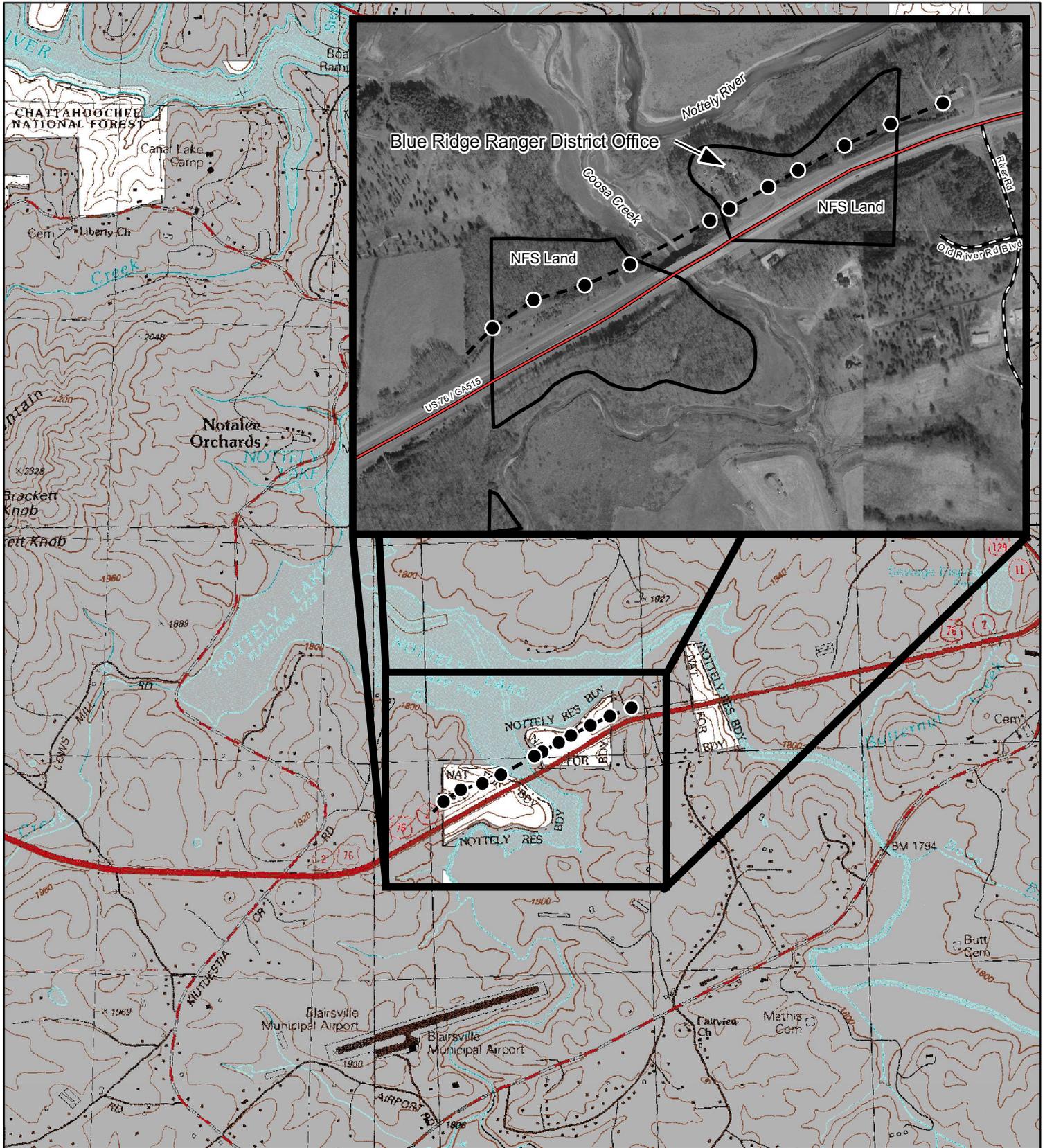
Please note that you will be sent further correspondence on the proposed action *only* if you request a response in your reply. Feel free to call the Forest Service office if you have additional questions or would like more information regarding these proposed activities.

Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alan Polk
Alan Polk
District Ranger

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC - Overhead Power Line - US 76/GA 515



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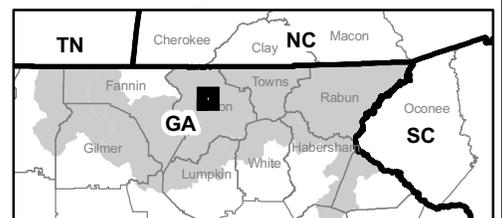
GIS by JIC 07/10/2008

Legend

- Proposed Pole
- ↘ Proposed Power Line
- Non-NFS Land

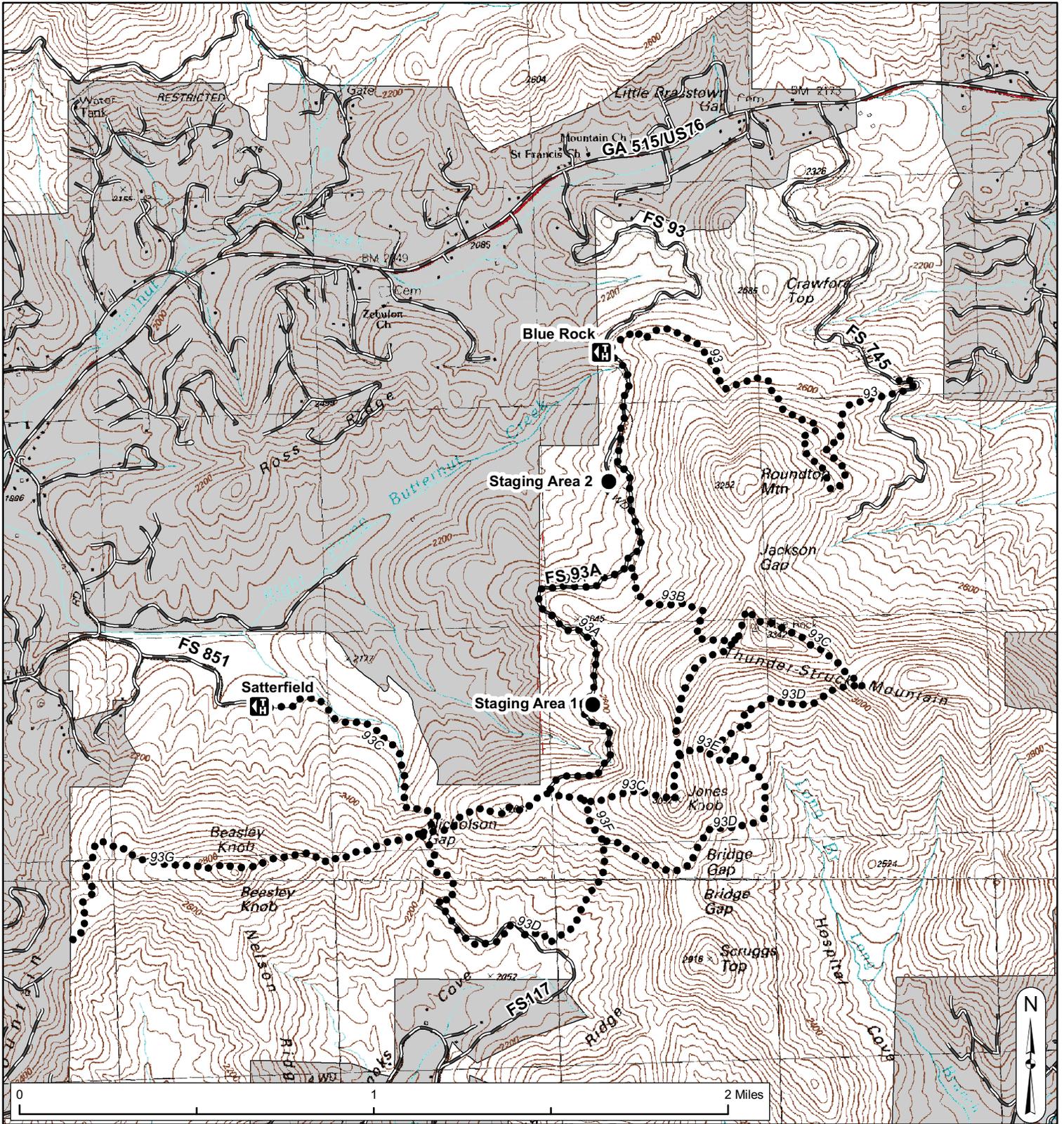
Note: NFS = National Forest System

VICINITY MAP



Georgia Cruisers 4x4 Club

Beasley Bash Recreation Event



Legend

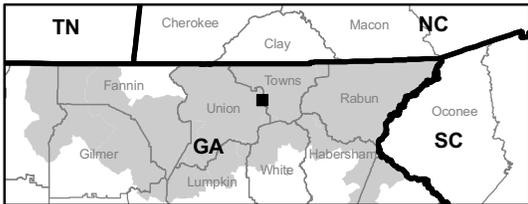
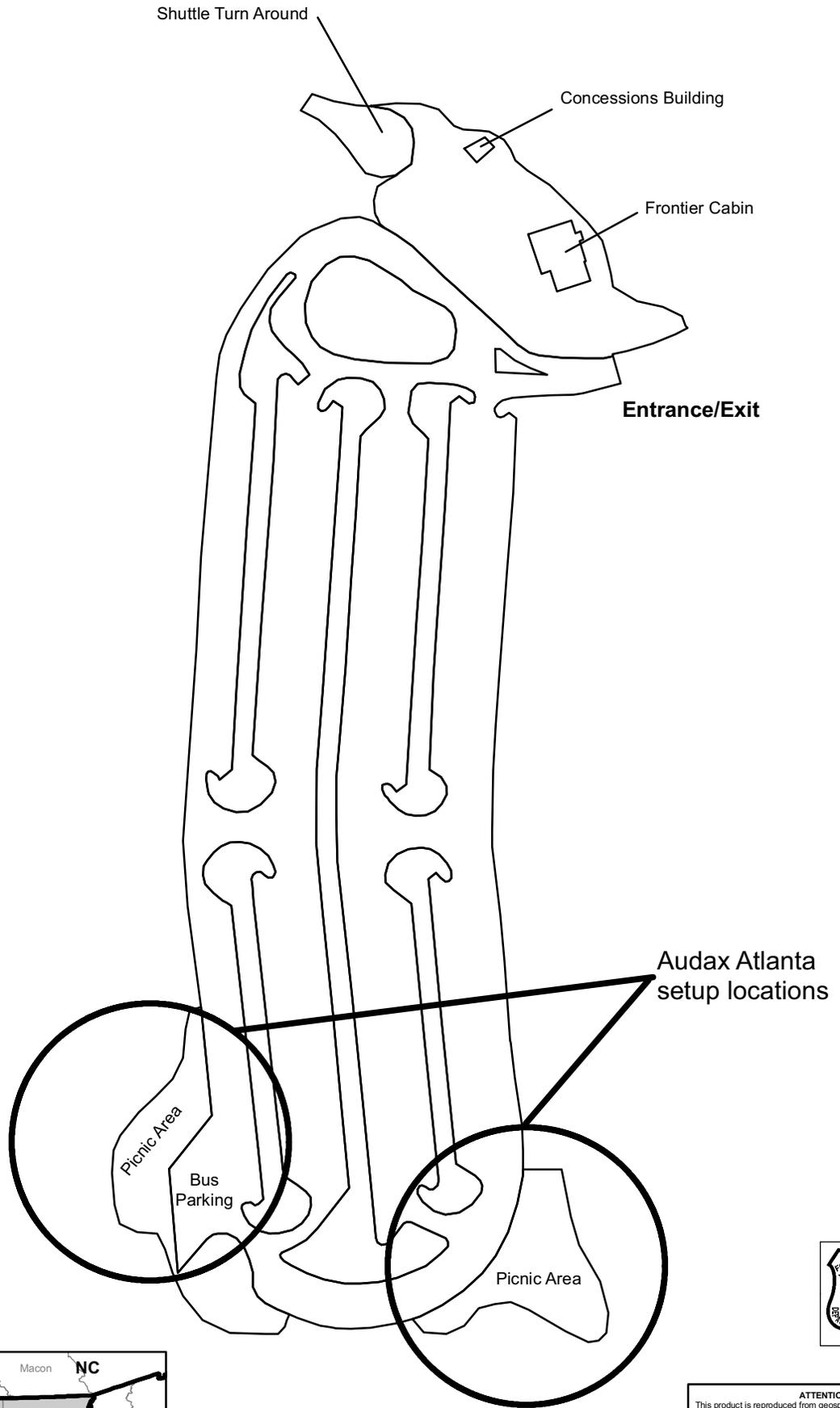
- Trail
- Road
- Staging Area
- Ⓜ Trailhead
- Private Land

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Audax Atlanta Fall Brevet Cycling Event Checkpoint



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